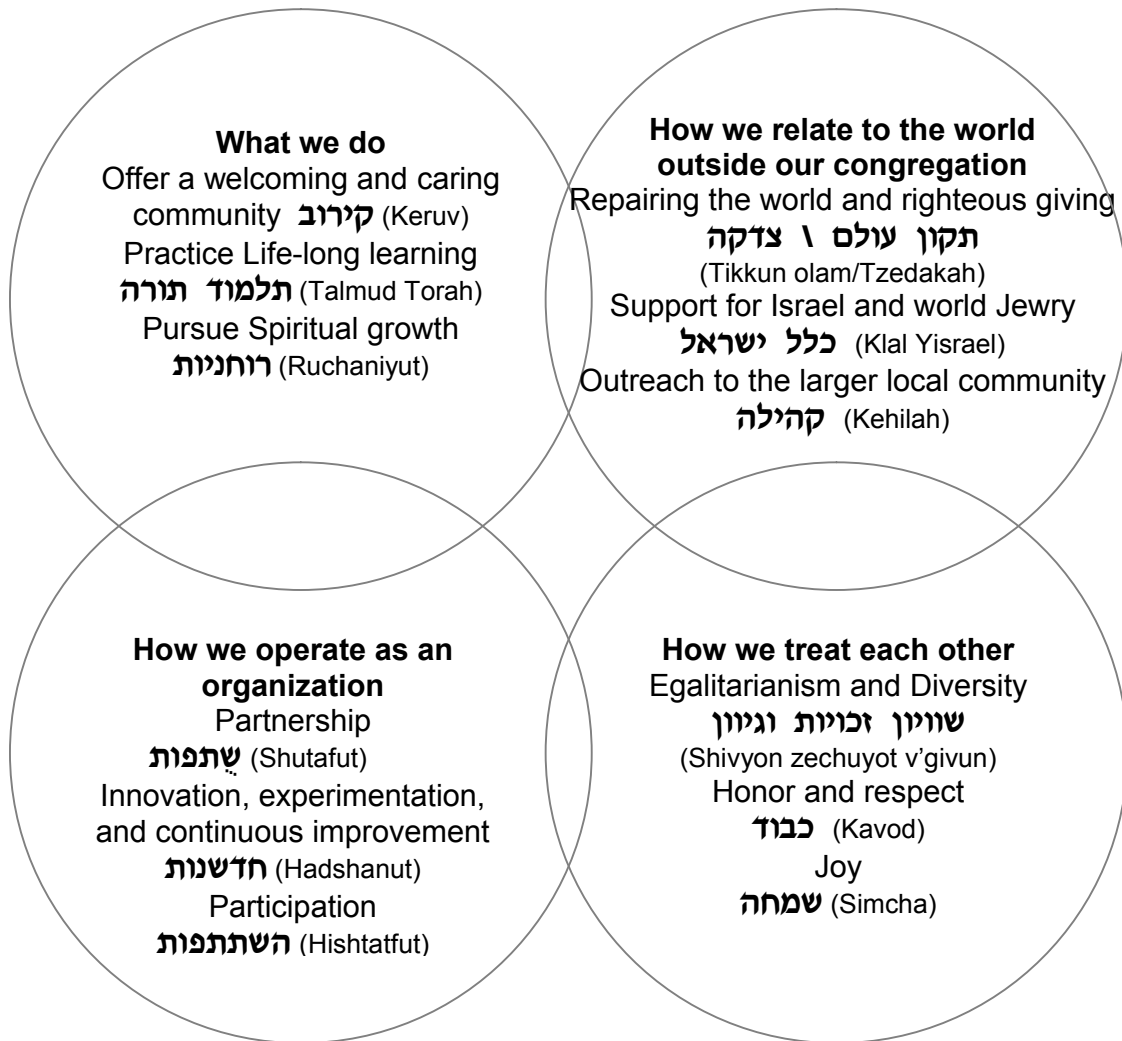


Congregation Beth Am Values

(Working Draft)

These values are of primary importance to Congregation Beth Am and form the basis for Congregation Beth Am's identity, aspirations, planning and decision-making. We teach these values in all of our programs and try to model them in all of our interactions. We also encourage our congregants to live these values outside congregational life.



What we do

Offer a Welcoming and Caring Community קירוב – (Keruv)

We value the Jewish tradition of gracious hospitality and warm welcome, which we seek to extend to all those who visit our congregation, including current and new members, those curious about Congregation Beth Am, those who are considering Judaism, and the unaffiliated. We help people in our community to make connections, form friendships and participate in synagogue life. We support one another—emotionally, physically, and spiritually—in good times and in times of need. We encourage congregants to request, give and receive support from our clergy and from one another in a caring, respectful and, where appropriate, confidential manner.

Practice Life-long learning תלמוד תורה – (Talmud Torah)

We value lifelong Jewish learning and seek to help our congregants become committed, knowledgeable, participating Reform Jews. We will continuously identify and address obstacles and barriers to learning so that congregants will not be inhibited from participating fully in our education programs.

Pursue Spiritual Growth רוחניות – (Ruchaniyut)

We value spiritual growth and embrace the many paths by which our congregants seek to develop spiritually, including Jewish prayer and meditation, service to the congregation and the community, and, compassionate human interaction. We are mindful of our spiritual tradition, which has placed God at the center of Jewish life throughout the ages. While many of us struggle with our conception of, and our relationship with, the Holy, we hope that our congregants will find Beth Am an environment which invites reflection and the deepening of spiritual life.

How we treat each other

Egalitarianism and Diversity שוויון זכויות וגיוון – (Shivyon zechuyot v'givun)

We believe that the unique views and experiences of our individual congregants all serve to strengthen and enrich our community. We strive to provide an environment in which each individual has the opportunity to grow Jewishly in his or her own way while wholly within, and as an integral part of, our community. We are open, welcoming, and embracing of all Jews regardless of gender, age, race, sexual orientation, physical ability, financial means, special learning needs, family composition, marital status, interfaith relationships and cultural and religious backgrounds. We value the participation and contributions of all our members, both through volunteer effort and financial support. We recognize that people give to our congregation in different ways and want people of all means to feel comfortable and appreciated.

Honor and Respect כבוד – (Kavod)

We value a culture in which all members of our community are cherished as individuals and treated with *Kavod* – honor, respect and dignity. An environment of *Kavod* promotes kindness and respect for all human beings, free exchange of opinions and open discussion of controversial topics. In the face of a secular culture which values outward appearance and conformity, we seek to cultivate in our children appreciation for the unique gifts inherent in each of us as well as empathy for the individual challenges that each person faces.

Joy שמחה – (Simcha)

We value the creation, experience and celebration of moments of *Simcha*, Jewish joy. Judaism encourages us to bring *Simcha* into our lives whenever possible. We want our programs and interactions to be filled with *Simcha* so our congregants will be uplifted by their experiences here and their lives enriched.

How we operate as an organization

Partnership among leaders שותפות – (Shutafut)

We value a leadership model in which our lay and professional leaders work together to create and achieve our shared vision. We bring together our talented congregants and staff both to set the direction for our congregation and to implement what we choose to do. We believe that the benefit of this partnership is self-reinforcing, inspiring further participation and leadership in our congregation.

Innovation, Experimentation, and Continuous Improvement חדשנות – (Hadshanut)

We value innovation, experimentation and continuous improvement in order to create programming and services which meet the changing needs of our congregation. We believe that experimentation and innovation, when undertaken with care for our tradition and in order to move us toward fulfilling our mission, are consistent with the highest Jewish values. We welcome constructive criticism as affording us the opportunity to do better. While we will never be perfect, we seek always to reach our congregation's potential through goal setting, reflective evaluation and assessment. We celebrate what we do well.

Participation השתתפות – (Hishtatfut)

We value active involvement in our synagogue life, strong connections among congregants, a sense of ownership in programs and activities and lively community. We create multiple points of entry into active participation in our congregation and encourage our congregants to experience the joy of full participation in Jewish life at home, at synagogue and in the community.

How we relate to the world outside our congregation

Repairing the World and Righteous Giving תיקון עולם \ צדקה – (Tikkun Olam/Tzedakah)

As Reform Jews we value doing holy and sacred work in the world through acts of compassion, justice and peace. We believe that Judaism is a religion that mandates such action and that *Tikkun Olam* and *Tzedakah* are essential means by which many of our congregants express themselves Jewishly.

Support for Israel and World Jewry כלל ישראל – (Klal Yisrael)

We value our place in the global community of Jews and we believe in building a special connection to Jews around the world. We see ourselves as having a special relationship to the land, people and history of Israel and support her survival as a democratic Jewish nation and homeland. We seek to create an environment conducive to an open and honest debate concerning the State of Israel. We support progressive and pluralistic Judaism within Israel, as throughout the world, and celebrate the rich contribution of Israeli culture to the life of our congregation. We encourage our congregants to express support of Israel and world Jewry financially, morally, through advocacy and with frequent visits.

Outreach to Larger Local Community קהילה – (Kehilah)

We value strengthening the Jewish community by building partnerships with other Jewish organizations. We also see ourselves as part of the larger local non-Jewish community. We believe in active outreach to non-Jewish organizations and seek to promote mutual understanding and social justice through inter-faith partnerships and coalitions.