



The Small Jewish Communities Project
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The Small Jewish Communities Project is focused on the clarification of Jewish values, how these values are transmitted from one generation to the next, and strategies for overcoming the challenges of raising the next Jewish generation.

The list below includes a variety of Jewish values shared by Jewish communities world-wide. Can you match these values with their historical antecedents on the other side of this page?

1. **Nekudot Bechirah** (Choice Points): Making positive choices.
2. **Anavah** (Humility): No more than my space, no less than my place.
3. **Ahavat Yisrael** (Love for Israel): Acting in a loving fashion toward fellow Jews and all human beings.
4. **Kavod** (Respect/Dignity/Honor): Recognizing the respect due to others and the dignity due ourselves.
5. **Chesed** (Loving-kindness): To do what we can to make the world a better place through *gemilut chasadim* (lit. “acts of loving kindness”).
6. **Shmirat HaLashon** (Thoughtful Speech): To hold our speech inside our heads until we determine whether or not it will be of value.
7. **Emunah** (Faith/Trustworthiness): A quality of reliability based on integrity, honesty and consistency.
8. **Bakesh Shalom v’Rodfehu** (seek peace and pursue it): The obligation to actively reduce conflicts, advocate for peace and prohibit violence against the innocent.
9. **Ahavat Ger** (loving the stranger): Empathy for those who are “outsiders” and the inclusion of those who are different from us.
10. **Pikuach Nefesh** (the saving of life): The highest Jewish obligation.
11. **Tzedakah** (Righteousness): The giving of charity (money and time) to those in need.
12. **Tzedek Tirdof** (pursuit of justice): Actively pursuing justice.

A non-comprehensive list of sources for Jewish values:

- A. Ben Zoma: “Who is honorable? The one who honors others.” Avot 4.1
- B. “Have I been trustworthy in my transactions with others?” Shabbat 31a
- C. Deuteronomy 30:20, “Choose life that you may live!”
- D. When Saul was chosen as Israel’s first king, he was discovered “hiding among the baggage” (I Samuel 10:22), a phrase which became known among Jews for the man who shuns the limelight. The Hebrew king was to write a copy of the law and read therein all the days of his life, “that his heart be not lifted above his brethren” (Deuteronomy 17:20).
- E. “You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Reprove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19.17-18) “A soul enters this world for seventy or eighty years just to do a favor for another.” —the Baal Shem Tov.
- F. According to Maimonides, the greatest level of charity, above which there is no greater, is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand until he need no longer be dependent upon others.
- G. One must trouble oneself to properly act with chesed... this is done for the rich and for the poor, for the living and for the dead. Sukah 49b
- H. “Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” Deuteronomy 16.20
- I. ““You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.” Leviticus 19.16-17
- J. In every generation we are obligated to see ourselves as though we personally went out from Egypt. Passover Haggadah. “The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” Leviticus 19.33-34
- K. “It is a religious precept to desecrate the Sabbath for any person afflicted with an illness that may prove dangerous; he who is zealous is praiseworthy while he who asks questions sheds blood.” Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 328:2
- L. “Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.” Psalm 34.15

ANSWER KEY:
1(C); 2(D); 3(E); 4(A); 5(G); 6(I); 7(B); 8(L); 9(J); 10(K); 11(F); 12(H)