

Accompanying Texts

עירובין י"ג ב:י-י"ד

א"ר אבא אמר שמואל שלש שנים נחלקו ב"ש וב"ה הללו אומרים הלכה כמותנו והללו אומרים הלכה כמותנו יצאה בת קול ואמרה אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים הן והלכה כב"ה וכי מאחר שאלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים מפני מה זכו ב"ה לקבוע הלכה כמותן מפני שנוחין ועלובין היו ושונין דבריהן ודברי ב"ש ולא עוד אלא שמקדימין

Eruvin 13b:10-14

Rabbi Abba said in the name of Shmuel, For three years, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai argued. One said, 'The halakha is like us,' and the other said, 'The halakha is like us.' A heavenly voice spoke: "These and these are the words of the living God, and the halakha is like the House of Hillel." A question was raised: Since the heavenly voice declared: "Both these and those are the words of the Living God," why was the halakha established to follow the opinion of Hillel? It is because the students of Hillel were kind and gracious. They taught their own ideas as well as the ideas from the students of Shammai. Not only for this reason, but they went so far as to teach Shammai's opinions first.

[Y]ou and I have it in us to be nourishers of discernment, fermenters of healing. We have the language, the tools, the virtues – and the calling, as human beings – to create hospitable spaces for taking up the hard questions of our time.

— KRISTA TIPPETT

"Fear is seldom wise and never kind."
- Ursula Leguin

Who is wise? One who
learns from all people.

איזהו חכם? הלומד מכל אדם.

M. Avot 4:1

Language provides the primary vehicle for human beings to interpret their encounter with the world. Language plays a central role in creating the world in which we live by giving us the names, concepts and cognition that shape our consciousness. Indeed, our world is unimaginable without words. Through talking, writing, thinking, reading and listening, through books, conversations, radio, computers, television, lectures, discussions, plays and poetry, we not only shape our world but are shaped by it. Language is the primary tool for creating and shaping culture and for creating the cooperation needed to accomplish tasks large and small.

– RABBI DAVID TEUTSCH

Central to the vision of Evolve is that unity does not require uniformity. We will, God willing, continue to disagree about central issues of policy, practice and belief. The magnitude of our differences should be viewed, we believe, as signs of our community's vitality. Instead, we seek to cultivate ever-expanding pockets of trust in which conversations can occur among people who recognize that everyone in the room is deeply committed to the flourishing of Jewish civilization, even when we think their viewpoints are destructive. With that recognition comes respect and deep listening.

– RABBI JACOB STAUB

משנה אבות ה':י"ז

(יז) כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, סופה להתקיים. ושאין לה לשם שמים, אין סופה להתקיים. איזו היא מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת הלל ושמואל. ושאין לה לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת קרח וכל עדתו:

Pirkei Avot 5:17

Every argument that is [for the sake of] heaven's name—lit is destined to endure. But if it is not [for the sake of] heaven's name -- it is not destined to endure. What [is an example of an argument for the sake of] heaven's name? The argument of Hillel and Shammai. What [is an example of an argument not for the sake of] heaven's name? The argument of Korach and all of his followers.



RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

Welcome!

ברוכים הבאים!

Convention and
Grounding Virtues

GROUNDING VIRTUES FOR ROOTED AND RELEVANT: RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM IN 2018

We are so delighted that you are here with us at Rooted and Relevant: Reconstructing Judaism in 2018. We are a self-selecting group: every person here is choosing to give of your time, money and energy over these four days of our convention. Thank you! We can presume that you are drawn here because of our Reconstructionist approach, which is built on a commitment to diversity and a stance of curiosity. As Reconstructionists, we cherish the rich and varied legacy we have inherited. As Reconstructionists, we understand the opportunity and even the obligation to create the Jewish community that we want to live in, and that we want to pass onto the next generation. This combination ensures that we will always remain boldly relevant.



We see all around how easily discourse and interaction can break down into arguments, partisanship, isolation, and, as the Pittsburgh shooting made so painfully clear, even violence. Across the Reconstructionist movement, we are working to nurture connection across difference and holy conversation across disagreement. We hope over the course of this gathering you will learn about and from many of them. We see this work as a necessary first step toward a transformed society. As Krista Tippett says, “The point of learning to speak together differently is learning to live together differently.” Over 18 months of planning for convention, we have sought to do everything we can to make this a time of growth, connection and even transformation. Now that we are here in the same space, we ask that you join us in sanctifying this time and place as an opportunity for holy conversation and deep listening. We are a pop-up community comprising a core of the Reconstructionist movement. We hope to make our pop-up community intentional and holy in our interactions—a true *kehillah kedoshah*.

We begin with **grounding virtues**, found below and augmented by margin notes that, we hope, illuminate them.¹ These are comprised entirely in the affirmative. We are putting forward in the positive what we want to create together. We continue with a **behavioral covenant**, adapted from the covenant that Camp Havaya and Havaya Arts use for the incredible experiences they create for campers every summer. This covenant includes both affirmative behaviors and limits, and it identifies resources you can call on while you are at convention if you are having a hard time.

Rabbi Shoshana Waxman

¹ With acknowledgment and appreciation to On Being’s Civil Conversations project [insert link] and Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer’s work on Campus Chaplaincy for a Multifaith World, funded by the Luce Foundation.

Hesed/Lovingkindness... חסד

We remember that we are all connected to one Source and that Source is loving. We prioritize relationship over judgment or “being right.” We extend the same compassion to ourselves.

Anavah/Humility... ענוה

We strive to take up the right amount of space—not too much or too little. We listen as passionately as we want to be listened to. We note our visceral responses and think before we respond. We stay curious. When in doubt, we ask a question.

וְהִבֵּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ

Vahavi’enu leshalom me’arba kanfot ha’aretz/ Gathering the corners to the center...

We honor difference and make space for it in our communities, building on our aspirations to enact inclusion. We allow people to introduce themselves on their own terms and ask for pronouns rather than assume them. We recognize the inherent belonging of people of color in the Jewish community. We work to foster participation across abilities.

Tikkun/Repair... תיקון

We believe repair is possible when we err, when a relationship falters, when a dynamic is difficult. Through teshuvah/repentance and relationship-building, we take steps to enact repair when necessary. When we (or the world) are not ready for tikkun, we hold the brokenness with hesed.