

SOURCE 1) Rabbi Rachel Timoner, "On the Jewish People"

pp. 5-9 in *Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity* (New York: CCAR, 2017), 7-8

Rabbi Rachel Timoner is a Reform rabbi and the Senior Rabbi at Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn. She cites Tal Becker, a Vice President of the Shalom Hartman Institute, lawyer, and educator.

Any way you look at it, the Jewish people has a unique vocation among all nations. This does not make us superior. It only makes us singular. (The same can be said of every other tribe and nation on earth.) No other people shares our ancestry, our history, our Torah, our culture, our traditions, or our obligation.

You do not have to believe in God or Torah to believe in the unique vocation of the Jews. You only have to believe in history. Whether because, as the Torah teaches, God lifted us out of slavery in order to form an eternal covenant with our people; or because we witnessed, perished in, and survived the Holocaust; or because of a myriad of other defining moments in our story, the Jewish people is unlike any other. And we have a specific job to do.

We are here to remind the human race that the world we live in is not good enough, that human dignity, justice, and peace are possible on earth, and that we are needed to transform the world that is into the world that should be. As Tal Becker of the Shalom Institute wrote, "The Biblical imperative of being 'a kingdom of priests and a holy people' (Exodus 19:6) compels you not only to ask how can I be better tomorrow than I was today, but also to believe that constant improvement is possible" (Becker, "iEngage: How to Be an Optimist in the Middle East").

The prophets describe a messianic age when there will be dignity for the poor and justice for the oppressed (Isaiah 11:4), an end to all war among nations (Isaiah 2:4), harmony with nature (Isaiah 4:2), and an utter lack of fear (Micah 4:4).

I believe that human beings are capable of continual improvement and that the messianic age will be its result. If that day is guaranteed through God's will, we are needed as God's partners to make it real. If that is not guaranteed by God, well then, it depends on us. Either way, I agree with Franz Kafka, who wrote: "The Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary" (*Parables and Paradoxes*, 81).

SOURCE 2) Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, excerpt from *To Life!*

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner, *To Life!* (New York: Grand Central, 1993), 10-11

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner (1935-2023) was an American rabbi, author, and lecturer. He wrote the famous book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, as well as this book, *To Life! A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking*.

... Judaism begins not with an idea but with a community, the great-great-grandchildren of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, going through the experience of Egyptian slavery and miraculous liberation from slavery. Out of that shared experience and the subsequent encounter with God and Mount Sinai, we shaped a religion-- holy days and rituals to celebrate the formative events of our history, prayers and Scriptures to spell out how we understand our relationship to God. But through it all, it is the participation in the community that defines us as Jews; the creeds and rituals are secondary. ...

SOURCE 3) Exodus 14:21-23, 26-31

From the second book of the Torah, Exodus recounts the start of the Israelites as a people: slavery in and redemption from Egypt, revelation at Sinai, and the building of the wilderness Tabernacle.

(21) Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the Eternal drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, (22) and the Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. (23) The Egyptians came in pursuit after them into the sea, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and riders. ...

(26) Then the Eternal said to Moses, "Hold out your arm over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians and upon their chariots and upon their riders." (27) Moses held out his arm over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal state, and the Egyptians fled at its approach. But the Eternal hurled the Egyptians into the sea. (28) The waters turned back and covered the chariots and the riders—Pharaoh's entire army that followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. (29) But the Israelites had marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. (30) Thus the Eternal delivered Israel that day from the Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea. (31) And when Israel saw the wondrous power which the Eternal had wielded against the Egyptians, the people feared the Eternal; they had faith in the Eternal and in God's servant Moses.

(כא) וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּזְלַח יְהוָה אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֲזָה כָּל־לַיְלָה וַיַּחַד הַיָּם לְחֻבָּהּ הַלֵּילָה נִגְשָׁם בְּגִי' וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם: (כב) וַיָּבֹאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בִּיבָשָׁה וְהַמַּיִם חוֹמָה מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם: (כג) לָהֶם וַיָּבֹאוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם כָּל נִיִּרְדָּפוֹ מִצְרַיִם אֶל־תּוֹךְ סוּס פָּרְעֹה רֶכֶב וּפָרָשָׁיו הַיָּם: ...

(כו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה נָטָה אֶת־עַלְיֵהֶם וַיִּשְׁבּוּ הַמַּיִם עַל־מִצְרַיִם יָדָה וְעַל־פָּרָשָׁיו: (כז) וַיֹּט מֹשֶׁה עַל־רֶכֶב הַיָּם לַפָּנוֹת אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁבּ בִּקְרָ לְאַתְנָזוֹ וּמִצְרַיִם נָסוּ לִקְרָאָתוֹ וַיִּנְעַר יְהוָה אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם: וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת־הָרֶכֶב (כח) וַיִּשְׁבּוּ הַמַּיִם וְאֶת־הַפָּרָשִׁים לְכָל־חֵיל פָּרְעֹה הַבָּאִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם בָּיָם לֹא־נִשְׁאָר בָּהֶם וּבְגִי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִלְכוּ עַד־אַחַד: (כט) לָהֶם חוֹמָה בִּיבָשָׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְהַמַּיִם מִיְּמִינָם וּמִשְׁמָאלָם: (ל) וַיִּזְשַׁע יְהוָה הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם בְּיוֹם אֶת־מִצְרַיִם מָת עַל־נִירָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־שֹׁפֵת הַיָּם: (לא) וַיִּירָא יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם הָעָם אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּאֲמִינוּ בִּיהוָה וַיִּירָאוּ וּבִמֹּשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ:

SOURCE 4) Exodus 19:1-6, 16-17; 20:1-14

From the second book of the Torah, Exodus recounts the start of the Israelites as a people: slavery in and redemption from Egypt, revelation at Sinai, and the building of the wilderness Tabernacle.

(1) On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they entered the wilderness of Sinai. (2) Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front of the mountain, (3) and Moses went up to God. The Eternal called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: (4) 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. (5) Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, (6) but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel." ...

(16) On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. (17) Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain. ...

(1) God spoke all these words, saying: (2) I am the Eternal your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: (3) You shall have no other gods besides Me. (4) You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Eternal your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me. (6) but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep

(א) בחודש השלישי לצאת בני ישראל מארץ מצרים ביום הזה באו מדבר סיני: (ב) ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחננו במדבר ויחננו שם ישראל בגד הקדש: (ג) ומשה עלה אל ה' וה' קרא אליו יהוה מר-ההר לאמר כה תאמר לבית ישראל ואתם ראייתם אשר עשיתי למצרים ואשא אתכם על כנפי נשרים ואבא אתכם אלי: (ה) ועתה אם-שמעו תשמעו בקולי ושמרתם את-בריתי והייתם לי סגולה מקל-העמים כי-לי כלה-ארץ: (ו) ואתם תהיו-לי ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש אלה הדברים אשר תדבר אל-בני ישראל: ...

(טז) ויהי ביום השלישי בהית הפקר ויהי קולת וברקים וענן כבד על-ההר וקול שפר חזק מאד ויחרד כל-העם אשר במחנה: (יז) ויצא משה את-העם לקראת האלהים מן-המחנה וימתצבו בתחתית ההר: ...

(א) וידבר אלהים את כל-הדברים האלה לאמר: {ס} (ב) אנכי יהוה אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים: (ג) לא-יהיה-לך אלהים אחרים על-פני: (ד) לא-תעשה-לך פסל וכל-תמונה אשר בשמים ובעל ואשר בארץ מתחת ואשר במים ואת-האשר תשחנה להם ולא תעבדם כי אנכי יהוה אלהיך אל קנא פקד עון אבות על-בנים על-שלישים ועל-רבעים לשנא: (ו) ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי: {ס} (ז) לא תשא את-שם-יהוה אלהיך לשווא כי

My commandments. (7) You shall not swear falsely by the name of the Eternal your God; for the Eternal will not clear one who swears falsely by God's name. (8) Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. (9) Six days you shall labor and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Eternal your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. (11) For in six days the Eternal made heaven and earth and sea—and all that is in them—and then rested on the seventh day; therefore the Eternal blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. (12) Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land that the Eternal your God is assigning to you. (13) You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (14) You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox or ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

לֹא יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁבַּע אֶת־שְׁמוֹ לִשְׁוֹא: {פ} {ח} זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לִקְדָּשׁוֹ: {ט} שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשָׂה יְיָ כָּל־מְלָאכָתָיו: {י} וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ־וּבִתְךָ עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וּבְהֶמְלֶכְךָ וּגְרֶכְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ: {יא} כִּי שִׁשְׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל־כֵּן בִּרְכוּ יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: {ס} {יב} כִּבְדּוּ אֶת־אֲבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכּוֹן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ: {ס} {יג} לֹא תִרְצָח: {ס} לֹא תִנְאָף: {ס} לֹא תִגְנֹב: {ס} לֹא־תַעֲנֶה בְרַעְיָךְ עַד שִׁקְרָה: {ס} {יד} לֹא תִחְמַד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ {ס} לֹא־תִחְמַד אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעֲיָה וְעַבְדּוֹ וַאֲמָתוֹ וְשׁוֹרְוֹ וְחֲמֹרֹו וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְרַעֲיָךְ:

SOURCE 5) Isaiah 58:5-6

The Book of Isaiah comprises multiple prophets named Isaiah. Here, in Trito-Isaiah from after the return from Exile (after 530s CE), the prophet describes God's ideal worship.

(5) Is such the fast I desire, A day for people to starve their bodies? Is it bowing the head like a bulrush And lying in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call that a fast, A day when God is favorable? (6) No, this is the fast I desire: To unlock fetters of wickedness, And untie the cords of the yoke To let the oppressed go free; To break off every yoke.

{ה} הֲכִזָּה יְהוָה צוֹם אֲבֹתֶיהֶם יוֹם עֲנוּת אֲדָם נִפְשׁוֹ הִלְכָּה כְּאֶגְמוֹן רֹאשׁוֹ וְשָׁק וְאֶפֶר יִצְיַע הִלְזָה תִּקְרָא־צוֹם וַיּוֹם רָצוֹן לַיהוָה: {ו} הֲלֹא זֶה צוֹם אֲבֹתֶיהֶם פִּתַּח סְרָצָבוֹת רָשָׁע הִתָּר אֲגָדוֹת מוֹטָה וְשָׁלַח רְצוּצִים חֲפָשִׁים וְכָל־מוֹטָה תִּנְתְּקוּ:

SOURCE 6) Pirkei Avot 1:1-2

Pirkei Avot, a book of the Mishnah (compiled c. 200 CE), presents some of the earliest rabbinic teachings from c. 100 BCE to 100 CE.

(1) Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great

{א} מֹשֶׁה קִבֶּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וּמִסִּרָּה לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ לַזִּקְנִים, וְהַזִּקְנִים לְנָבִיאִים, וְנָבִיאִים מִסִּרְוָה לְאַנְשֵׁי

Assembly. They said three things: Be patient in [the administration of] justice, raise many disciples and make a fence round the Torah.

כנסת הגדולה. הם אמרו שלשה דברים, הוו מתונים בדין, והעמידו תלמידים הרבה, ונעשו סניג לתורה:

(2) Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly. He used to say: the world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple service, and the practice of acts of piety.

(ב) שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים:

SOURCE 7) Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 13b

The Talmud (compiled c. 500) incorporates the earliest rabbinic writings (c. 100 BCE-200 CE) and later rabbinic commentary (c. 200-500 CE). It is the backbone of rabbinic Judaism. This tractate, *Eruvin*, covers boundaries and other related topics.

Rabbi Abba said that Shmuel said: For three years Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagreed. These said: The *halakha* [law] is in accordance with our opinion, and these said: The *halakha* is in accordance with our opinion. Ultimately, a Divine Voice emerged and proclaimed: Both these and those are the words of the living God. However, the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel.

אמר רבי אבא אמר שמואל: שלש שנים נחלקו בית שמאי ובית הלל, הללו אומרים: הלכה כמותנו, והללו אומרים: הלכה כמותנו. ויצאה בת קול ואמרה: אלו נאלי דברי אלהים חיים הן, והלכה כבית הלל.

The Gemara [Talmud] asks: Since both these and those are the words of the living God, why were Beit Hillel privileged to have the *halakha* established in accordance with their opinion? The reason is that they were agreeable and forbearing, showing restraint when affronted, and when they taught the *halakha* they would teach both their own statements and the statements of Beit Shammai. Moreover, when they formulated their teachings and cited a dispute, they prioritized the statements of Beit Shammai to their own statements, in deference to Beit Shammai.

וכי מאחר נאלו דברי אלהים חיים, מפני מה זכו בית הלל לקבוע הלכה כמותן? מפני שנוחין ועלובין היו, ושונין דברייהו ודברי בית שמאי, ולא עוד אלא שמקדימין דברי בית שמאי לדבריהו.

As in the *mishna* that we learned: In the case of one whose head and most of his body were in the *sukkah* [temporary shelter for the holiday of Sukkot], but his table was in the house, Beit Shammai deem this *sukkah* invalid; and Beit Hillel deem it valid.

כאותה ששנינו: מי שהיה ראשו ורובו בסוכה ושלחנו בתוך הבית, בית שמאי פוסלין ובית הלל מכשירין.

SOURCE 8) Shulkhan Arukh, Orach Chayim 634:4

The *Shulkhan Arukh*, written by Rabbi Joseph Caro in 1563 (with significant commentary by Rabbi Moses Isserles), has become the most widely consulted law code in Judaism.

One whose head and most of his body is inside the *sukkah*, and his table is outside the *sukkah* and he eats as if it he cannot eat in the *sukkah*, even if it is a large *sukkah*--there is a prohibition against this, in case he might be pulled after his table.

מי שהיה ראשו ורובו בסוכה ושולחנו חוץ לסוכה ואכל כאלו לא אכל בסוכה אפי' אם היא סוכה גדולה גזירה שמא ימשך אחר שלחנו:

SOURCE 9) "Pittsburgh Platform," CCAR, 1885 (excerpt)

The "Pittsburgh Platform" was a statement of principles outlined by Reform rabbis in 1885.

3. We recognize in the Mosaic legislation a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine, and today we accept as binding only its moral laws, and maintain only such ceremonies as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject all such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.

4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

SOURCE 10) Salomon Jehuda Leib Rappoport, "Open Rebuke," 1845

Salomon Jehuda Leib Rappoport (1790-1867), aka *Shir*, was the chief rabbi of Prague starting in 1840. While he was a pioneer of the historical study of Judaism and a frequent collaborator with early Reform and Conservative thinkers, he nonetheless held a firm Orthodox view.

In my humble opinion, this should be our answer [to the Reformers]: Our brethren, children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you are demanding from us things that we cannot give you. ... We teachers have been charged to instruct the people according to all that which has been written and transmitted to us for thousands of years. ...

The people of Israel have always followed the Oral Law [the Talmud in addition to the Torah], which gave, and will [continue to] give their religion a new and increasingly life-preserving spirit. The wearing of tzitzit [fringes] and the laying of phylacteries every day, [the observance of] the Sabbath and sacred festivals... [the devotion to] the Torah and prayer and the sanctification of the soul every day... the hope for future redemption-- these are what have renewed, and will always renew, at every time and on every occasion, the spirit of life within our nation. These have been the life of the people and the source of its long life, in former times and forever more. The small sect of reformers will remain with their abbreviated Sabbaths and festivals. Their labor and endeavors on the Sabbath and festivals will be no different from what is on weekdays. They shall exist

without the hope for good times, without the Torah and without feeling. Their life will become like a flat plain and desolate wilderness...

SOURCE 11) Zecharias Frankel, *On Changes in Judaism*, 1845

Zecharias Frankel (1801-1875) attended early Reform Jewish conferences in Germany but soon became disillusioned with their radical turn away from tradition, and thus founded the “positive historical” approach to Judaism, what has today become Conservative Judaism. (Note that his text does not call it “Conservative Judaism” but has been edited that way for clarity.)

... Maintaining the integrity of Judaism simultaneously with progress, this is the essential problem of the present. ...

[Conservative Judaism*] not only stands within the bound of Judaism, but is also filled with real zeal for its preservation and endeavors to hand it over to the descendants and make it the common good of all times. [Conservative Judaism] declares that Judaism must be saved for all times. **It affirms both the divine value and historical basis of Judaism and, therefore, believes that by introducing some changes it may achieve some agreement with the concepts and conditions of the time.**

SOURCE 12) Akiba Joseph Schlesinger, "An Ultra-Orthodox Position" (1864)

Rabbi Akiva Joseph Schlesinger (1837-1922) was one of the active designers of Haredi, or ultra-Orthodox, Judaism.

The wording in [a thirteenth-century Jewish code] is: "You must not follow the ways of the gentiles, neither with respect to their clothing, nor with respect to their customs." **Accordingly, Israel must be separated from the gentiles in clothing, in custom, and in speech. ...**

SOURCE 13) Theodor Herzl, "A Solution of the Jewish Question," 1896

Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist and lawyer, founded the modern concept of political Zionism after an antisemitic incident in France in the late 1800s.

Two phenomena arrest our attention by reason of the consequences with which they are fraught. One, the high culture, the other, the profound barbarism of our day. I have intentionally put this statement in the form of a paradox. By high culture, I mean the marvelous development of all mechanical contrivances for making the forces of nature serve man's purposes. By profound barbarism, I mean antisemitism...

The Jewish Question still exists. It would be foolish to deny it. It exists wherever Jews exist in perceptible numbers. ... This is true in every country, and will remain true even in those most highly civilized...

In countries where we have lived for centuries, we are still cried down as strangers; and often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already made experience of suffering. Yet, in spite of all, we are loyal subjects, loyal as the Huguenots, who were forced to emigrate. If we could only be left in peace....

Let the sovereignty be granted over us a portion of the globe large enough to satisfy the requirements of the nation--the rest we shall manage for ourselves. ... The creation of a new state has in it nothing ridiculous or impossible. We have, in our day, witnessed the process in connection with [other] nations...

SOURCE 14) Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*

Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai* (San Francisco: Harper, 1986), 1

Dr. Judith Plaskow, PhD (b. 1947) was the first Jewish feminist theologian to identify herself as a theologian. Her groundbreaking work, *Standing Again at Sinai*, calls for the inclusion of women's perspectives in a traditionally male-oriented canon.

We cannot redefine Judaism in the present without redefining our past because our present grows out of history. The Jewish need to reconstruct the past in light of the present converges with the feminist need to recover women's history within Judaism. Knowing that women are active members of the Jewish community in the present, we know that we were always part of the community, not simply as objects of male purposes but as subjects and shapers of tradition. To accept androcentric histories as the whole of Jewish history is to enter into a secret collusion with those who would exclude us from full membership in the Jewish community. It is to accept the idea that men were the only significant agents in Jewish history when we would never accept this (still current) account of contemporary Jewish life. **The Jewish community today is a community of women and men, and it has never been otherwise. It is time, therefore, to recover our history as the history of women and men, a task that will both restore our own history to women and provide a fuller Jewish history for the Jewish community as a whole.**

SOURCE 15) David Shneer, "Interpreting the Bible through a Bent Lens"

David Shneer, "Interpreting the Bible through a Bent Lens," pp. 1-8 in *Torah Queeries* (ed. Gregg Drinkwater, Joshua Lesser, and David Shneer; New York: New York University, 2009), 4

Dr. David Shneer, PhD (1972-2020) was a professor of Jewish history at the University of Colorado Boulder and a co-editor of *Torah Queeries*, a commentary on the Torah from LGBTQ+ perspectives.

Feminisms' challenge to Judaism meant women's access not only to Judaism, text, and power but also to the way Judaism was interpreted. A feminist Judaism meant broadening the access points to Judaism. ... [This book] *Torah Queeries*, then, follows a history of textual interpretation that is more than two thousand years old. Reading Torah through a bent lens opens up new insights and allows the text to liberate rather than oppress. ...