![Moving Traditions — Connect. Challenge. Change.]

Gender Neutral Hebrew

In an increasingly nonbinary world, is gendered Hebrew willing to adapt? [abridged]

Renee Ghert-Zand | 9 December 2018 | Times of Israel

Not long ago in Israel, Rabbi Arie Hasit led memorial prayers at a service for a transgender Jew. Among those gathered were many members of the LGBTQ community, some of whom identified as gender nonbinary — neither male nor female. While the American-born Conservative rabbi is generally not at a loss for words in his fluent Hebrew, this time he was.

"It would have been helpful to have had nonbinary language, to make sure I was inclusive of everybody there," said Hasit, who resorted to switching off between the masculine and feminine.

These changes could come from 21-year-old American college student Lior Gross, for whom Hebrew poses a regular, personal challenge. Gross, who identifies as gender nonbinary, attends synagogue regularly, studies traditional texts, and plans on applying to rabbinical school. Yet, Gross (who uses the pronouns they/them/their in English) often feels invisible in the Jewish community, especially when Hebrew is used.[…]

Gross tackled the challenge in cooperation with University of Colorado Boulder Hebrew instructor Eyal Rivlin. Together they investigated nonbinary and queer references in traditional Jewish texts, as well as efforts to make nonbinary Jews feel comfortable in American Jewish communal settings, such as summer camp.

Over the course of the last year, the duo developed a nonbinary Hebrew system, which has been given a test-drive in some of Rivlin's classes. Then they uploaded it to the web in the hopes of disseminating it and drawing feedback. It's totally open source and available for use by anyone interested.

"This is really important to me personally. I felt very left out, unsupported and diminished until we developed this language that can hold me," Gross told The Times of Israel.

According to Israeli Hebrew teacher Tal Janner-Klausner, who identifies as nonbinary, gender queer and trans, this is already happening within the LGBTQ and feminist communities in Israel […] Janner-Klausner isn't worried about sounding odd when speaking nonbinary Hebrew. "It will sound jarring at first, just as modern Hebrew did at first. But we should take a leap of faith and make this a reality," they said.

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Nonbinary Hebrew

For more information, please visit **www.nonbinaryhebrew.com**

Noun Endings

Singular	תַלְמִידֶה
Plural	תַלְמִידִימוֹת

Pronouns

2nd person singular	אַתֶה
2nd person plural	אַתֶמֶן
3rd person singular	הֶא
3rd person plural	הֶמֶן

Construct Chains

Singular	תַלְמִידֶת הַכִּיתָה
Plural	תַלְמִידוֹתֵי הַכִּיתָה

Pronominal Suffixes

Second person singular	ךֶ–
Second person plural	כֶמֶן–
Third person singular, single subject	◌ֶה–
Third person plural, single subject	מֶן–
Third person singular, plural subject	◌ֶיהֶ–
Third person plural, plural subject	◌ֶיהֶמֶן–

Present Tense

שלמים	
Singular	לוֹמֶדֶה
Plural	לוֹמְדִימוֹת
ל״ה	
Singular	עוֹשֶת
Plural	עוֹשִׂימוֹת
ע״ו/ע״י	
Singular	קָמֶה
Plural	קָמִימוֹת

Past tense

שלמים	
Second person singular	לָמַדְתֶה
Second person plural	לָמַדְתֶמֶן
Third person singular	לָמְדֶה
ל״ה	
Second person singular	עָשִׂיתֶה
Second person plural	עֲשִׂיתֶמֶן
Third person singular	עָשְׂתֶה
ע״ו/ע״י	
Second person singular	קַמְתֶה
Second person plural	קַמְתֶמֶן
Second person singular	קָמֶה

שלמים	
Second person singular	תִלְמְדֶה
Third person singular	יִלְמְדֶה
ל״ה	
Second person singular	תֶעֶשֶׂאָה
Third person singular	יַעֲשֶׂאָה
ע״ו/ע״י	
Second person singular	תְקוּמֶה
Third person singular	יָקוּמֶה

Command Form

ל״ה	
Second person singular	עֲשֶׂת
פ״נ	
Second person singular	תְנֶה