

Seven Jewish Values

Guidelines for inclusive Jewish community

Kavod: Respect

כבוד

Judaism teaches us to treat ourselves and others with respect; even the stranger is to be treated with respect. Kavod is a feeling of regard for the rights, dignity, feelings, wishes, and abilities of others. Teasing and name-calling disrespect and hurt everyone, so learn to respect people's differences.

Shalom Bayit: Peace in the Home

שלום בית

Our community centers, synagogues, youth groups, and camps are often our second homes. Everyone needs to feel comfortable, safe, and respected at home. Don't ostracize those who seem different. Strive to settle disagreements in peaceful and respectful ways that allow all community members to maintain their dignity.

B'tzelem Elohim: In God's Image

בצלם אלוהים

The Torah tells us that we are all created "b'tzelem Elohim" (Bereshit 1:26), in the image of God. This is a simple and profound idea that should guide our interactions with all people. If we see each person as created in the image of God, we can see humanity and dignity in all people. True inclusion is built upon this foundation.

Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh: Communal Responsibility

כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה

The Jewish principle that "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a) means each of us must take action and inspire others to create a community in which we can all take pride.

Sh'mirat Halashon: Guarding One's Use of Language

שמירת הלשון

The Talmud warns us that we must take care in how we use language. Talking about others behind their backs, even if what we are saying is true, is prohibited. The guidelines for "sh'mirat halashon" remind us that what we say about others affects them in ways we can never predict. Words can hurt or heal depending on how we use them.

V'ahavta L'reiacha Kamocha: Love your neighbor as yourself

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

Commenting on Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as yourself," Rabbi Hillel once stated that this is the foundational value of the Torah. It begins with loving ourselves. We must love and accept our whole selves, and in doing so create the capacity for extending that love and acceptance to others.

Al Tifrosh Min Hatsibur: Solidarity

אל תפרוש מן הציבור

"Don't separate yourself from the community" (Pirke Avot 2:5). When you feel different from others in your community, don't isolate yourself. Find allies and supporters who you can talk to. If you know someone who is feeling isolated, reach out; be an ally and a friend.