



BUILDING UPON JEWISH VALUES TO MAKE SAFER CONGREGATIONS

We create safe and sacred communities as an expression of our Jewish values. When we keep our Jewish values in mind, we have greater success in building such communities. Our communities and congregations are unique, and each emphasizes certain Jewish values. It is important for each community/congregation to reflect on those values. This reflection will inform the work that we should undertake to establish and preserve our safe and sacred community. The brief outline below includes a list of some important Jewish values. Consider which ones resonate for your community. If there are values that are important to your community and that are not on this list—by all means, reflect on them. We would appreciate it if you could please let us know what they are.

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General

/ **שלום בית** *Shalom Bayit, Shalom Bayis, Shelom Bayit* / “Peace of the house” (Talmud Shabbat 23b) [Rava said: It is obvious to me that (if one can only afford either) the lamp of one’s house (for Friday night, “Shabbat candles”) or the Chanukah lamp, then the lamp of one’s house takes precedence because of *shelom bayit*/peace of the home.” Rashi there: “One’s family would be in distress to sit in the dark (on Shabbat night).”]

Values and Dispositions

/ **צלם א-להים** *Tzelem E-lohim* / “Image of God” (Genesis 1:27 and elsewhere)

/ **כבוד הבריות** *Kevod HeBeriyot* / “Honor of creatures,” human dignity (Talmud Berachot 19b)

/ **רפואת הגוף, רפואת הנפש** *Refu’at ha-nefesh, refu’at ha-guf* / Healing for the spirit, healing for the body (the Mi She-berach prayer)

/ **תיקון עולם** *Tikkun Olam* / Repairing or Perfecting the World; Social Justice (for example, from the Aleinu prayer, Mishnah Gittin 4:3 and elsewhere)



Strivings

/ **והיה מחניך קדוש** *ve'haya machanecha kadosh* / let your camp be holy (Deut. 23:15)

/ **גמילות חסדים** *Gemilut Hasadim* / “Performing acts of (loving)kindness” (Pirkei Avot 1:1), one of three supports of the world.

/ **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** *ve'ahavta le'rei'a'cha kamoachah* / “You shall love your fellow as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18) [Compare the teaching of Hillel, / **דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד** that which is hateful to you, do not do to another (Bavli Shabbat 31a)]

/ **צדק צדק תרדוף** *Tzedek tzedek tirdof* / Justice, justice shall you pursue (Deuteronomy 16:20)

/ **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבתן לתורה** *Ohev shalom ve-rodef shalom, ohev et haberiot u-mekarevan laTorah* / Loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people (creatures) and bringing them close to Torah. (Pirkei Avot 1:12)

/ **כי תבנה בית חדש ועשית מעקה לגגך ולא תשים דמים בביתך כי יפל הנפל ממנו** / When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone should fall from it. (Deut. 22:8)

/ **לא תעמד על-דם רעך** / Do not stand by the blood of your fellow (Lev. 19:16). [See also **לא תוכל** / *lo tuchal le-hit'alem* / you must not remain indifferent (Deut 22:3) in the context of returning lost articles]

/ **ובחרת בחיים למען תחיה אתה וזרעך** *u-vacharta ba-chayyim le-ma'an tichyeh attah ve-zar'echa* / Choose life so that you and your children may live (Deut. 30:19) [“On the basis of this verse, Rabbi Akiva says: One must teach one’s child how to swim” (Yerushalmi Kiddushin 1:7).]

/ **ונשמרתם מאד לנפשתיכם** *ve-nishmartem me'od le-nafshoteichem* / take good care of yourselves (Deut. 4:15) [Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 32:1 one must keep away from things that damage the body / צריך האדם להרחיק את עצמו מדברים המאבדין את הגוף]

What are the stakes?

/ **יראת אלהים** *yir'at Elohim* / “fear of God”

.ויאמר, אברהם, כי אמרתי רק אין-יראת אלהים, במקום הזה; והרגוני, על-דבר אשתי.
“I thought,” said Abraham, “surely there is no **fear of God** in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.” (Genesis 20:11).

/ **אחותנו** *Achoteinu* / “our sister”

. / But they answered, “Should **our sister** be treated like a prostitute?” (Genesis 34:31).

/ **שתיקה כהודאה דמיה** *shetikah kehoda'ah damya* / Silence is tantamount to acquiescence (Talmud Yevamot 87b)



/ **ולא אתה בן-חורין להיבטל ממנה** *Lo alecha ha-mlachah ligmor, ve'lo attah ben-chorin le-hibbatel mimmenah* / You are not expected to complete the task... (Rabbi Tarfon in Pirkei Avot 2:16)

Partnership

/ **כל ישראל ערביין זה לזה** *kol Yisrael areivin zeh la-zeh* (or: *...zeh bazeh*) / all Israel are guarantors one for the other - Sifra to Leviticus 26:37 and Rashi to Bavli Rosh Hashanah 29b [This has negative and positive aspects. Negative: "With no one pursuing, they shall stumble over one another" (Lev. 26:37). "over one another" refers to the sin of the other (Sifra there). Positive: "even though one has fulfilled one's own obligation, one may discharge the obligation (of another)" Bavli Rosh Hashanah 29a. Rashi there: "for all Israel are guarantors one for the other"]

Our own integrity and safety

/ **אם אין אני לי, מי לי** *Im ein ani li, mi li?* / If I am not for myself, who is for me? – Hillel (1st c. CE in Pirkei Avot 1:13)