

Seven Jewish Values

Guidelines for Inclusive Jewish Community

כבוד | Kavod



RESPECT - 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.

שלום בית | Shalom Bayit



PEACE IN THE HOME - Our community centers, synagogues, youth groups, and camps are often our second homes. Everyone needs to feel comfortable, safe, welcome, 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.

בצלם אלהים | B'tzelem Elohim



IN GOD'S IMAGE - 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. We do not know the "image of God" except as it is reflected in the different types of people we encounter in the world. If we can remember that each of us, no matter how different, is created in God's image, this idea can lead us to find the connection we have with one another and help create truly inclusive communities.

כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה | Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh



COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY - The Jewish principle that "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a) means that it is our responsibility to stand up for each other, especially for those who are vulnerable and cannot speak up for themselves.

שמירת הלשון | Shmirat Halashon



GUARDING ONE'S USE OF LANGUAGE - 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 "shmirat 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.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך | V'ahavtah L'Reiecha Kamocha



"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" - Commenting on Leviticus 19:18, Rabbi Hillel once stated that this was 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.

אל תפרוש מן הציבור | Al Tifrosh Min Hatsibur



SOLIDARITY - "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.

