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***SAME-SEX CEREMONIES AND HEALING
CEREMONIES AND THE ROLE THAT MUSIC
PLAYS IN THEM***

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**Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for Master of Sacred Music Degree**

**Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion
School of Sacred Music
New York, New York**

**2006
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Same-Sex Ceremonies and Healing Ceremonies, and the Role
That Music Plays in Them

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Introduction

Throughout history, the richness of Jewish tradition has helped individuals and families mark some of the most important moments of their lives. While liturgy, rituals, and music have all played important parts in connecting people to that tradition, contemporary society has brought about new needs that tradition has not been able to fulfill on its own. *Ben Bag Bag* used to say, "Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it. Reflect on it and grow old and gray with it. Don't turn from it, for nothing is better than it." (Pirke Avot 5:22) Through creativity and insight, certain individuals in the Jewish community have had the courage to step forward to address those needs. Rather than disregard tradition, they have worked and reworked all that it is made up of, extracting new meaning from the texts, and opening up new pathways to acknowledge and celebrate those significant moments that have fallen through the cracks.

While there are numerous innovations that the Jewish community has brought to life as a response to the greater needs of its members, in order to present a more in depth study, this thesis focuses on two recent innovations: 1) Gay and Lesbian same-sex ceremonies, and 2) Healing services.

The interest in exploring the topic of gay and lesbian same-sex ceremonies came about when I was in a Reform lifecycle repertoire class and was assigned a piece to learn whose language I found outdated and offensive. As a heterosexual woman living in today's contemporary society, to sing about "a man and his wife", didn't fit with the ideals I have about two people joining together in an equal relationship. Reflecting further, I realized that as a heterosexual, I at least have plenty of other musical resources to go to. But what of the many gay and lesbian Jews who are in search of music for their

ceremonies? Most of the music that has been written is not gender neutral, and so would be problematic for two men or two women to use. As a future cantor, I find that this is an important need that cannot be ignored.

The gay and lesbian community has struggled to find a voice in society, and even more so in religious communities. This thesis explores some of the ways the Jewish community has worked with the already established model of a wedding service to create similar ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples, who until recently, had no way of marking a change in status within a loving and committed relationship.

The decision to explore the topic of the healing ceremony came about with my concern as a future cantor, of how I might respond to the needs of individuals in need of healing after the great tragedies that have befallen this world. My first year of school was spent in Jerusalem at the height of the intifada, where my classmates and I struggled to get by, day to day, with the rest of Israel. The same year, back on American soil, were the horrible events of 9/11. The topic is one that is relevant to everyone, and it is the responsibility of each person to aid in its repair for we are all affected by the brokenness of the world. Everyone has challenges that they must face in their own lives.

The Jewish healing service, while not based on any previously established service model, does have its roots in tradition. Themes integral to the healing process can be found throughout our liturgy, and with the creativity of a few key individuals, these have been woven together in creative ways to create whole services.

In same-sex ceremonies and healing services, the role of music is becoming increasingly important. While for some, the significance of its role is yet to be discovered or realized to its full potential, through increased musical and liturgical

education and understanding, music is becoming a more influential source for individuals in connecting with Jewish tradition.

Chapter I

SAME-SEX CEREMONIES

I Samuel 18:1, 3, 20:16-17, 42

The soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord seek out the enemies of David." Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as his own life. Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since both of us have sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you forever.'"

Introduction and Background to Same-Sex Ceremonies:

In June of 1998, an Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality prepared a report for the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) Convention, where they concluded that *k'dushah*¹ (sanctity) can be present for members of a same-sex, Jewish couple, who are in a committed relationship, and therefore their relationship "can serve as the foundation of stable Jewish families, thus adding strength to the Jewish community."² Furthermore, the report stated that a same-sex couple should be able to have their relationship publicly affirmed through appropriate Jewish ritual, and that each rabbi should be able to decide for themselves, based on their own informed rabbinic conscience, whether or not to officiate at such a ceremony.

It was in March 2000, that the CCAR passed a resolution on same gender-officiation:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS justice and human dignity are cherished Jewish values, and

¹ Transliterations drawn from a specific liturgical text or organization will follow the orthography of the author/compiler. The explanatory prose of this thesis will use its own consistent system of transliteration.

² "Ad Hoc Committee on Human Sexuality", Selig Salkowitz, Chair (Report to the CCAR Convention) June, 1998.

WHEREAS, in March of 1999 the Women's Rabbinic Network passed a resolution urging the Central Conference of American Rabbis to bring the issue of honoring ceremonies between two Jews of the same gender to the floor of the convention plenum, and

WHEREAS, the institutions of Reform Judaism have a long history of support for civil and equal rights for gays and lesbians, and

WHEREAS, North American organizations of the Reform Movement have passed resolutions in support of civil marriage for gays and lesbians, therefore

WE DO HEREBY RESOLVE, that the relationship of a Jewish, same gender couple is worthy of affirmation through appropriate Jewish ritual, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we recognize the diversity of opinions within our ranks on this issue. We support the decision of those who choose to officiate at rituals of union for same-gender couples, and we support the decision of those who do not, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the CCAR to support all colleagues in their choices in this matter, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that we also call upon the CCAR to develop both educational and liturgical resources in this area.³

Why Have a Ceremony?

In a world of fear and oppression over what is foreign, gay and lesbian couples are met with the challenges of not only being understood and accepted for who they are and how they live their lives, but of finding support from the outside community for their relationships. Language limitations make it difficult to distinguish the status of a gay or lesbian relationship. "My lover can be someone I met last month or the person I have committed to sharing my life with."⁴ While criticisms are cast upon those who cannot weather the hardships of a meaningful relationship, those who attempt to mark the sanctity of one are often criticized for the attempt to imitate the "real thing".⁵

³ Resolution on Same-Gender Officiation"- Resolution adopted at the 111th Convention of the central Conference of American Rabbis, March, 2000.

⁴ "Why Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews" by Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn, in Kiddushin: Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews. 1995, pg 1.

⁵ Ibid., pg 1.

For couples who desire to take that next step, ritual affirmation is one way to celebrate their change in status. Ceremonies only have religious and communal meaning, since they don't have any legal standing in the U.S. "Celebrating and honoring our lives and relationships in the face of continuing oppression and discrimination affirms our faith, ourselves, our love and our community; celebrating and sacralizing as Jews, within the context of tradition, affirms our rightful place as part of the household of Israel."⁶

Throughout history, the reasons why people got married along with how these unions were marked through ceremony have changed. As society's views on what was considered to be appropriate and meaningful changed over time, so did the ways people chose to mark these sacred events. While the rubrics of a Jewish wedding ceremony are rooted in tradition, interpretations of some of the elements of the rituals continue to change, as do parts of the text from the wedding liturgy. In addition, people have added their creativity in various ways. Couples today tend to have a bigger role in sculpting their ceremonies, learning about the various wedding customs, and choosing which to include or omit based on which they themselves find meaningful and relevant. Such changes have occurred over time to reflect the social, political, religious, and philosophical changes taking place in the world around us.

"Today, in all but some ultra-Orthodox communities, two individuals choose to make an enduring commitment to each other that is predicated upon mutuality, equality, exclusivity, love, and companionship. Through *qiddushin*, two Jewish adults willingly set each other apart from all others sexually, financially, and emotionally. Publicly, they and those in attendance affirm and celebrate their commitment, as individuals and as a corporate entity—a new household—to contribute to the community and to creation. This recast understanding of *qiddushin* has led Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis to affirm that all Jewish couples, sexual

⁶ Ibid., pg 2.

orientation not withstanding, can celebrate their relationships through appropriate Jewish rituals"⁷

Comparison of a Traditional Wedding Ceremony to Same-Sex-Ceremonies:

Same-sex ceremonies will have the most variations within them, because gay and lesbian couples are found in every movement. What is included and excluded from each ceremony depends on who the couple is and how they identify as Jews. In creating a ceremony for a couple, one need not start from scratch since the structure for a wedding ceremony in Jewish tradition is there to serve as a guideline. While some same-sex couples want their ceremony to follow tradition as closely as possible, others choose to only loosely base their ceremonies on the traditional model, and others choose to break from it completely. Even within a particular movement, there can be many variations in a wedding ceremony, which is why the rabbi's manual for each movement offers several options for a ceremony. Decisions on which ceremony to use might be made based on who the couple is, or what the officiant feels more comfortable with or wishes to emphasize within the ceremony.

The following chart takes a look at how some of the movements in Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform), along with how some same-sex couples, approach the main rubrics of a wedding ceremony. Because of the options within each movement, the comparison is mainly limited to the first and most commonly used ceremonies in the various rabbis' manuals.

⁷ Nancy H. Wiener "Jewish Marriage Innovations and Alterations: From Commercial/Legal Transaction to Spiritual Transformation," *CCAR Journal* (Fall 2001) p. 34.

WEDDING RUBRICS	ORTHODOX ⁸	CONSERVATIVE ⁹	REFORM ¹⁰	SAME-SEX
ERUSIN: Wine	<i>Begins the Erusin section of the wedding ceremony</i>	<i>Begins the Erusin section of the wedding ceremony</i>	<i>Begins the Erusin section of the wedding ceremony</i>	<i>Begins the Erusin section of the wedding ceremony</i>
Blessing (underlined texts are used by that particular movement)	<i>...b'mizvotav v'<u>tzivanu al haarayot v'asar lanu et haarusot</u>...</i>	<i>...b'mizvotav v'<u>tzivanu al haarayot v'asar lanu et haarusot</u>...</i>	<i>...b'mizvotav v'hiltir lanu et <u>hanesuim v'hanesuot lanu al y'dei (chuppah v)'kiddushin</u>. optional</i>	<i>-some ceremonies include this blessing and some do not -some ceremonies include an alternate blessing</i>
Ring Exchange and Vows	<i>-Recitation of special formula by groom, after which he places the ring on the bride's finger.</i> <i>"Harei at m'kudeshet li, b'tabaat zo, k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael—By this ring, you are consecrated to me, as my wife, in accordance with the laws of Moses and the people of Israel."</i>	<i>-Recitation of special formula by groom, after which he places the ring on the bride's finger.</i> <i>-Bride places a ring on the groom's finger and recites one of four verses. (optional)</i>	<i>-Recitation of special formula by groom, after which he places the ring on the bride's finger. (optional)</i> <i>-Bride places a ring on the groom's finger and recites either the same special formula (with the appropriate masculine/feminine endings) or another verse.</i> <i>-Both the bride and groom recite a non-traditional formula</i>	<i>*SEE APPENDIX for Vow Variations</i>
Officiant's Remarks (D'var Torah or Wedding Charge)	<i>No indication of one in the ceremony</i>	<i>Done after the ring exchange (optional)</i>	<i>Done after the ring exchange (optional)</i>	<i>Can be done at any point in the ceremony (optional, though usually the opportunity is taken to discuss the uniqueness of the couple and ceremony)</i>
Ketubah	<i>Read before Nissuin in Aramaic</i>	<i>Read before Nissuin in Aramaic, English, or both, though not always in its entirety.</i>	<i>Read (optional) - sometimes in Aramaic, sometimes in English, and sometimes both, though usually not in its entirety.</i>	<i>Read (optional) - sometimes in Aramaic, sometimes in English, and sometimes both, though usually not in its entirety.</i>

⁸ Bulka, R. Reubven P., *HaMadrikh: The RCA Life Cycle Manual*. NY, NY: Rabbinical Council of America, 1995, 2000. (Orthodox)

⁹ Raphael Rank, R. Perry, and Freeman, R. Gordon M., editors, *Moreh Derech, v1*. NY, NY: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1998. (Conservative)

¹⁰ Polish, David (liturgical Editor), and W. Gunther Plaut (Historical and Halachic Notes), *Maglei Tzedek: Rabbi's Manual*. NY: CCAR, 1988.

NISSUIN: Sheva B'rachot	<i>All seven blessings are recited</i> Blessing: #4-...v'tageil <u>haakarah</u> #7-...v'shalom v'reiut	<i>All seven blessings are recited</i> Blessing: #4-...v'tageil <u>haakarah</u> #7-...v'shalom v'reiut	-Opt. #1: <i>All seven blessings are read with the following changes:</i> Blessing: #4-...v'tageil <u>tzion</u> ... #7-...shalom v'reiut -Opt#2: <i>different order:</i> Blessing #2,3,4,7 (which skips m'heirah Adonai...n'ginatam), 6, 5 (which extracts the omitted section from blessing #7)...blessing #1 is skipped altogether -sometimes the blessings are read in English with either a literal or creative translation	*SEE APPENDIX for Sheva B'rachot Variations
Priestly Benediction	<i>Recited by officiant</i>	<i>Recited by officiant</i>	<i>Recited by officiant (optional)</i>	<i>Recited by officiant (optional)</i>
Breaking the Glass	<i>Broken by groom</i>	<i>Broken by groom</i>	<i>Glass can be broken by one or both individuals, or not at all</i>	<i>Glass can be broken by one or both individuals, or not at all</i>

While the orthodox are pretty strict about following the traditional rubrics of a wedding without adding much else, more liberal circles often take the liberties of personalizing a ceremony by using creative translations of the texts, or adding creative readings. The further one moves from the orthodox tradition, the more English one will likely come across in a ceremony, though of course this is not a steadfast rule.

Tradition and Innovation: What's In a Name?

"The gaps in our liturgy begin when the *keva* (permanence) of text and ritual, from our received tradition become separated from the *kavannah* (intention) of meaning brought by the celebrants."¹¹ When our tradition can not adequately serve the purpose of conveying the meaning individuals seek for a certain moment that they wish to celebrate, it becomes necessary to add to or deepen the existing structure of the ceremony. In the changing face of modern-day society, many Jews are seeking to acknowledge ritually, those moments and transitions which they consider to be spiritually important to them. Living in a secular society has made it necessary for some people to go to their religious communities (where there is a tie to a people and its traditions) to help mark such occasions in a more meaningful way. While Jewish tradition previously did not have any ways for same-sex couples to ritually affirm their relationships, there has been an increasing response within our community to find innovative ways to use our tradition.

In sharing her thoughts with Rabbi Yoel Kahn on performing same-sex ceremonies, Rabbi Janet Marder (who was then the rabbi of the UAHC's first gay and

¹¹ "Filling in the Gaps: Creating New Lifecycle Ceremonies" by Yoel Kahn, from Committee on Jewish Family Life, CCAR Convention, San Antonio, TX, April 8, 1992.

lesbian outreach congregation, Beth Chayim Chadashim in Los Angeles) once noted that gay and lesbian relationships are no less valid than heterosexual ones and therefore deserve no less.¹² She also explained that since the relationships are not exactly the same, not everything needs to be done the same. Ceremonies can follow the framework of tradition with some personal changes (just like the preference of certain heterosexual couples to use egalitarian language and modify other parts of the rituals), and any personalization or creativity are nice opportunities to invite family and friends to participate, and can create a more meaningful experience.

Various same-sex couples seeking to have a Jewish ceremony to mark the change in status of their relationship may be of different minds about what kind of ceremony would be appropriate. While some couples want to have a "wedding" ceremony, seeking to claim the same privileges, familial and legal respect afforded a heterosexual couple who married, others, associate "marriage" with heterosexuality and patriarchy, and so consciously avoid using the word. Rabbi Kahn suggests that by using the Hebrew term "*kiddushin*" (sanctification or dedication) in place of the word "marriage", the *halachic* (pertaining to Jewish law) principal of *chukat hagoyim* (imitating the nations) can be applied. Just as a synagogue should not look like a church, "lesbian and gay people need not imitate everything that non-gay people do".¹³ However, just as in a heterosexual union, in a same-sex union the concept of *kiddushin* is an indication that two people are becoming dedicated to one another exclusively, not just as a social arrangement or contractual agreement, but a spiritual bonding and the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* (Divine

¹²"Why Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews" by Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn, in *Kiddushin: Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews*. 1995, pg 1.

¹³"Gay Weddings: *The Jewish Gaily Forward*" by Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn, in *Kiddushin: Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews*. February 1990.

precept).

There are many things for a same-sex couple's clergy to consider when putting together a religious ceremony: from what a couple decides to call their ceremony, to how they will be referred to in the ceremony, to what textual changes they or their officiant/s make to the liturgy, to what rituals they will use.

Rabbi Yoel Kahn, for instance, has instituted a slot for remembering/acknowledging absence in the ceremonies that he conducts. He uses this opportunity to remember those individuals who have passed away or as a chance to acknowledge the painful absence of those who would not attend the ceremony because of their lack of support. While this practice was once unique to the ceremonies where he officiated, it has become more common for officiants to include this moment in their ceremonies. Other officiants take the opportunity to bring up the challenges that a same-sex couple faces living in today's world. This can either be done as a teaching opportunity for those in attendance, reminding them that the couple being united will need support beyond the ceremony, and that they, the guests, are playing a big role in bringing forth understanding and promoting the equality of same-sex couples with heterosexual couples, just by being present, or as an opportunity for those in attendance to participate by making a pledge of support to the couple.

Another change that has become common (for not only some same-sex couples, but for some liberal heterosexual couples as well), is the omission of *hi-tir lanu*, the first blessing of the *erusin*¹⁴ (the betrothal) on forbidden and permitted unions. The gender

¹⁴The Jewish marriage originally took place in two stages. The first, the betrothal, was called *erusin*. The second, the wedding, was called *nissuin*, and took place about a year later. The two steps eventually joined to create the marriage ceremony, called *kiddushin*.

issue for most couples had to do with the fact that the "blessing outlines sexual relations permissible to a man (i.e. with the woman whom he has married) through kiddushin."¹⁵

Circling is a ritual that is often included in same-sex and heterosexual union ceremonies, but with many variations both in its physical act, and how it is interpreted. It used to be that it was the bride who circled the groom, either three or seven times depending on family and community tradition. The decision to abandon the custom for some has to do with "the apparent subservience in the bride's circuits around her master."¹⁶ Those who have decided on incorporating the ritual into their ceremony have come up with meaningful interpretations, such as creating a sacred circle of love, or creating a space that the couple will share, or symbolizing the merging of two families. Rather than one person doing the circling around the other, one custom has become to have both individuals do the circling (which also has many variations).

The ring ceremony is arguably the most recognized part of a ceremony, since its custom is also widely practiced by those not part of the Jewish community. Jewish tradition began with the groom giving a ring to his bride while he recited the following formula: *Harei at m'kudeshet li, b'tabaat zo, k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael*. "By this ring, you are consecrated to me as my wife, in accordance with the laws of Moses and the people of Israel." While many couples now choose to do a double ring ceremony, to indicate that there is an equal partnership and commitment to one another, the formula accompanying the giving of the ring has become problematic for some. For a heterosexual couple, a bride's giving a ring to the groom is not according to Jewish law

¹⁵Rothblum, Michael. "Elements of the Traditional and Jewish Wedding in Same Sex Marriages"-written for Rabbi Larry Hoffman's Lifecycle I course at HUC-JIR, NY (Fall 5762), pg 2.

¹⁶Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Wedding*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 1985, pg 104.

so using the same formula (even with the appropriate gender changes to the language) feels inauthentic for some couples to use.

For a same-sex couple who has had to deal with being shunned from Jewish tradition, using the formula can feel even more inauthentic. For those couples who wish to find a more meaningful text for themselves, educated and thoughtful officiants have come up with a number of formulas to replace the traditional one (see Appendix II).

A *ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract) gives details (i.e. names, date, place, witnesses) and outlines the obligations each individual has to one another. In today's contemporary society there are many *ketubah* texts to choose from. The obligations a couple wishes to make to one another, and the goals that they want to focus on in their relationship are usually what liberal couples look for when deciding on a text. Issues that some couples (four same-sex couples interested in having a Jewish ceremony were interviewed about how they planned on approaching the various elements of a traditional wedding) have had with the layout of a traditional *ketubah*, include the following¹⁷:

1) attests to bride's virginity, 2) *Kinyan* (payment for bride), 3) outlines the amount of a bride's dowry, 4) delineates a husband's responsibility for his bride, 5) sets amount bride receives in a divorce, 6) bride doesn't sign.

With regard to issue #1, one couple said that not even if they were straight would they have included such a provision in their *ketubah*. For many liberal individuals, the decision to commit themselves to a relationship through *kiddushin* is not dependent on

¹⁷ Rothblum, Michael. "Elements of the Traditional and Jewish Wedding in Same Sex Marriages"-written for Rabbi Larry Hoffman's Lifecycle I course at HUC-JIR, NY (Fall 5762), pgs 3-4.

the validity of such a statement. Furthermore, the fact that traditional *ketubot* are only concerned with a woman's virginity and not a man's, has many egalitarian couples against the inclusion of a gender-biased statement.

The issue of *kinyan* (in the traditional context of a groom giving his bride a ring to "acquire" her and thereby making the change in their status official) is thought of as outdated for some couples. Many couples do like the idea of a ring-exchange as a sign of their union, and choose to do it through a double-ring ceremony (though there are traditional rabbis who feel that this invalidates the *kinyan*).¹⁸

Most egalitarian couples left out mention of dowry in their *ketubot*, since for modern couples the custom is outdated. One of the couples interviewed, however, had a wooden chest that was provided by one of the individuals, where "each had a responsibility to add something to it every year."¹⁹

The couples who were interviewed chose wording for their *ketubot* that was egalitarian, and outlined the responsibilities they hoped to fulfill to one another in their respective relationships. Following their egalitarian partnership, all of the couples choose to have both individuals sign the *ketubah*.

As for mention of divorce, three of the couples were against the inclusion of any such statement, one of them stating that "enough forces are already against us."²⁰ The fourth couple, the most traditional of the four interviewed, did include a clause, mentioning "one gold dinar" which one of them received from the other upon their divorce.

¹⁸ Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Wedding*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 1985, pg 70.

¹⁹ Rothblum, Michael. "Elements of the Traditional and Jewish Wedding in Same Sex Marriages"-written for Rabbi Larry Hoffman's Lifecycle I course at HUC-JIR, NY (Fall 5762), pg 4.

²⁰ Ibid, pg 4.

With regard to the language of the *sheva b'rachot* (the seven traditional wedding blessings), same-sex couples and even heterosexual couples approach this part of a ceremony in a number of ways (see Appendix III). Same-sex couples are in the more challenging position of possibly having to change parts of the text to deal with not only the gender issue, but also how they will be referred to in the blessings. This moment in the ceremony is an opportunity some couples take for creativity and family/friend involvement. Rather than use the traditional seven blessings, the couple will select certain individuals to write a blessing in their own words based on either the themes of the traditional seven, or on seven themes of the couple's choosing (which still follows the idea of seven blessings).

The ritual that comes to mind when most people think of a Jewish wedding, is the breaking of the glass at the end of the ceremony. Traditionally this is done by the groom. In a same-sex ceremony, this ritual is approached in a variety of ways, with attention given to how the ritual is interpreted. Some couples choose to have both individuals participate in the physical act of the ritual as many liberal heterosexual couples currently do. Others have only one person break the glass. Of the four same-sex couples interviewed, one of the women was the only one to break the glass at her ceremony. "One glass was broken by Lisa, compensating for the dress [that I wore - Andrea wore pants]. It also felt very cathartic, as an acknowledgement of the pain and early difficulty in our relationship."²¹ Andrea shared that she just didn't like stepping on glass.

²¹Rothblum, Michael. "Elements of the Traditional and Jewish Wedding in Same Sex Marriages", written for Rabbi Larry Hoffman's Lifecycle I course at HUC-JIR, NY (Fall 5762), pg 6.

The Role Music Plays

Creativity with a service more often than not is seen in the specific readings that are chosen, which can include special blessings, poems and words written by friends or family. Music is another powerful creative element that can inspire a particular mood, and can meaningfully reflect the couple having the ceremony. For a same-sex couple, it can be a challenge to find musical settings of non-gender specific traditional wedding texts.

If a cantor is there to officiate at a ceremony, then it is likely that most of the Hebrew will be sung or chanted. A cantor who is chanting the texts is more easily able to improvise changes in the text based on the rest of the melody of a piece. An accompanied song where the text is set is more problematic since changing words can change the rhythm and meter of a piece, adding fewer or extra beats that make it hard to line up with the accompaniment. Furthermore, trying to fit the words to follow the set accompaniment can cause the singer to accent the wrong syllables within a word. A thoughtful composer usually begins with the lyrics/text and creates an accompaniment that not only conveys musically what the text is saying, but brings out particular parts to the text for phrasing, emphasizing the important parts of the text. When it is done the other way around, where the text is being forced into the accompaniment, setting the text properly becomes a much bigger challenge.

While there are a good number of compositions appropriate for both heterosexual and homosexual ceremonies, because the texts are not gender specific and the themes are based on subjects such as love, commitment, or other fitting subjects, there are very few composers who have reworked the wedding liturgy for a same-sex ceremony and set it to

music. Furthermore, if one is using Hebrew, the music composed for a lesbian ceremony could be problematic to use for a gay ceremony since Hebrew uses masculine and feminine-specific language, which as mentioned before, can change the phrasing and accents of the text. A skilled officiant and musician (one who knows which syllable is the correct one to accent), however, can usually take the questionable text and rework it in a way that does not disturb the integrity of the music. Of course there are cases where changing the endings of words is a non-issue, due to the fact the number of syllables does not change, and therefore the musical emphases do not need to shift.

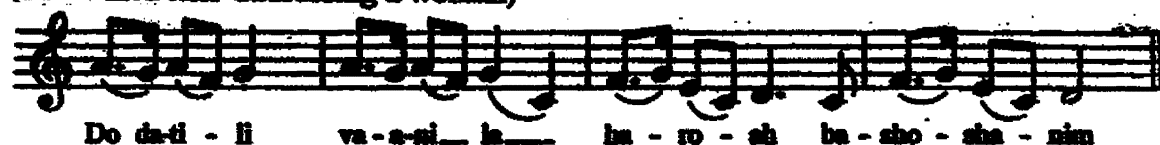
♪ Example of when changing the text from masculine to feminine or vice versa *does not* affect the phrasing of the music:

Song of Songs 2:16-17^{22ab}

a.(original masculinized text/ addressing a man)



b.(Feminized text/ addressing a woman)



*Here, the accented syllables of the text line up with the accented notes in the music even though the text change from *do-di* to *do-da-ti* adds an extra syllable.

^{22ab} Excerpt from a Song Cycle for *Song of Songs*, composed by Cantor Eliyahu Schleifer of HUC-SSM, Jerusalem, for Geoff Pine and his partner Joel.

2) Example of how changing the text from masculine to feminine or vice versa does affect the phrasing of the music:

Rise Up My Love (Song of Songs 2:10-12)²³

Kis-si- lech re-ye-ti- ye-je-ti- at-chi-lech-

Kum I'da-

*Changing the text to address a man in this case, changes the way the composer wanted to accent certain notes which therefore changes the phrasing of the music. Here is an example of how the text change does not fit with the composer's intentions, nor does it fit into the music's natural rhythm.

Perhaps as same-sex ceremonies become more widely accepted and performed, composers will see the need to set music to the variations in texts that are being circulated within the gay and lesbian community.

Aside from the responsibility of music to act as a bridge to the text, the genre of music an officiant uses should reflect a number of things as well. What kind of music would the couple identify with the most (folk, Sephardic, classical, accompanied or unaccompanied cantorial, contemporary)? Knowing some details about the individuals having the ceremony can be helpful to an officiant in deciding what music would suit them. For some couples, a CD of possible music is given to them during the planning stages of their union so that they can be an active part in deciding what they would like for their ceremony.

²³ Excerpt from: "Rise Up My Love", by Gershon Kingsley, from 3 Sacred Songs.

Is this a formal ceremony? Perhaps a couple's decision for what kind of music to use will be based on this factor. Is it indoors or outdoors? An indoor ceremony might have more options to choose from in terms of what accompaniment they would want to include based on the fact that some instruments would be difficult if not impossible to bring outside such as an organ or a piano. Are there a large number of people in attendance or is it a more intimate group? For a ceremony where there are a large number of people, it is important to take into consideration what kind of music, especially what kind of accompaniment will be able to fill a space so that everybody invited can feel like they are part of the experience. Guitar, for instance, is not a very loud instrument, so people would have a harder time hearing it unless there is sufficient amplification. On the other hand, an intimate crowd of guests might be overwhelmed by grand musical settings. The music not only needs to fit the space and the couple, but must be able to take into account the kind of mood the couple wishes to set.

There are all kinds of musical opportunities to consider within a ceremony. Some couples choose to have music playing in the background while their guests are getting settled. Most often this music is instrumental (performed or recorded). This usually allows guests to talk more freely, where they don't feel like they have to compete with another voice. Instrumental or sung music can then be used for the processional (the recessional music is usually instrumental since there is often a lot of excitement and commotion and the text of a sung piece would just get lost).

Cantorial/traditional singing opportunities usually begin with 1. *Baruch Haba* (we bless you who enter) and/or *Mi Adir* (may the One who is powerful above all), 2. blessing over the first glass of wine, 3. *Sheva B'rachot*, 4. Priestly Benediction, then 5. *Siman tov*

u'mazel tov (it is a good and lucky sign)/processional. These opportunities are of course open to other genres of music as discussed above. Other music and singing opportunities can be taken either before or after the first cup of wine, after the rabbi's/officiant's charge, and/or after the rings/vows. There is a lot of flexibility with a same-sex ceremony since even though it is based on a Jewish wedding ceremony, there is no one way to officiate a ceremony since it is not a formalized ceremony, and each movement (along with the couples within it) approaches it differently.

Unconventional Creative Elements

Same-sex couples who are involved in creating their ceremonies sometimes wish to add special elements which hold significant meaning to who they are as Jews, and as a way of acknowledging the uniqueness of a same-sex ceremony. One couple chose to hold their ceremony²⁴ (which they entitled *Kiddush Ahavah*- "sanctification of love") on the seventh night of *Chanukah* (Jewish festival of lights/ Dedication) and integrated a *Havdallah* (service that separates the Jewish Sabbath from the rest of the week) service into their ceremony which was held on *Motsei Shabbat* (the Sabbath's end). As an introduction to their service, the officiant explained how the braided *Havdallah* candle is an attempt to capture in symbols and sensations the mysterious transition from one state to another, from holy to profane, from light to dark, and how the candle further would serve the purpose of being a symbolic instrument of transition for this loving couple, into

²⁴"*Kiddush Ahavah* Ceremony for N and J" (Rosh Chodesh Tevet 5752), 7th night of Channukah. Submitted by Helaine Ettinger, 1991.

a union sanctified and set apart from all others. In addition to the *Havdallah* candle, the couple invited everyone to join them in lighting the *Channukah* candles after the ceremony. They had seven *Channukiot* (*Channukah* candleholders) to mark the seventh night of Channukah. The officiant explained that "in the darkness of winter we kindle flames to bring light into our homes. So too, in the darkness of society's ignorance, J and N kindle a flame, their loving commitment to each other, and bring light into our world."²⁵

In another ceremony for Robin and Shira²⁶ entitled *Brit Ahavah*, the two women decided on using three cups of wine instead of the traditional two. With the first, following *birkat erusin*, they used an imperfect *Kiddush* cup to symbolize that they would accept each other as is. With the second, following the reading of their *ketubah*, they used a *kiddush* cup that they repaired to symbolize their commitment to *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world. With the third cup, following the *sheva b'rahcot*, they used an undamaged cup to symbolize what the world can be. Another unconventional element that they chose to add to their ceremony was the blowing of the *shofar* which they explained as being reminiscent of ancient times, when Jews sounded the *shofar* as a call for the community to gather together.

Amy and Rachel²⁷ also chose to use three cups in their ceremony, one from each of their families and a third symbolizing the joining of their lives and values together. As

²⁵"*Kiddush Ahavah* Ceremony for N and J" (Rosh Chodesh Tevet 5752), 7th night of Channukah. Submitted by Helaine Ettinger, 1991.

²⁶"*Brit Ahavah: Covenant of Love Ceremony*" for Robin and Shira (27 Tamuz 5762) July 7, 2002 at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun- Nathan Barnert Memorial Temple in Franklin Lakes, NJ.

²⁷"The Wedding of Amy Marie Wilkenson and Rachel Leah Joseph" (23 Adar II 5765) April 3, 2005.

their families poured their cups into Amy and Rachel's, they drank from it to show who they had become together through their love. For them it was an acknowledgement of the support that they had received throughout their lives.

In creating ceremonies for same-sex couples, Rabbi Yoel Kahn works to incorporate lesbian or gay content into each one. This has become common practice for many officiants planning a same-sex ceremony. There are a number of sources for people to use, such as "Song of Songs, David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, Hebrew medieval homoerotic poetry (by Judah ha-Levi and others), modern Jewish authors such as Muriel Ruykeiser and Adrienne Rich, other authors, or words written by the couple or their friends."²⁸

Conclusion

There have been a number of courageous souls within the Jewish community who have taken the stand to support gay and lesbian individuals and couples.

With the many controversial issues surrounding homosexuality, they publicly chose to embrace them and to show them that they had a rightful place in the Jewish community. While same-sex ceremonies are becoming more frequently performed, there is still a lot of discomfort present both by those same-sex couples who have not found a supportive Jewish home, and by those clergy who are continuously feeling pressured by the surrounding controversies and aren't sure where to draw their own boundaries.

While the liberal Jewish community as a whole has taken great strides in

²⁸"*Taklis of Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews*" by Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn, in Kiddushin: Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews. 1995, pg 7.

promoting not only tolerance, but acceptance of gays and lesbians, the challenge for society at large of unlearning the bigotry and fear from lack of understanding is still an issue that needs to be dealt with. Through education and dialogue, there is hope for a future where lesbian and gay relationships will be valued as much as heterosexual relationships are. Each individual, no matter their sexual orientation, has unique gifts to offer, and has the shared responsibility of restoring wholeness to the world.

Chapter II

HEALING SERVICE

Please listen to my call-
Help me find the words
Help me find the strength within
Help me shape my mouth, my voice, my heart,
So that I can direct my spirit and find You in prayer
In words only my heart can speak
In songs only my soul can sing
Lifting my eyes and heart to You.²⁹

-Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

History of the Jewish Healing Service:

April 1988 marked the birth of the Jewish service of healing. When asked, Rabbi Yoel Kahn of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav (Golden Gate) in San Francisco created a model Jewish liturgy of healing to be led at an Episcopal conference.³⁰ Aside from the *Mi Shebeirach* (May the One who blessed) prayer for healing that was offered during the Torah service in synagogue, Rabbi Kahn decided to look at the themes of various liturgical texts that he thought could be helpful to individuals who were in need of healing for one reason or another. This service became the model for future healing services, many of which took Rabbi Kahn's service and reworked it in ways to make it relevant for different groups. His synagogue was the first to take his service and customize it, which they began to do from time to time.

The emergence of the Jewish healing movement in the early 1990's, came about as a response to the growing number of Jews who were looking for ways to deal with

²⁹ Excerpt from a poem by Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, in A Personal Guide to Dealing with Suffering: Jewish Paths toward Healing and Wholeness, by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky, pg 107.

³⁰ Cardin, Nina Beth, A Leader's Guide to Services and Prayers of Healing, New York: The National Center For Jewish Healing, 1996.

both individual and communal suffering in a meaningful, Jewish way. Secular outlets were not able to help people with their relationships with God, nor were they able to provide people with healing in the context of the richness of Jewish tradition. The Jewish healing movement sought out ways to access the healing components of the tradition and bring them together to create opportunities for individuals and communities to cope with their suffering.

The Jewish Healing Center was founded in 1991 in San Francisco by three rabbis and two lay leaders, who themselves had experienced loss or illness. They reworked Rabbi Kahn's service further, and began using it to lead semi-monthly healing services for the Bay Area. The Jewish Healing Center split into two separate organizations in September 1994. *Ruach Ami* (Spirit of My People): Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, and the National Center for Jewish Healing in New York. Today, there are over 30 healing centers around North America, serving and providing numerous resources for Jews and communities and their various needs.

What's In a Name?

Since Rabbi Yoel Kahn's first service served as the inspiration for later services created by others³¹, evidence of recycled material can be seen, from liturgical components, biblical texts, readings, poems, meditations, and rituals, to musical selections and the texts they might accompany. While the creators of these services found it unnecessary to reinvent the wheel, they also had the responsibility to find particular ways to adapt a service for those individuals for whom the service was

³¹ "That service was modified and adopted by his synagogue and used on a periodic basis, until in 1991 it was modified again with the help of the Jewish Healing Center."- from *A Leader's Guide to Services and Prayers of Healing*, pg 7.

intended. What might seem like an insignificant change, like the title of a service, may end up being what draws or deters someone from attending a service.

So, what's in a name? A title can sometimes reflect the unique content of a service. For instance, *Azkarah*³²: *A Service of Healing and Memory*³³, compiled and led by *Ruach Ami*: Bay Area Jewish healing Center, is directly connected to the themes of healing and memory found throughout the service. In it are readings dealing with topics such as the stages of grief, life after death, a prayer about living life to the fullest, remembering those who have touched our lives but are no longer with us, and about existing through miracles in the world of the living when we are gone. An excerpt from such a reading called *My Hereafter*³⁴, says:

I will look up at you from the eyes
Of little children;
I will bend to meet you in the swinging boughs
Of bud-thrilled trees,
And caress you with the passionate sweep
Of storm-filled winds;
I will give you strength in your upward tread
Of everlasting hills;

These readings are interwoven with liturgical selections resonating with these themes, which put the readings in a Jewish context. From Ecclesiastes 3 we find the passage: "For everything there is a season..." which talks about the ebb and flow of life and the concept of balance in the world with everything having a time and place. Psalm 23, *El Male Rachamim* (God full of mercy), *Kaddish Yatom* (mourner's kaddish), *Mi Shebeirach*, the Priestly Benediction are further examples of some of the liturgy which

³² http://www.jhom.com/hebrew/memory_h.htm. The rabbis of the Talmud often refer to the ineffable four-letter divine name as the *azkarah*, an Aramaic word that is also used to denote a memorial ceremony.

³³ *Ruach Ami*: Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, *Azkarah: A Service of Healing and Memory*

³⁴ Juanita de Long, *My Hereafter*, from *Ruach Ami*: Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, *Azkarah: A Service of Healing and Memory*, pg 8.

we find in this particular service. The first three can be found in the liturgical layout of a Jewish funeral and *Yizkor* (memorial) service. *Kaddish Yatom* is also a regular part of daily services, to be recited for a year by those who are remembering a loved one on the anniversary of their passing or daily following a death. Only after someone has experienced a period of mourning can the healing process begin. Extracted from their usual settings, these liturgical texts are recontextualized within a healing service. Musical settings of the liturgy in this service include Debbie Friedman's: *B'ruchot Habaot* (Blessed are you who have come here), a feminized and pluralized version of *Baruch Haba*, (which is often found at the beginning of a naming or wedding ceremony), and *Oseh Shalom* (Maker of peace), which ends *Kaddish Yatom*. When this text is separated out from the rest of the *Kaddish*, it is a nice conclusion to a healing service as a prayer for peace and wholeness. In addition, *Oseh Shalom* is one of the most well known prayers when sung to Nurit Hirsch's setting, which for many Jews, makes them more likely to participate.

In contrast to the thematic service of healing and memory, by *Ruach Ami*, is the service: *A Havdalah (separation) of Healing and Hope*³⁵. While it does contain the themes of healing and hope, the service itself is constructed utilizing the rubrics of a Havdallah service. It, too, interweaves liturgy, readings, and music, but it also uses the symbols of the Havdallah service to create distinct sections in the service. These symbols however are used for the healing messages that can be drawn from them, rather than as they normally are in the context of a service separating Shabbat from the rest of the week. Wine serves as a reminder of the importance of caring for our bodies to restore strength;

³⁵ Compiled by Robin and Shira Nafshi for Temple Sholom of Fanwood, NJ, *A Havdalah of Healing and Hope*. (Robin became an ordained rabbi and Shira an invested cantor in 2005)

spices as a reminder that we are not alone in our pain; and the light from the Havdallah candle as a vehicle to save us from obstacles set before us. The last blessing, *hamavdil* (The One who makes distinctions), over the separation of the holy and mundane, speaks of keeping the sweetness of Shabbat with us, which is particularly meaningful in the context of this service. For the attendants, the symbolic ritual allows them to move from their original state of needing healing, to a place of healing. The title of the service is further reflected in the musical selections that are not normally found in a Havdallah service. Debbie Friedman's *Those Who Sow*, from Psalm 126:5, says: "Those who sow in tears will reap in joy..." which for someone in need of healing, is there to give them hope for happiness in the future.³⁶

Some individuals are drawn to a service because of the particular theme indicated in the title. But titles can reflect more than just the goals or content of a service. Sometimes a title is used to reflect where the congregation or its attendees are with regard to their knowledge of Jewish tradition and language. For instance, a congregation or congregant, who is not comfortable with Hebrew might be uncomfortable with a service that has a Hebrew title. Some might deduce that with a Hebrew title, there will be a lot of Hebrew in the service which they will not understand or with which they will be unable to connect. For others, the use of Hebrew makes a service feel more authentically "Jewish". Even in English, words resonate differently with different people. The idea of a "Healing Service" might connote something too touchy-feely for one person, while for another, it may seem like something they never thought of in a Jewish context and which therefore seems strange to be a part of. For others it might be exactly what they are seeking and they are happy to have the opportunity to experience it with their Jewish

³⁶ Ibid, pg. 3.

communities. It is important for those creating a service, to take all of these factors into consideration, from the title, to the goals of the service to for whom the service is being created, to the balance of Hebrew and English.

Under the Wings of Shechinah (the in-dwelling presence of God on earth): *A Service of Healing & Comfort, Hope and Faith*³⁷, is a great example of a service title that not only has the goals stated within it, but also has a fusion of Hebrew and English in the title, a statement to participants that gives them some insight into what they might expect in the service.

Responding to Different Needs:

The individuals who seek out some form of a healing service are either there with different personal needs, or they are there as a community that has endured shared suffering. The acknowledgement that people are coming into a service with their own pain can be a source of immediate comfort to some, allowing them to feel understood and safe. It is not always easy for people to find a sacred space where they can come and feel supported by friends, family, and community. This should be the immediate goal of any service.

Some healing services respond to individual suffering by first acknowledging that there are many ways one might be suffering, from the physical, to the emotional, to the spiritual. Some services further point out that there are different stages of dealing with individual grief and suffering, and that the healing process is a journey. By making this simple statement in one way or another, people are given the time and space to be

³⁷ Scarsdale Synagogue- Tremont Temple, "Under the Wings of Shechinah": A Service of Healing & Comfort, Hope & Faith.

wherever they are, without feeling pressure to be where the person sitting next to them is. For example, Central Synagogue of NY, NY, created a healing service³⁸ which speaks of how we each must face our pain alone, but that we can reach out around us for support, whether from friends, family, community, or God. It speaks of the balancing act that is life, with life comes death, with joy comes sorrow; with defeats to overcome we must have hope, for all life is one. The service continues with the idea that life is full of choices, and that it is a choice to be open to healing and to continue forward in life. And while there is always risk involved, it is up to all individuals to make things happen for themselves. These concepts are not unique to this particular service, but rather are stated in unique ways in the various services that are circulating.

Many of the inspirational and healing words contained in healing services come in the form of readings, poems, Psalms or other biblical texts, and, in some, musical settings for these texts. Some of the texts are read or sung out loud by a service leader or an attendee, some by the community as a whole, some as responsive readings or songs. Other readings are there for people to look over silently. The language of the texts can have a particular impact on how they are received by individuals. For instance, a text which is in the first person, using words like "I" and "me" can allow someone to have a personal experience in a group situation. Silent moments for individual reflection can be very powerful, as can opportunities for personal testimonials. A thoughtful balance is something to take into consideration when creating a service.

A service created in response to group suffering shares many of the same elements as a service created for individuals and their various needs. Although a community may have gone through a traumatic experience together, the individuals

³⁸ Central Synagogue of NY, A Healing Service.

within the group will each be dealing with the trauma in their own way. Since the healing service is a contemporary innovation, we can only look back to recent history and its tragedies to see how the healing movement has responded to them. Probably the most significant communal tragedy that has affected people on such a wide scale, were the devastating events of 9/11 in 2001. As a result of the thousands who died in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington four years ago, friends, families and communities were torn apart by loss, separation, fear, and anger. People were quick to turn to their religious institutions to help them cope with their feelings. Some were left numb or silenced, others were plagued by memories and images that had taken control of their lives, and others had been forced to fend for themselves with seemingly no help. Beyond loss, beyond the physical effects on the body that people experienced or continue to experience, beyond the loss of jobs or financial security, came also a questioning of faith and God. The individual acts of humanity and heroism that came in response to these events were the beginning of the communal healing that needed to take place.

While whole services dedicated specifically to communal healing are still in the beginning stages of creation, individual prayers for the healing of communal tragedies are abundant. Though many are original texts that people have written, either for a particular occasion or to complement the liturgical sections of a service, there are also sources for healing within our liturgy (examples include selections from Psalms and Torah, *Elohai N'shamah*, *Hashkiveinu*, *Nissim B'chol Yom* [blessings of daily life], and *Oseh Shalom*). The Jewish High Holy Days which followed the tragic events of 9/11 brought greater expectations from people of their spiritual leaders than usual. While High Holy Days are the most highly attended services of the year, the need for communal and spiritual

healing became the major focus for many rabbis, who at the last moments rewrote their sermons to respond to 9/11.³⁹ In the context of a holiday service, where Jewish communities gathered for inspiration and spiritual fulfillment in the context of tradition, moments were created for reflection and healing.

Sources of Healing:

"Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, a Hassidic master who was beset by his own demons taught that a human being reaches in three directions: inward to self, outward to other people, and upward to God. The real secret, he taught, is that the three are one. When we truly connect with self, we can then reach out to help others. When we truly reach out to others, we come to truly know God."⁴⁰

Services created for both individual and communal suffering all highlight these same resources for healing (community, friends, God, and the healing from within). Looking to God as a healing source is reflected in a variety of ways. All of the services included in this thesis created a sacred space for individuals to have a personal relationship with God. Some contain first person letters or narratives directed to God. Many express feelings of anger, confusion, abandonment, loss of hope, even a questioning of God about suffering, along with such ideas as seeking strength, comfort and healing. Regardless of how a text directs its communication with God, all have one thing in common: they affirm God's presence in our lives.

³⁹ <http://www.torahfromterror.com> is a website with various rabbinic sermons responding to the tragedies.

⁴⁰ Scarsdale Synagogue- Tremont Temple, "Under the Wings of Shechinah"; A Service of Healing & Comfort, Hope & Faith.

Models and Components of a Healing Service:

There are three specific approaches that have been taken to create a healing service.

Some services may even combine these approaches.

1. *Time-based* services are those created around a specific regular celebration (like Shabbat or Havdallah), possibly including the rituals that accompany them (candle-lighting, hand-washing, etc.), or for a specific time of day/week, such as a weekday or Shabbat shacharit (morning) service, or ma'ariv (evening) service. These services use the liturgy according to tradition, where prayers like *Elohai N'shamah* (My God, the soul you have given me) would only be used in a morning service and *Hashkiveinu* (Grant that we lie down) in an evening service.

The 1999 UAHC Biennial Convention created: *A Weekday Service of Healing*⁴¹. As the title indicates, the liturgy followed the traditional order of a weekday morning service. While it went through the various parts of the service, creative elements (readings, biblical texts, musical selection, etc.) were woven in to put the morning service into the larger context of a healing service.

2. *Creative* services use the liturgy, texts and rituals from the tradition for their healing content, but unlike a *time-based* service, use them without regard to their usual time-bound nature. Texts are inserted into a specific place in the service as a way of bringing the participants on a guided journey of healing.

For example, *R'faeinu- "Heal Us": A Circle of Healing, Wholeness, and Renewal*⁴², is a service that begins with English readings to lead people into prayer. These are followed by the service's first piece of "standard" liturgy, *Adonai S'fatai* (God open my lips), which normally opens the *Amidah* (standing prayer) section of a service. *Shalom Rav* (May there be abundant peace) and *Asher Yatzar* (The One who has created human beings) are just some of the other liturgical texts that follow. While these texts are all found in liturgy, they are not used in their traditional order. *Asher Yatzar* is found toward

⁴¹ UAHC Biennial, *A Weekday Service of Healing*, 1999.

⁴² Fleischer Jewish Healing Center of St. Louis, MS, *R'faeinu- Heal Us: A Circle of Healing, Wholeness, and Renewal*

the beginning of a morning service in the *Birchot Hashachar* (morning blessings) section of a service, and while *Shalom Rav* is part of the *Amidah* section of a service, it is found in the evening service. The next reading, the first done in unison, entitled "Seeking the Sacred", asks God "How can we find You?" It articulates the participants' desire to be heard by God so that they can find healing, wholeness, and renewal. This hope is reiterated through the inclusion of an English excerpt of *Sh'ma Koleinu* (hear our voice) found in the daily *Amidah*.

3. *Thematically-based* services focus on particular ideas such as: memory, hope, and healing, and may draw from the liturgy to outline those ideas. Their use of liturgy can overlap with both the *time-based* or *creative* service model.

An example of such a service is: *Never Alone: A Ceremony for Hope and Healing*⁴³, which is divided into specific thematic sections, each with its own title: 1. On a Search for God, 2. Finding Miracles, 3. To Never Lose Hope, 4. To Lessen the Hold of Fragility and Fear, 5. Faith, and 6. Surrender. Each section begins with the blowing of the shofar, which shows its creative use of a High Holy Day ritual. The ceremony also incorporates a candle-lighting ritual modeled after a Havdallah service, where stage directions tell participants to "hold out their free hand to the candle so the glow of the flame is reflected in the fingernails. Slowly make a fist, capturing the light for yourselves, and blow out the candle."⁴⁴ While looking at the reflection of the flame in ones fingernails is part of a standard Havdallah service, the blowing out of the candle is a divergence from Havdallah, intended to create and fulfill a meaningful healing component. The candle is a visual symbol of hope, warmth, and comfort. Its glow can be mesmerizing - almost hypnotic. The fist is a symbol of holding on - not letting go. Close your hand into a fist

⁴³Shira Nafshi, *Never Alone: A Ceremony for Hope and Healing*.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pg. 12.

and then let it open. The authors of the service considered the question: which happens faster? Their answer—usually the closing—became the basis for the ritual. It is harder for us to open our hands and let go of things than it is to grab on in the first place. In this case, the idea is for people to metaphorically grab onto the light, the hope, the warmth and comfort of that flame. Take the flame into their hands, their souls, and, once it is there, blow the physical candle out because the actual flame isn't necessary anymore. This ritual can be seen as a metaphor for taking the hope and light from the service experience, beyond its confines, so that healing can continue beyond this point in the outside world.

A service that incorporates all three approaches is: *Tefillat Refuat Ha-nefesh: A Havdalah Service for the Healing of the Soul*.⁴⁵ The service is separated into three thematic sections: 1. Creation/Preparation, 2. Revelation/Naming, 3. Redemption/Separation. The first section uses liturgical texts from the morning liturgy, such as *Asher Yatzar* and *Elohai N'shamah*, showing a creative use of liturgy since these particular prayers are being used for a Havdallah service. A breathing exercise is directed after *Asher Yatzar*, as a creative and meditative ritual to connect people with their bodies and the text of the liturgy. A focus on breath as "the breath of life" both through the texts and the breathing exercise, acknowledges God and the miracle of life, and invites God into the healing experience. The second section begins with a creative element, a song entitled: "Geshet Tzar M'od" (The world is a narrow bridge), which reminds people to not be afraid as they go through life and its challenges. *Birkat Shalom* (blessing of peace), a blessing for wholeness and peace follows, trailed by a reading

⁴⁵ Temple Anshe Hessed of Erie, PA, Tefillat Refuat Ha-nefesh: A Havdalah Service for the Healing of the Soul

which speaks of the intimate connection between each person and God, and the desire to receive strength, vitality and rejuvenation. Since it has been extracted from its place in the Amidah, its use here is creative. The time-based component comes in the third section, with a Havdallah service. Like many of the services that are currently circulating, there are closing blessings such as the Priestly Blessing and *T'fillat HaDerech* (a traveler's prayer) to help send off participants with hope and blessing.

Creating a Sacred Space:

Regardless of the approach taken to create a service, the unique elements that are combined to make it a healing service must flow. The beginning goal should be creating a sacred and intimate space where people can feel safe and comfortable. Choosing the right physical space (if one has a choice in the matter) and preparing it for this particular service, can really help set the tone for people. In planning a service, there are so many elements to think about, that it can be a helpful reminder for the planner/s to think about engaging the senses (what they might see, hear, feel, etc.) of their participants as a way to organize some of these elements. What will people see when they walk in? Perhaps candle-light, or other dim light might be used to help draw people in to a more intimate setting. Maybe there are ritual objects set up to give people insight into what they might expect. How the chairs are set up can also make a difference. Is the service a frontally-led one, or would sitting in a circle make more sense? Perhaps a more intimate setting might have people on couches, or sitting on pillows (this can affect not only what people see, but how they might feel). How is the tone being set aurally? Is there possibly

silence or meditative music? Having insight into who the participants will be can help the creator/s of a service make all of these decisions about what will be most effective.⁴⁶

The creation of the service itself should take its participants on a journey. It should be able to create specific moods and guide people through the stages of the healing process, taking into account that participants will be coming with different needs.

"The best services are organic; they should rise, reach a peak and fall as a breath. Avoid services that are an anthology of prayers and songs. Some of the most successful services have a gentle beginning (a welcome and statement of purpose to ground people and help them settle in, a *niggun*, perhaps some breathing or relaxing technique), a core theme, musical refrain, or image that runs throughout, a feeling of progression, a letting go and a closing."⁴⁷

As is our tradition, the closing should leave people with a sense of hope and connection, a *n'chemta* (a consolation).

The Role of Music:

Debbie Friedman, a singer, songwriter and guitarist, is arguably the most influential person to spark the Jewish healing movement. Her musical setting of the *Mi Shebeirach* prayer (©1988), which she composed for a service entitled *Simchat Chochma* (celebration of wisdom), held on November 14th, 1997, created a unique opportunity for communal healing within a service. "[She] wrote it for a woman who was celebrating her arrival into her golden years and wanted to embrace them with joy instead of terror."⁴⁸ She looked at the traditional *Mi Shebeirach* prayer and translated it into English with some help from her friend Drora Setel, who was going to be officiating at the service.

⁴⁶ These ideas were taken from A Leader's Guide to Services and Prayers of Healing, a resource from the National Center for Jewish Healing, and from an HUC-SSM course entitled "Empowering the congregational Voice", taught by Cantor Benjie Schiller and Merri Lovinger Arian.

⁴⁷ Nina Beth Cardin, A Leader's Guide to Services and Prayers of Healing, (New York: The National Center for Jewish Healing, 1996), 13.

⁴⁸ <http://www.jewishbulletin.ca/archives/May04/archives04May07-01.html>

"At the service, four people held up a tallis, each holding one of its corners, said Friedman. 'I asked if there was anybody who would like to come forward, who would like to be part of this, who would like to be blessed under the tallis to experience the blessings of healing and well-being, who felt that they needed that. And there was this mass exodus (from their seats). They all came forward and when I looked out there, 175 seats - the whole *kehila*, the whole community - the whole congregation was empty, they were all under this tallis. That was the beginning of the healing service.'"⁴⁹

Such is the power of a song for people. What was once a nearly glossed over part of a service in liberal circles, was now highlighted. Friedman's composition enabled people to connect to the text in a way that they had not before. Whether it was her use of the folk idiom alone, or her translation of a liturgical prayer into English that reached people, Friedman helped reclaim the liturgy. Now while Friedman was responsible for bringing back the healing segment of a service through her composition, Rabbi Yoel Kahn of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco actually expanded the first healing service beyond the Mi Shebeirach prayer.

It is commonly recognized that word content on its own can be limiting, but putting them in a musical context can be helpful in connecting people and bringing them on a spiritual journey. There are often multiple musical settings of the liturgical texts from which to choose when preparing a healing service. The setting used should reflect the tone of the service at a particular time. While music can serve as a bridge to the text, "our primary attraction to music is most likely through its power to create moods and to elicit emotional responses from within us."⁵⁰ A great example can be seen with what musical setting a service leader might use for *Esa Einai*. The text says: "I lift my eyes up to the mountains, from where will my help come? My help will come from the Lord,

⁴⁹ <http://www.jewishbulletin.ca/archives/May04/archives04May07-01.html>

⁵⁰ McClellan, Randall. *The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory and Practice*. (Rockport, MA.: Element, 1991), pg. 137.

maker of heaven and earth."⁵¹ Ben Steinberg's setting is a slow and meditative solo piece, accompanied by organ or piano. A piece like this could be a nice opening to a service, where individuals can listen to someone give voice to how they might be feeling deep inside. While they may be feeling alone or afraid, they are hearing a reassuring message that they are about to have an experience with healing. In contrast, Shlomo Carlebach's setting of the text is more participatory, with an upbeat and rhythmic melody that is easy to learn, and might best be used toward the end of a service as a final message of hope that God will be there to help a person with their healing after they leave the service.

While some healing services indicate which musical setting is to be used, often the creators of a service do not indicate a particular setting and leave the decision up to the service leaders. For someone with a background in Jewish music, choosing the appropriate settings to create a particular flow can be done in a thoughtful way. However, individuals who don't know multiple musical settings of the liturgy will find it much more challenging to create that flow.

Mantra and chant are two musical forms that may be used in a healing service. Their repetitive nature can help people experience text aesthetically. In contrast, a *niggun* is a wordless melody which has the ability to create a mood and send people into an altered state of consciousness. "*Niggunim* are intended as a means to move beyond words and to express that which cannot be expressed in language. The melody is repeated in a seemingly endless way, until the power of the *niggun* opens a door that reaches deep inside us and stretches all the way to heaven."⁵²

⁵¹ Psalm 121:1-2

⁵²http://www.ijs-online.org/resources_study.php (Institute for Jewish Spirituality), Rabbi Michael Strassfield

While music can offer us a more meaningful way to experience a service, silence can be an equally powerful tool. It is often during those moments of quiet reflection or meditation that people are able to sit with their feelings and discover certain realizations and truths, which can then allow them to move forward in their own journey of healing.

Conclusion

"Jewish healing is a discovery and rereading of Jewish texts, a reinterpretation and invention of Jewish rituals developed through the eyes and heart of one who has experienced loss. All lead to bringing a compassionate presence to Jews who are ill, grieving and despairing, to their families and their caregivers."⁵³

-*Rabbi Rachel Cowan*

With the many reasons people seek healing it becomes easy to understand why the Jewish healing movement has become as widespread as it has. While elements of healing are numerous within our tradition, it is through the creativity and insight of certain individuals and organizations that those elements have been pulled out and woven together to create services to respond to the various needs of healing out there.

While healing texts and texts with healing components are abundant within our tradition, musical settings for these texts are still in the beginning stages of being created. More and more, composers are taking the opportunity to reflect on the texts, giving them new life and meaning through musical expression. In the book *R'fuah Shleimah: Songs of Jewish Healing*⁵⁴, aside from Debbie Friedman's, there are twelve settings of the *Mi Shebeirach* prayer that have been included. Some other texts that have been identified as "healing" in this collection include: *R'faeinu*, *Adonai Li*, *Elohai N'shamah*, *Asher Yatzt*,

⁵³Quote from Rabbi Rachel Cowan from: A Personal Guide to Dealing with Suffering: Jewish Paths toward Healing and Wholeness, by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky.

⁵⁴Merri Lovinger Arian, ed., R'fuah Sh'leimah, NY, published by Synagogue 2000, distributed by Transcontinental Music Publication.

Ma Gadlu, Adon Olam, Asher Yatzar, various Psalm settings, and music inspired by poetry. Music has become an important medium which has helped people connect to our liturgy in a more profound way. Slowly, those service leaders and individuals who are compiling new and creative services, are beginning to understand the importance of choosing not only the musical texts to complement the readings and liturgy, but that choosing the particular settings of the music is just as important.

Conclusion

Whoever thought that Jewish tradition was unforgiving and unyielding never had the opportunity to work with some of the greatest contemporary figures. Tradition is what we make of it, and it is up to the people who carry that tradition to keep it relevant and accessible. Tradition is not meant to shut people out, but rather to help enrich our lives and help us connect with others. While individuals have felt isolated or disconnected by the gaps in our liturgy, others have seen an opportunity to look deeper into the richness of tradition, and find innovative ways to work with it to address those seemingly untouchable issues. Some of the new liturgies that have been developing and circulating within the Jewish community have come about because of necessity, and some because of invitations for experimentation. Some have succeeded and some have failed. An increasing desire for social awareness has opened up people to new possibilities within Jewish tradition. Furthermore, there has been an increase in people's desire to connect with those traditions and the community of Israel, to give more meaning to their lives.

While not the only ones, gay and lesbian individuals within and outside the Jewish community, have learned first hand what brokenness lies within the world. Many have also been blessed in witnessing and being a part of the beginning of its repair. The progressive Jewish community is moving forward with respect to promoting the equal treatment of all those within our community. We are finally taking the time to reach out to those who have had no voice, and using our tradition in new ways to make those voices heard. The changes made to our liturgy have reflected the changing views of society. Our collective consciousness has become aware of the need to pay attention to the small nuances in the language we use. Egalitarian-sensitive prayer books are

replacing the male-focused prayer books; composers are reworking the liturgy, opening up more doors to more individuals who can use their musical settings, because of the use of gender-sensitive language or their consideration of more liberal ideologies.

Through the research collected for this thesis, it is clear that the lack of indication of musical settings in the services and ceremonies collected shows how the Jewish community as a whole is still in the beginning stages of understanding the importance of choosing specific settings. The limited number of musical settings that people are familiar with, drastically narrow down what some individuals are willing or capable of using in a service that they are leading. Those who are not comfortably familiar with liturgy, Hebrew, and Jewish music, will have a much harder time selecting thoughtful music that will complement the liturgy and flow of a service. Individuals who are interested in becoming more educated in these areas can turn to books, their clergy, classes, and other educated members in their community. Musical resources are abundant (see Appendix VIII) to help expose and familiarize individuals with the rich musical heritage of the Jewish people. Making informed decisions about the liturgy we use, how we use it, including the music we choose, will only enrich the Jewish experience people receive, and help them connect in a deeper, more profound way. Furthermore, understanding the decisions and changes people/communities make to the liturgy, affects not only those who are using it, but helps promote a greater understanding of the differences and needs within the Jewish community.

While the scope of this thesis is limited to two of the innovations that have become significant parts of contemporary Jewish life, they each focus on specific areas of research with regard to each topic. The issues facing gays and lesbians, both Jews and

non-Jews, are many, and in order to promote change and understanding, one needs to become familiar with those issues.

With regard to the topic of healing, there are many facets to learn about and understand beyond what has been explored in this thesis. While many people associate healing with the need for *physical* healing, more people have come to understand that the mind and spirit are also parts of us that need healing. With the years of silence people have endured, with the challenges of living in today's world, with the emotional, physical and spiritual struggles that are a God-given part of life, we are all in need of healing, and finally, that need has been understood and is being addressed. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of each individual to make the world a better place through healing and wholeness, which cannot be achieved alone.

Both topics of research explored the use of creative liturgy and music. With the pre-existing rubrics of a traditional wedding to use as a model, individuals seeking to create a ceremony for a same-sex union already have inherited liturgy to draw from. Because of the constraints of gendered language and certain ideologies in tradition, the main challenge for officiants and couples to grapple with is how to approach these elements when creating a same-sex ceremony.

While the healing service is a more recent innovation and is not based on any pre-existing model, individuals have relied on several methods for compiling services. Time-based, creative, and thematically-based services all use pre-existing liturgy in one way or another, using the texts either in their tradition manner, or extract parts of the text to bring out a particular idea.

Without tradition to bind us to the new developments we continue to make as we respond to the changing needs within our community, we will lose the sense of who we are in the context of our people. We must continue to make strides, and not forget that we will always have the giants who have come before us, to inspire us to continue moving mountains.

Appendix I⁵⁵

What to call the Ceremony:

קדוש אהבה	Sanctification of Love (R. Nancy Wiener)
ברית אהבה	Covenant of Love (Roseanne Leipzig and Judy Mable) Covenant of Loving Dedication (R. Leila Gal Berner and Renee Gal Primack)
ברית אהובים	Lovers' Covenant (AJ Congress Feminist Center)
קדושין	Union Ceremony, Commitment Ceremony (R. Yoel Kahn) Covenant of Union (anonymous couple/Kahn)

What to Call the Couple and the Individuals:

רעים האהובים / רעות האהובות	Loving companions
רעה ודוֹתָהּ רע ודוֹתוֹ	Lover and beloved
זוג/ה נאמן/ה	Faithful spouse

Lovers

Lovers and companions to one another

This couple

These men/women

⁵⁵ Compiled by R. Deborah Gordon for R. Larry Hoffman's "Lifecycle Liturgy" class, HUC-JIR/NY. Leipzig and Mable in Ceremonies of the Heart: Celebrating Lesbian Unions. (Ed. Butler, The Seal Press, 1990). Berner and Primack in Orenstein Lifecycles (Jewish Lights, 1994).

Appendix II⁵⁶

Vow Variations

From Song of Songs (6:3)

"I am my beloved's and my beloved's is mine."

Said about a man:

Ani l'dodi v'dodi li

אני לדודי ודודי לי

Said about a woman:

Ani l'dodati v'dodati li

אני לדודתי ודודתי לי

From Psalms (89:4)

"I shall establish a covenant with my chosen one"

Said about a man:

Karati b'rit livchiri

כרתי ברית לבחירי

Said about a woman:

Karati b'rit livchirati

כרתי ברית לבחירתי

From Genesis (9:12)

"This is a token (sign) of the covenant."

Said by either a man or a woman:

Zot ot b'rit

זאת אות ברית

From II Samuel (23:5)

"For he/she has made an ever lasting covenant with me."

Said about a man:

Ki v'rit olam sam li

כי ברית עולם שם לי

Said about a woman:

Ki v'rit olam samah li

כי ברית עולם שמה לי

⁵⁶ Wiener, R. Nancy H. Beyond Breaking the Glass: A Spiritual Guide to Your Jewish Wedding. NY: CCAR Press, 2001.

From Song of Songs (5:16)
"This is my beloved and this is my friend."

Said about a man:

Zeh dodi v'zeh rei-i

זה דודי וזה רעי

Said about a woman:

Zot dodati v'zot rayati

זאת דודי וזאת רעיתי

From the Book of Ruth (1:16)
"Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people will be my people, and your God my God."

Said to a woman:

כי אל-אשר תלכי אלד ובאשר תליני אלן עמד עמי ואלהדך אלהי.

Said to a man:

כי אל-אשר תלכי אלד ובאשר תלין אלן עמד עמי ואלהדך אלהי.

From the First Book of Samuel (18:1)
"And it came to pass...that the soul of Jonathan was knot with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."

ויהי...ונפש יהונתן נקשרה בנפש דוד ויאהבו יהונתן בנפשו.
Vay'hi...v'nefesh Y'honatan niksharah b'nefesh David, v'ye-chavu Y'honatan k'nafsho.

* * * * *

Rather than end your vows with these words:

"...according to the religion/tradition/laws/customs of Moses and Israel."

K'dat Moshe v'Yisrael

כדת משה וישראל

You may want to choose from these variations:

I'fi m'soroteinu hak'doshot

לפי מסורותינו הקדושות

l'fi ham'sorot hak'doshot

lifnei Elohim v'ha'eidim ha'eileh

lifnei ha'eidim ha-eileh

לפי המסורות הקדושות

לפני אלהים והעדים האלה

לפני העדים האלה

Appendix III⁵⁷

Sheva B'rachot Variations

Below are some Hebrew variants either for same-sex ceremonies or for any couple wishing to remove gender- or role-specific language. Many of them can be inserted without changing the meter of the blessings, so that they can be sung to standard tunes.

1.

Chatanim / חתנים / grooms
is changed to

"friends/companions"

rei-im (male or mixed)

רעים

rei-ot (female)

רעות

or "lovers"

ahuvim (male or mixed)

האהובים

ahuvot (female)

האהובות

2.

Chatan im hakallah / חתן עם הכלה / groom with the bride
is changed to "loving companions"

rei-im haahuvim

רעים האהובים

rei-ot haahuvot

רעות האהובות

3.

M'sameach chatan im hakallah / משמח חתן עם הכלה /
"who causes groom and bride to rejoice"
is changed to "who unites individuals in love":

⁵⁷ Wiener, R. Nancy H. Beyond Breaking the Glass: A Spiritual Guide to Your Jewish Wedding. NY: CCAR Press, 2001.

Male or mixed

ham'acheid y'chidim b'ahavah

המאחד יחידים באהבה

Female

Ham'achedet y'chidot b'ahavah

המאחדת יחידות באהבה

4.

Kol chattan v'kol kallah / קול חתן וקול כלה /
"voice of the groom and voice of the bride" is changed to

"voice of honor and voice of strength/courage"

(Not gender-specific):

kol kavod v'kol g'vurah

קול כבוד וקול גבורה

or "the voice of lovers"

kol y'did v'kol ahuv (two men)

קול ידיד וקול אהוב

kol y'didah v'kol ahuvah (two women)

קול ידידה וקול אהובה

5.

chatan v'kallah / חתן וכלה / groom and bride
is changed to:

rei-im v'ahuvim (male or mixed)

רעים ואהובים

rei-ot v'ahuvot (female)

רעות ואהובות

or "beloved and friend"

dod v'rei-a (two men)

דוד ורע

dodah v'rei-ah (two women)

דוד ורעה

or "one who loves and one who is loved"

ohev v'ahuv (two men)

אוהב ואהוב

ohevet v'ahuvah (two women)

אוהבת ואהובה

Appendix IV

Sample Ketubot

#1⁵⁸. Egalitarian language, gay content and retrospective acknowledgement.

This ketubah locates the ceremony in the context of an on-going relationship and also links this ceremony to the wider work of tikkun olam (repairing the world). It was composed by Rabbi Yoel Kahn and Dan Bellm for their wedding, June 16, 1991.

I. Date

On the [] day of the week [name weekly portion], the [] day of [Hebrew month] five thousand seven hundred and [Hebrew year] years since the creation of the world as we reckon time here in [location], corresponding to the [] day of [month] nineteen hundred and [year].

II. Names

_____,
son of _____,
said to _____,

_____,
son of _____,
said to _____,

III. Traditional formula/IV. Modern/Personal Statement

I betroth you to me forever,
heart

I betroth you to me in righteousness
and justice, in love and compassion

I betroth you to me in everlasting faithfulness

Set me as a seal upon your

like the seal upon your hand
for love is stronger than death
it is the flame of God.

I will cherish you, honor you, uphold and sustain you in all truth and sincerity, as I have strived to do throughout our first ten years together.

Therefore have I said to you: By this ring are you consecrated unto me in the spirit of our people, before God and our community.

We renew our pledge today to maintain a household dedicated to celebrating and sanctifying our Jewish heritage and the beauty of creation; to recognize and honor

⁵⁸ "Sample Ketubah Texts" by Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn, in Kiddushin: Union Ceremonies for Lesbian and Gay Jews. February 1990, pg 42.

the divine image in ourselves, each other and all people; and to work as a family and as a part of our community towards *tikkun olam*, the repair of the world.

IV. Affirmation and closing

On this day of celebration, we look forward to a time when all who are in exile can return and all who are hiding shall be free. This *ketubah* has been witnessed and signed. It is valid and binding.

#2⁵⁹- No Hebrew, egalitarian language, retrospective acknowledgement, no gay-specific content, but is none the less implied by the language.

*Be it announced to all those persons of good will who
Are open to the glorious potential and variety of existence,
That on this very day, the day of ,
in the town of and the State of ,
and in the presence of those who are accepting, understanding and supportive,
and
did hereby declare themselves to be married each to the other in accordance with the
dictates of their integrity and the approbation of those who truly love them.
Furthermore, be it avowed that and have
based their union upon the foundations of affection, attachment and devotion, and that
and have found within themselves because of
their relationship, a deep sense of gratification, benevolence and completion. How
magnificent it is for two human beings to touch each other's life and to have a mutual
enhancement of pleasure without a sacrifice of selfhood.
Furthermore, be it unequivocally proclaimed that and
Delight in each other's existence, and shall earnestly strive to know each other on an
increasingly profound level.*

*May they always clasp each other with an unreserved empathy, and kiss
each other with an unconditional commitment.
May they always be a safe repository for each other's secrets, and an emotional support
of each other's horizons.
May they always share an unembarrassed intimacy in which their rainbows can be
lovingly and gently renewed, and their dreams can find fulfillment.*

*Accordingly, let it be promulgated to all those that will hear, that
and
have pledged to each other an exclusivity called marriage, and have embraced as
friends, as lovers, and as unwavering companions.*

.....
⁵⁹ Prepared by Al Landers, Edison, New Jersey

Freely choosing and freely chosen individuals who comprehend that a genuine Garden of Eden is not gifted by God but, rather, is planted by Humanity.

Witness

Witness

Affiancer

#3⁶⁰-Commitment Ketubah Text (feminine)

On the ____ day of the week, the ____ day of the month of ____, in the year ____, which corresponds to the ____ day of the month of ____, in the year ____, in ____, ____, daughter of ____, and ____, daughter of ____, entered into a mutual covenant as equal partners before God and these witnesses and said each to the other: "I betroth you to me forever. I betroth you to me in everlasting faithfulness. In the spirit of Jewish tradition, I will be your loving friend as you are mine. Set me as a seal upon your heart, like the seal upon your hand, for love is stronger than death. And I will cherish you, honor you, uphold and sustain you in all truth and sincerity. I will respect you and the divine image within you. I take you to be mine in love and tenderness. May my love for you last forever. May we be consecrated, one to the other, by these rings. Let our hearts be united in faith and hope. May our hearts beat as one in times of gladness as in times of sadness. Let our home be built on Torah and loving-kindness. May our home be rich with wisdom and reverence." This ketubah has been witnessed and signed according to the laws and traditions that began with Abraham and Sarah and continued through Moses and the people of Israel. It is valid and binding.

*Bride _____ Bride _____

*Witness _____ Witness _____

*Rabbi _____

*Signature lines may be altered

⁶⁰ http://www.mpartworks.com/commitment_ketubahstudio.htm#7b

Appendix V

Model of a Same-Sex Ceremony

Geoff Fine and Joel Hencken's *Kiddushin* (August 4, 1996)

♪Pre-Processional Music/ Processional: (piano music)

Sher (Chassidic melody)

Ro'eh V'Ro'ah (M. Shelem)

Hanaava Babanot (A.Neeman)

Officiant's (Cantor Jodi Sufrin) opening remarks and charge:

I am delighted to share with you, you families and friends in this most special day in your lives. Each of you brings to this ceremony of commitment, the finest qualities of *menschlekeit*, and we here rejoice in the knowledge that two souls, two compassionate individuals, have become *rei-im ahuvim*, beloved companions. When we met this past spring to prepare for today's ceremony, Joel, you mentioned a wonderful Chassidic story that resonated with you. And I will tell you this story. It's a story about the child of a rabbi who used to go wandering in the woods. At first, his father let him wander, but over time he became concerned. The woods were dangerous and the father worried about what lurked in there. He decided to discuss the matter with his child. One day he took him aside and said, "You know, I have noticed that each day you walk into the woods. I wonder, why do you go there?" The boy answered, "I go there to find God," the boy replied. "That is a very good thing," the father replied. "I am glad you are searching for God. But, my child, don't you know that God is the same everywhere?" "Yes," the boy answered, "but I am not."

This lovely story opens up many possible interpretations. The one that I would like to draw for us here today is this. For many of us, spirituality takes a back seat in our lives. We are passive in its pursuit. And while we may enjoy a good sunset, we often do not actively search to sanctify moments in a manner of speaking, to go out into the world.

It is my sense that you, Geoff and Joel, know, like this little boy, that having found each other you are not the same. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Perhaps what you are experiencing can be described by the poet, George Elliot, when she asked, "What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined together, to strengthen each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness, to be with each other in the silent unspeakable memories." I know that together, life takes on exquisite richness. In the same way that we can be moved by the beauty of a single voice, there's often an indescribable magic when two voices intertwine in harmony. As soul mates, it's no accident that the beauty and harmony of your voices is complemented by the harmony of your spirits. By means of this ceremony, with the hours that went into its creation, by means of the promises that you make to each other before all who are gathered here, you have reached for the gold.

You accept the challenge to become finer individuals than you could ever be by yourselves. As you know very well, that is the essence of this ceremony of commitment which is in Hebrew called *kiddushin*. It means holiness. And the beauty of its concept is

that it attempts to bring together that commonplace realities of life with our very highest ideals. *Kiddushin* means to take the ordinary and lift it up to a higher level. My hope for you is that *kiddushin* not only reawaken the childlike wonder and awe in each of you, but also, that *kiddushin* direct you in the most basic sense, to understand that you have made the commitment to nurture each other, to encourage and praise each other, to be there for each other, and to help each other grow into the highest version that each of you has for yourselves. That is simply what this ceremony is about.

Surrounded by loved ones whose joy and prayers are with you here, you stand at this *chuppah*, symbol of the Jewish home. It is our hope that the love and devotion that has lead you to make this commitment to each other, now lead you to be blessed with a home filled with song, peace, happiness, and love. Amen.

♫*Shehecheyanu*: (traditional melody) sung by everyone, followed by a reading of the English translation by the officiant.

♫*Song of Songs*: (Song Cycle of selected texts composed by Cantor Eliyahu Shhleifer for Geoff and Joel) sung by Geoff and Joel to each other.

Rings:

Geoff, as you place this ring on the finger of your beloved companion, I'd like you to recite after me these words that unite you as *rei-im ahuvim*. "You are consecrated to me, as my partner, in the spirit of the traditions, of Moses and Israel. *Harei ata m'kudash li, k'shutafi l'chayim, b'ruach masoret, Moshe v'Yisrael.*"

And Joel, as you place this ring on Geoff's finger, look at him and say to him these words: "You are consecrated to me, as my partner, in the spirit of the traditions, of Moses and Israel. *Harei ata m'kudash li, k'shutafi l'chayim, b'ruach masoret, Moshe v'Yisrael.*" (the couple kiss and sit).

The officiant invites up various honored guests to share words

Guest #1- (Joel's mom):

Love really is a many splendored thing. Never lose sight of it. Grow together and you will find continued happiness through out your life. (she then reads a special sonnet to the couple)

Edna St. Vincent Millay - Not In A Silver Casket Cool With Pearls

Not in a silver casket cool with pearls
Or rich with red corundum or with blue,
Locked, and the key withheld, as other men
Have given their loves, I give my love to you;
Not in a lovers'-knot, not in a ring
Worked in such fashion, and the legend plain—
Semper fidelis, where a secret spring
Kennels a drop of mischief for the brain:
Love in the open hand, no thing but that,
Ungemmed, unhidden, wishing not to hurt,
As one should bring you cowslips in a hat
Swung from the hand, or apples in her skirt,
I bring you, calling out as children do:

"Look what I have!—And these are all for you."

Guest #2-

Geoffrey and Joel, today you are surrounded by your family and friends. We are here to offer you our love and support during this wonderful day in your lives, and share in your happiness on this day. Everyone's hope here today is that your love for each other will continue to grow and enrich your lives. As your sister who loves you, I hope you will love one another always. May your time together on this earth bring you a good life together and a long, lasting, healthy, and loving relationship.

Sheva B'rachot: The Seven blessings are all in praise of God's gifts. They discuss:

- 1) The wine as a symbol of the rejoicing couple
- 2) The creation of the world
- 3) The creation of humankind
- 4) People in God's image (Creation of wisdom, intelligence, free will)
- 5) Joy for the couple to be shared by all of Jerusalem
- 6) Happiness for the couple who are likened to Adam and Eve in Eden
- 7) Ten blessings of joy relating to the couple

Priestly Benediction

Breaking of the Glass: (broken by both individuals)

♪Recessional: Siman Tov U'mazel Tov

Appendix VI

A Service of Jewish Healing

Hava Nashira

Thursday, June 2, 2005/ 25 Iyyar 5765

(compiled by Debbie Friedman and Merri Lovinger Arian)

♪NIGGUN

Lamdeini

Lamdeini elohai bareich v'hitpalel

Lameid et sifiotai

B'racha v'shir hallel

Teach me, O God, a blessing, a prayer
Teach my lips a blessing, a song of praise!

* * *

♪THE TIME IS NOW

The time is now
We've gathered 'round
So bring all your gifts
And bring all your burdens with you

No need to hide
Arms open wide
We gather as one
To make a *makom kadosh*

We come to tell
We come to hear
We come to teach, to learn
We come to grow,
And so we say

The time is now
Sing to the One
God's presence is here,
Sh'chinah You will dwell among us

We'll make this space
A holy place
So separate, so whole,
Rejoice every soul
Who enters here.

Each of us enters the act of praying from a different path. Some of us walk in defiantly, alienated from tradition, text, a language that never seemed to be about us. Some of us creep in with our heads bowed, uncertain, insecure, ignorant of tradition, a text, a language we don't understand. Some of us breeze in, comfortable, with warm nostalgic memories of a grandfather whose tallis kept us warm.

Today we want to be together on the same path—perhaps a new path. In the course of this service, we will explore the liturgy itself, searching for its power to heal, to comfort, to nourish, and to sustain us. Some of us have davened a thousand times and never felt the power of these words to heal. Some of us have prayed these words in our hearts, never knowing they were part of Jewish prayer. But the rabbis in their wisdom ask us to pray every day, not because the words change, but because we change, and each time bring the language into new focus. We begin the daily morning service in gratitude for our bodies and the intricate functions they perform, and with an awareness of how hard it is for us when our bodies fail us. We begin the evening service with an awareness of the complexity of the lived-out day, when we missed the mark, missed the point, missed one another, missed the beat. And we ask O God, extend your help—answer us when we call.

* * *

My help is in the mountain
Where I take myself to heal
The earthly wounds
That people give me

*I find a rock with a sun on it
And a stream where the water runs gentle
And the trees which one by one give me company*

So I must stay for a long time
Until I have grown from the rock
And the stream is running through me
And I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.

*Then I know that nothing touches me
Nor makes me run away
My help is in the mountain
That I take away with me.*

Earth cure me. Earth receive my woe.
Rock strengthen me. Rock receive my weakness.
Rain wash my sadness away. Rain receive my doubt.
Sun make sweet my song. Sun receive the anger from my heart.

* * *

ESHA EINAI

*Esa Einai el heharim
Mei-ayin yavo ezri*

*Ezri mei'im Adonai
Osei shamayim va-aretz.*

I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where does my help come?
My help will come from Adonai, maker of heaven and earth.

* * *

*There lives a God,
Present in the glow of human hearts,
and in the fact of human love.*

*It is a godly task, not easily accomplished,
to choose what life and blessing we can
even in the presence of illness.*

* * *

We are loved by an unending love.
We are embraced by arms that find us
even when we are hidden from ourselves

*We are supported by hands that uplift us
even in the midst of a fall
We are urged on by eyes that meet us
even when we are too weak for meeting
We are loved by an unending love*

Embraced, touched, soothed, and counseled...
ours are the arms, the fingers, the voices;
ours are the hands, the eyes, the smiles;
We are loved by an unending love

Blessed are You, Beloved One, who loves your people Israel.

♫ YOU ARE THE ONE (REB NACHMAN'S PRAYER)

You are the One, for this I pray,
That I may have the strength to be alone.
To see the world, to stand among the trees,
And all the living things
That I may stand alone and offer prayers and talk to You;
You are the One to whom I do belong,
And I'll sing my soul,
I'll sing my soul to You
And give You all that's in my heart.

May all the foliage of the field,
All grasses, trees and plants,
Awaken at my coming, this I pray,
And send their life into my words of prayer.
So that my speech, my thoughts and my prayers will be made whole,
And we know that everything is one,
Because we know that everything is You.

You are the One, for this I pray,
I ask you, God, to hear my words
That pour out from my heart; I stand before You;
I, like water, lift my hands to You in prayer.
And grant me strength, and grant me strength to stand alone.
You are the One to whom I do belong.
And I'll sing my soul, I'll sing my soul to You
And give You all that's in my heart.

You are the One, for this I pray,
And I'll sing my soul to You.

* * *

When Miriam was sick her brother Moses prayed
El na r'fa na lah
"O God, heal her please!"
We pray for those who are now ill.
Source of life, we pray:

Heal them

We pray for those who are affected by illness, anguish and pain.

Heal them.

Grant courage to those whose bodies and minds,
holy proof of Your creative goodness
are violated by illness and pain.

Encourage them

Grant strength and compassion to families and friends
who offer love and support
and who help to overcome despair.

Strengthen them.

Grant wisdom to those who probe
the deepest complexities of Your world,
as they labor in the search for treatment and cures.

Inspire them.

Grant clarity of vision and strength of purpose
to the leaders of our institutions and our government.
May they be moved by justice and compassion
to sustain those who seek out cures.

Guide them.

Lead us to understand that whenever death comes,
we must accept it.
But before it comes,
We must make our life as worthy as we can, as long as it is lived.

Bless and Heal us all.

* * *

♪ HEAL US NOW

R'faeinu Adonai v'neirafei
Hoshi'einu v'nivashi'ah
Eil karov l'chol korav
Ach karov lirei'av yish'o

We pray for healing of the body
We pray for healing of the soul
For strength of flesh and mind and spirit
We pray to once again be whole
Eil na r'fa na

Oh please, heal us now
R'fu'at hanefesh ur'fu'at haguf
R'fuah sh'leimah
Heal us now (2x)

Hoshi'ah et amechcha
Uvareich et nachaltecha
Ur'eim v'nas'eim ad-ha'olam
Mi shebeirach avoteinu
Mi shebeirach imoteinu
Ana, Adonai, hoshi'ah na

We pray for healing of our people
We pray for healing of the land
And peace for every race and nation
Ev'ry child, ev'ry woman, ev'ry man.

Heal us, Adonai, and we will be healed. Save us and we will be saved. God is close to all who cry out. God's salvation is close to all who are in awe. Please heal us now, healing of soul and healing of body, complete healing. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Tend them and exalt them for ever. The One who blessed our ancestors, please, Adonai, save us.

* * *

I call upon the Source of Life,
the Power within and without,
the Power that makes for
Being and Nothingness,
joy and pain,
suffering and delight.

*I call upon You
To calm my fearful soul
to open me to the Wonder of Truth
the transience of all things*

In Wonder was I conceived
and in Wonder have I found my being.
Thus I call upon You,
the Source of Wonder,
to open my heart to healing.

*In You I discover the mystery of Life
And the necessity of Death*

In You I see all things and their opposites
Not as warring parties
but as partners in a dance
whose rhythm is none other than
the beating of my own soul.

*Denial may come,
but so too will acceptance.
Anger may come,
but so too will calm.*

I have bargained with my fears
and have found them unwilling to compromise.
So now I turn to you,
to the Wonder that is my True Nature.

*I abandon the false notions of separateness
and embrace the Unity
that is my true Reality.*

I surrender
not to the inevitable
but to Surprise,
for it is the impossible
that is life's most precious gift.

*My tears will pass
and so will my laughter,
But I will not be silenced,
for I will sing the praise of Wonder
through sickness and health;
knowing that in the end,
this too shall pass.*

* * *

♫LAMDEINI

*Lamdeini elohai bareich v'hit'palel
Lameid et sif'totai
B'racha v'shir halel.*

Teach me O God a blessing, prayer
On the mystery of a withered leaf,
On ripened fruit so fair
On the freedom to see,
To sense
To breath
To know
To hope
To despair.
Teach my lips a blessing, a hymn of praise,
As each morning and night You renew Your days,
Lest my days be as the Ones before,
Lest routine set my ways.

* * *

We anticipate a day of whose coming we are certain, though its date and time we do not know.

We anticipate a day on which questions will beget answers rather than doubt in the very worth of asking; a day on which memory will refuel hope rather than certify the cause for despair.

We anticipate a day on which each will be fulfilled with his and her oneness and rejoice in the oneness of the other; a day on which each one will feel completed by the wholeness of the other.

We anticipate a day when need will be the handmaiden of mutuality – the mutuality of friends, lovers, parents and children, and even neighbors prone to enmity.

We anticipate a day so improbable that only a remembered promise – however dimly remembered – would dare us to hope for its coming; a day that has not yet been; a day so filled with possibility that we cannot merely await it.

We anticipate that day that beckons us as would a distant lover, and makes us restless with its anticipation.

We anticipate that day and know that its coming will be hastened only by the work of our minds, hearts and hands...indeed it will come only because we anticipate it.

And there are days: when love is intense when a child is born, when health and completeness are restored, when the balm of a spring day smoothes away the last scaly flakes of winterkill, when we are reassured in some small measure that the day we anticipate – our anticipation day – will surely come.

We anticipate that day with a yearning so intense that it transforms all our exertions into plans for hastening its arrival.

All our restlessness, born of anticipation, makes silence unbearable.

* * *

♩ 23RD PSALM

Adonai roi, lo echsar.
Binot deshe yarbitzeini, al mei m'nuchot y'nahaleini.
Nafshi y'shoveiv, yancheini v'maglei tzedek l'ma-an sh'mo.
Gam ki eilech b'gei tzalmavet lo ira ra, ki ata imadi,
Shivt'cha umishantecha, heima y'nachamuni.
Ta-aroach ;'fanai shulchan neged tzor'rai,
Dishanta vashemen roshi, kosi r'vaya.
Ach tov vachessed yird'funi kol y'mei chayai,
V'shavti b'veit Adonai l'orech yamim.

*Adonai is my shepherd, I lack nothing
God makes me lie down in green pastures;
leads me to water in places of repose; renews my life;
guides me in right paths as befits God's name.
Though I walk through the valley of deepest darkness.
I fear no harm, for You are with me.
You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; my drink is abundant.
Only goodness and steadfast love
shall pursue me all the days of my life.
And I shall dwell in the house of
Adonai for many long years.*

* * *

JAL TASTEIR (DON'T HIDE YOUR FACE)

Don't hide Your face from me;
I'm asking for Your help.
I call to You;
Please hear my prayers, O God.
If You would answer me
As I have called to You,
Please heal me now.
Don't hide Your face from me.

* * *

Some years ago I went to Avery Fisher Hall in New York City and saw the great Israeli violinist Itzhak Perlman. As you know, Itzhak Perlman suffered polio as a child and has braces on both legs and walks with two crutches. To see him cross the stage is both painful and slow, but somehow heroic and majestic at the same time. He came out center stage, he took his seat and reaching down he unhinged the clasps that were on his leg and, tucking one leg back and extending the other, he took his violin in hand, laying his crutches on the floor. He began to play. No sooner had he started playing than one of those marvelous strings broke on his instrument. We heard it. It went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what it meant. There was equally no mistaking what he had to do.

We started applauding softly, finally louder and louder waiting for him to leave the stage. He did not leave the stage, but rather signaled the maestro and they started out the symphony...He played with such power, with such intensity, with three strings. Now I know that it is impossible to do. He was modulating, he was changing, he was recomposing the piece in his head, and on one or two occasions it even looked as if he detuned the strings to get different sounds or tuned them upward to get other sounds. I do not know. All I know is that when he finished, there was extraordinary, awesome, awe-inspiring applause and accolades from the audience. We were on our feet screaming and yelling and doing everything we could do to say how much we appreciated what he had done. He quieted us down and gave us these words...He said, "It is my genius as well as my heart to make music with what remains."

* * *

MI SHEBEIRACH

Mi Shebeirach avoteinu
M'kor habracha l'imoteinu

May the source of strength
Who blessed the ones before us
Help us find the courage
To make our lives a blessing
And let us say, Amen

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor habracha l'avoteinu

Bless those in need of healing
With r'fuah sh'leimah
The renewal of body
The renewal of spirit
And let us say, Amen.

* * *

Who made the world?
Who made the swan and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass.
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I don't know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

* * *

♫NIGGUN

* * *

♫ADON OLAM

Adon olam, asher malach
B'terem kol y'tzir niv'ra,
L'eit na'asah v'chef'tzo kol,
Azay melech sh'mo nik'ra.

V'acharai kich'lot hakol
L'vado yim'loch nora,
V'hu haya, v'hu hoveh,
V'hu yih'yeh b'tif'ara.

V'hu echad, v'ein sheini
L'ham'shil lo, l'hach'birah,
B'li rei'shit, b'li tach'lit,
V'lo ha'oz v'hamis'rah.

V'hu eili, v'chay go'ali
V'tzur che'vli b'eit tzarah,
V'hu nisi umanos li,
M'nat kosi b'yom ek'ra.

*Into Your hand I commit my soul
—When I'm asleep and when I'm awake—
And with my soul, by body too
God is with me, I shall not fear.*

B'yado af'kid ruchi
B'eit ishan v'a'irah,
V'im-ruchi g'viyati:
Adonai li v'lo ira.

* * * * *

SOURCES FOR HEALING SERVICE

Readings:

Each of us enters...(p.2) by Rabbi Joy Levitt, adapted with permission of the author

My help is in the mountain... (p.2) by Nancy Wood

There lives a God...(p.3) from *Gates of Prayer*

We are loved by an unending love... (p. 3) by Rami M. Shapiro

When Miriam was sick...(p.5) from the liturgy of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

I call upon the Source of Life...(p.7) from the *Chavurat Shalom Prayerbook*

We anticipate a day...(p.11) by a UJA-Federation Woman's Division member from Kansas City

Who made the world...(p.12) by Mary Oliver

Musical Selections:

Lamdeini- words; Leah Goldberg; music: Benjie Ellen Schiller

The Time is Now- Debbie Friedman and Tamara Ruth Cohen

Esa Einai- words: Psalm 121; music: Shlomo Carlebach

You Are the One (Reb Nachman's Prayer)- words: Debbie Friedman, based on a prayer of Reb Nachman of Breslov; music: Debbie Friedman

Heal Us Now- words: based on Liturgy and Psalms; music: Leon Sher

23rd Psalm- words: Psalm 23; music: traditional

Al Tasteir (Don't Hide Your Face)- words, based on Psalm 27:9; music: Debbie Friedman

Mi Shebeirach- words: Debbie Friedman and Drora Setel; music: Debbie Friedman

Adon Olam- words: Liturgy; music: from Amsterdam Synagogue, adapted by James Goodman

Appendix VII

Resources

Music:

Transcontinental Music Publications:

Kol Dodi: Jewish Music For Weddings (book and 2-CD set)

R'fuah Sh'leimah: Jewish Music for Healing (Synagogue 2000)

Bless Our Years (Rachelle Nelson)

Solo Collection, vol. II (Simon Sargon)

Solo Collection, vol. I, II, III (Ben Steinberg)

Solo Collection (Bonia Shur)

Marriage Service (Morris Barash)

Sheva B'rachot (Aminadav Aloni)

Music for a Jewish American Wedding (Randolph Dreyfuss)

Songs of Godlove, vol. I & 2 (Jack Gottlieb)

***not from TMP:**

Music for the Jewish Wedding (Reuven Kosaloff)

Jewish Songbook (A.Z. Idelsohn)

Cantor's Manual (Cantor's Assemebly)

Sheva B'rachot (Andrea Jill Higgins- commissioned for a gay ceremony by Cantor Don Croll; not published)

Sheve B'rachot (Chayim Feifel- not published)

Song of Songs (Cantor Eliyahu Shleifer- composed for a gay ceremony; not published)

Ketubot (art and texts):

www.customketubah.com

www.judiacconnection.com

www.ketubah.com

www.ketubahworks.com

Other helpful resources:

Alpert, Rebecca. "Religious Liberty, Same-Sex Marriage, and the Case of Reconstructionist Judaism." 68,1 pg 33/Fall 2003 (The Reconstructionist Journal)

CCAR Journal "On Homosexual Marriage" [Special Issue] (Winter 1998)

"Chicks in White Satin," an Academy award nominee for Best Short Documentary, is a 25 minute video about two Jewish women, their ceremony and their families. It is available through the director, Elaine Holliman, at (310)396-5890.

Dorf, Elliot. "Medical and Moral Reasons to Change the Law." USCJ Review, Spring 2004. www.uscj.org/COUNTERPOINTDorff6332.html

www.ncjh.org: The National Center for Jewish Healing helps communities meet the spiritual needs of Jews living with illness, loss, and significant life challenges.

www.ritualwell.org : Ritualwell is a source for innovative, contemporary Jewish ritual. On ritualwell you can browse thousands of rituals, listen to music, download a ritual, or cut and paste your own.

www.shalomctr.org: Provides resources for healing, and gay and lesbian issues.

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Geoff Fine and Joel Hencken's Kiddushin. August 4, 1996.

Kiddush Ahavah Ceremony for N and J. Rosh Chodesh Tevet 5752, 7th night of Channukah. Submitted by Helaine Ettinger, 1991.

The Wedding of Amy Marie Wilkenson and Rachel Leah Joseph. 23 Adar II 5765/ April 3, 2005.

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Wiener, Nancy, *Beyond Breaking the Glass: A Spiritual Guide to Your Jewish Wedding*. NY: CCAR Press, 2001.

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A Havdalah of Healing and Hope. Compiled by Robin and Shira Nafshi, Temple Sholom, Fanwood, NJ.

A Healing Service. Central Synagogue, NY, NY.

Never Alone: A Ceremony for Hope and Healing. Compiled by Shira Nafshi

R'faeinu- Heal Us: A Circle of Healing, Wholeness, and Renewal. Fleischer Jewish Healing Center, St. Louis, MS.

Tefillat Refuat Ha-nefesh: A Havdalah Service for the Healing of the Soul. Temple Anshe Hesed, Erie, PA.,

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<http://www.jewishhealing.org/about.html>

http://www.jhom.com/hebrew/memory_h.htm (Jewish Heritage Online Magazine)

www.ritualwell.org

www.shalomctr.org

<http://www.torahfromterror.com>