

# Repro Shabbat Liturgy and Readings



National Council of Jewish Women is the leading Jewish organization focused on reproductive freedom, including abortion access. Since 1893, we have been fighting for a world where everyone can make their own moral and faith-informed decisions about their bodies, lives, and futures.

Repro Shabbat is timed with *Parshat Mishpatim*, when we read the verses that undergird Judaism's approach to abortion, which is permitted and sometimes even required if the life of the pregnant person is in danger.

We're grateful to you for being part of Repro Shabbat, and we hope you stay in this work for the long haul — either as clergy, through [RabbisforRepro.org](https://RabbisforRepro.org), or as part of the larger Jewish movement for abortion justice, at [JewsforAbortionAccess.org](https://JewsforAbortionAccess.org).

## A Prayer for Repro Shabbat

God of our ancestors — *Elohei Emoteinu v'Avoteinu* —

We affirm that you have created each of us in Your sacred image, endowed with the inherent right to dignity and autonomy.

We ask that you guide us towards a caring and loving community and nation that reveres this dignity in each of us.

We affirm that reproductive freedom — the sacred right to own the personhood of one's own body — is a fundamental part of the just society for which we strive in Your name.

We ask that you endow us with the strength and resolve we need because the path that lies ahead is challenging, and we all need resilience, strength, and courage.

We ask that you protect the most impacted and marginalized among us, because it is they who are most at risk.

We do this work in your name, O God, because we are the compassionate, loving creations of a compassionate, loving, and just God. It is holy, sacred work.

May our country become a place of liberty and justice for all, and may our care for one another include care and respect for each other's right to good and affordable healthcare, including abortion care, and the right to live safely and securely as we each follow our path of conscience and the God we each do or do not believe in.

AMEN.

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## A Prayer for Those Denied Abortion Care

May you be safe. May a canopy of safety and peace, health and care cover you, despite everything you are now forced to endure.

May you find ways to own your body, your agency, and your dignity despite everything the government has taken from you.

May you be surrounded by a community of caring hands and loving hearts who can hold you.

May you always know that you are holy and sacred and that your will — your autonomy — matters and should be respected as such.

May you be protected in all ways, able to weather the material, physical, emotional and spiritual hardships that come your way.

May you find within yourself resilience, strength, and bravery.

May you know that you are not alone.

AMEN

## A Prayer for Repro Shabbat

*by Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch*

Tonight, we pray for freedom, safety, and health for all those who can become pregnant.

We affirm the choice to end a pregnancy. We assert that the life of the pregnant person is paramount! (Exodus 21)

We declare that the body of each person belongs to them! We echo our rabbis: “*P’shita — gufah hi*” It’s obvious — it’s her body! (Arachin 7a)

We uplift the right to have a child, the right to not have a child, and the right to parent children in safe and healthy environments. We look to a diversity of experiences. God created each of us *b’tzelem Elohim*, in God’s image, and each of us reflect a unique aspect of the infinite God. (Gen 1:27). We know that one law or one text can never tell the full story. Our laws, both ancient and modern, have never been one-size-fits-all.

We demand sexual autonomy and gender freedom for every human being.

We look to our laws, *mishpatim*, for guidance, as a starting point. We look to the lived experiences, to the real stories, of people who can become pregnant, as our motivation. We do this work for each of them. We do this work for our communities, our societies, so we work toward a world of justice, safety, and love. So we create the world we want to live in.

“Our rabbinic sages teach, ‘It is not incumbent upon [us] to complete the work, but neither are [we] free to desist from it.’” (Pirkei Avot 2:16)

May we be inspired to continue to do this work, together.

AMEN

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## Short Reading about Repro Shabbat

This weekend we celebrate Repro Shabbat, in which we are partnering with National Council of Jewish Women as a way of bringing the whole Jewish community together to talk about what our tradition teaches about reproductive health, rights, and justice.

And when we study, we know: Reproductive freedom is a Jewish value.

One in four people who can get pregnant will terminate a pregnancy by the age of forty-five. That includes members of our own community — for their own deeply personal reasons. So many important stories in our community go untold.

Our tradition not only permits the termination of pregnancy, but even requires it when the life of the pregnant person is at stake. And, of course, *kavod habriyot* — human dignity — and, more broadly, building a just society are ultimate Jewish concerns.

Our communities should be places where anyone who has terminated or may ever terminate a pregnancy feels loved and welcomed. And our communities should be places where everyone can feel welcome to share their reproductive health stories, without fear of shame or stigma. If folks wish to share, let us be a community that welcomes sharing of personal journeys, whether that involves termination, fertility challenges, pregnancy loss, or any other experience.

With the fall of *Roe v. Wade*, 40 million people of reproductive age are now trapped in states hostile to abortion access. Those harmed most by abortion bans are communities of Black, Indigenous, and other Peoples of Color (BIPOC); people struggling to make ends meet; people living in rural areas; immigrants; disabled people; youth; and trans and nonbinary people.

During a time when abortion access matters more than it ever has in many of our lifetimes, we here at [name of community/synagogue/organization] are committed to this work. And we'll be sharing with you ways that we can all be part of advocating for reproductive health access, rights and justice in the weeks and months to come.



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