

Rainbow Torah Text Packet

Pick one (or more!) texts to explore with your *hevruta* (partner) and use the questions below to guide your conversation.

Understanding the Text

- What does this text mean in your own words?
- What is something you like about this text?
- What is something you find challenging or that you dislike about this text?
- What is a question or something you don't understand about this text?

Applying the Text

- What does this text have to do with LGBTQ identity?
- How does this text connect to life at your camp?
- How can this text help you think about ways you can do a better job of celebrating LGBTQ identity at camp?

1. The First Person

Genesis 1:26

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרַדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה
וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

Genesis Rabbah 8:1

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ (בראשית א, כו) ... אָמַר רַבִּי יִרְמְיָה בֶן אֶלְעָזָר
בְּשַׁעַר שְׁבָרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן, אֲנִדְרוּגִינוּס בְּרָאוּ, הִדָּא הוּא דְכָתִיב (בראשית
א..ה, ב): זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בְרָאָם

God said: Let us make Adam in our image, in our shape... R' Yirmiyah ben Elazar said, when the Eternal created Adam initially, they were created as both genders; thus it is written, "male and female did God create them..."

2. The Rainbow

Genesis 9:12-16

God further said, "This is the sign that I set for the covenant between Me and you, and every living creature with you, for all ages to come. I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature among all flesh, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures, all flesh that is on earth.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹקִים זֹאת אֹתֵי הַבְּרִית
אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ
תִּיה אֲשֶׁר אֲתַכֶּם לְדֹרֹת עוֹלָם:
אֶת־קִשְׁתִּי נִתְּתִי בְּעָנָן וְהִיְתָה לְאוֹת
בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ: וְהִיְהִי בְּעָנְנֵי עָנָן
עַל־הָאָרֶץ וּנְרָאָתָה הַקִּשְׁתַּת בְּעָנָן:
זָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם
וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ תִּיה בְּכָל־בֶּשֶׂר וְלֹא־יְהִי־הָ
עוֹד הַמַּיִם לְמַבּוּל לְשַׁחַת כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר:
וְהִיְתָה הַקִּשְׁתַּת בְּעָנָן וּרְאִיתֶיהָ לְזִכָּר
בְּרִית עוֹלָם בֵּין אֱ-לֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ
תִּיה בְּכָל־בֶּשֶׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

Blessing for Seeing A Rainbow: Shulchan Arukh Orakh Chayim 229:1

הרואה הקשת אומר ברוך אתה ה' אמ"ה זוכר הברית נאמן בבריתו וקיים במאמרו

One who sees the rainbow says, [the blessing] "Blessed are you, God, Sovereign of the Universe, who remembers the covenant, who is faithful to God's covenant, and who fulfills God's word."

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh haolam, zokher habrit vene'eman bivrito vekayam bema'amaro.

3. Ethics in Jewish Law

Babylonian Talmud Tractate Berakhot 19b

תא שמע גדול כבוד הבריות שדוחה [את] לא תעשה שבתורה

Come and hear: Greater is human dignity, as it overrides [even] a prohibition in the Torah.

(Leviticus 18:22- A Torah Prohibition)

(וְאֶת־זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכַּבֵּי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הוּא)

(Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence.)

4. The Relationship between David and Jonathan

(Jonathan, son of King Saul, and David, a young shepherd, became close when David became an advisor to King Saul in the years following his victory over the Philistines and the giant Goliath. The verses below are selections of references to their relationship.)

<p>I Samuel 18:1-4 When [David] finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan's soul became bound up with the soul of David; Jonathan loved David as himself. Saul took him [into his service] that day and would not let him return to his father's house.— Jonathan and David made a pact, because [Jonathan] loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the cloak and tunic he was wearing and gave them to David, together with his sword, bow, and belt.</p>	<p>וַיְהִי כְּכַלְתּוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֶל־שָׁאוּל וַנִּפְּשׂ יְהוֹנָתָן נִקְשְׁרָה בְּנַפְשׁ דָּוִד וַיֵּאָהֲבוּ [וַיֵּאָהֲבֵהוּ] יְהוֹנָתָן כְּנַפְשׁוֹ: וַיִּקַּח הוּא שָׁאוּל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְלֹא נָתַן לְשׁוֹב בַּיִת אָבִיו: וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹנָתָן וְדָוִד בְּרִית בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתוֹ כְּנַפְשׁוֹ: וַיִּתְּפֹשֶׁט יְהוֹנָתָן אֶת־הַמַּעֲלִיל אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ לְדָוִד וּמִדָּוִד וְעַד־חַרְבּוֹ וְעַד־קִשְׁתּוֹ וְעַד־חַגְרֹו:</p>
<p>I Samuel 19:1 Saul urged his son Jonathan and all his courtiers to kill David. But Saul's son Jonathan was very fond of David,</p>	<p>וַיְדַבֵּר שָׁאוּל אֶל־יוֹנָתָן בְּנֵוֹ וְאֶל־כָּל־עַבְדָּיו לְהַמִּית אֶת־דָּוִד וַיְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן־שָׁאוּל חָפֵץ בְּדָוִד מְאֹד:</p>
<p>I Samuel 20:17 Jonathan, out of his love for David, adjured him again, for he loved him as himself.</p>	<p>וַיֹּסֵף יְהוֹנָתָן לְהַשְׁבִּיעַ אֶת־דָּוִד בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתוֹ כִּי־אַהֲבַת נַפְשׁוֹ אֵהָבּוּ: (ס)</p>

5. Metaphors In Time

Genesis 1:5

וַיִּקְרָא אֱ־לַקִּים | לְאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד
God called the light Day and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening,
and there was morning, the first day.

Pirkey Avot 5:6

עֲשֶׂה דְבָרִים נְבָרָאוּ בְּעֶרֶב שְׁבֵת בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת, וְאֵלוֹ הוּא, פִּי הָאָרֶץ, וּפִי הַבְּאֵר, וּפִי הָאֵתוֹן,
:וְהַקֶּשֶׁת, וְהַמָּוֶן, וְהַמַּטָּה, וְהַשְּׁמִיר, וְהַכֶּתֵב, וְהַמְּכַתֵּב, וְהַלּוּחֹת

Ten things were created on the eve of the [first] Shabbat at twilight. And they are: The mouth of the earth [that swallowed Korach and his followers]; and the mouth of the well

[that gave the Israelites water in the wilderness]; and the mouth of the donkey [that spoke to Bilaam]; and the rainbow [after the Flood], the manna [that fed the Israelites in the wilderness], the staff [of Moses], the shamir [worm], the letters, the writing, and the tablets [all of the Ten Commandments].

6. Gender Categories in Jewish Law

Mishnah Bikkurim 4:1

אֲנֶדְרוּגִינוֹס יֵשׁ בּוֹ דְרָכִים שֶׁהָאֲנָשִׁים, וְיֵשׁ בּוֹ דְרָכִים שֶׁהָלְנָשִׁים, וְיֵשׁ בּוֹ דְרָכִים שֶׁהָאֲנָשִׁים
וְיֵשׁ בּוֹ דְרָכִים אֵינּוּ שֶׁהָאֲנָשִׁים וְלֹא לְנָשִׁים

The *androgynous* person is in some ways like men, and in other ways like women. In other ways they are like men and women, and in others they are like neither men nor women.

Several gender categories recognized by the rabbis in legal texts:

Zachar: This term is derived from the word for a pointy sword and refers to a phallus. It is usually translated as “male” in English.

Nekevah: This term is derived from the word for a crevice and probably refers to a vaginal opening. It is usually translated as “female” in English.

Androgynos: A person who has both “male” and “female” sexual characteristics. In the Talmud, the androgynos is understood as someone who both has a penis as well as some female sex traits. 149 references in Mishna and Talmud (1st – 8th Centuries CE); 350 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes (2nd – 16th Centuries CE).

Tumtum: A person whose sexual characteristics are indeterminate or obscured. In the Talmud the tumtum has indeterminate genitals. 181 references in Mishna and Talmud; 335 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.

Ay’lonit: A person who is identified as “female” at birth but develops “male” characteristics at puberty and is infertile. 80 references in Mishna and Talmud; 40 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.

Saris: A person who is identified as “male” at birth but develops “female” characteristics at puberty or later. A saris is considered male, but has no penis or a very small penis. A saris can be “naturally” a saris (saris hamah), or become one through human intervention (saris adam). His status is also known as a eunuch. 156 references in mishna and Talmud; 379 in classical midrash and Jewish law codes.

(definitions from: <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/gender-diversity-in-jewish-sacred-texts/>)