

A Statement of British Values: A Jewish Perspective

The Jewish community in Britain has a great appreciation of British values and culture. We are proud to be British and proud to be Jewish; many a Jewish celebration ends with a hearty rendition of 'God Save the Queen'.

We feel fortunate to have made our home in Britain – a diverse liberal democracy – where we can practise our religion freely and play an active role in wider British society. We support the proposal to develop a statement of British values and we welcome the opportunity to offer a Jewish perspective on these important British values.

Equality

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם בְּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם:

And God created human beings in God's own image; God created them in the image of God, male and female God created them. *Genesis 1:27*

- We value the inherent worth of every single man, woman and child; every individual should be treated with dignity and respect
- We value living in a multicultural society; we respect and celebrate our differences and strive to learn from one another
- We value the importance of a society where everyone is treated equally and oppose discrimination in all its forms

Justice

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה עוֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט לֹא תִשָּׂא פָנֶי דָל וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פָּנֵי גְדוֹל בְּצִדֵּק תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ:

You shall commit no injustice in judgment; you shall not favour a poor person or respect a great person; you shall judge your fellow with righteousness. *Leviticus 19:15*

- We value the equal treatment of all before the law
- We value the rule of law to ensure a just and cohesive society and to protect citizens from arbitrary interference by the state
- We value the authority of British law; Jewish law teaches us to respect the 'law of the land' in which we live and fulfil our responsibilities to society

Freedom

This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.

Let all who are hungry come and eat...

Today, we are slaves. Next year, we will be free.

Excerpt from the Haggada, the story of the Exodus read at Passover

- We value our freedom to decide what we believe and how to practise our religion; our faith is stronger when it is freely chosen
- We value the freedom of all to express ourselves through thought, speech and culture; we choose not to use this freedom to offend or attack others
- We value our freedom to challenge ourselves, our communities and our political leaders; we support the strong tradition of free press and protest

Society

ת"ר: מפרנסים עניי נכרים עם עניי ישראל, ומבקרים חולי נכרים עם חולי ישראל, וקוברין מתי נכרים עם מתי ישראל, מפני דרכי שלום.

Our Rabbis taught: We sustain the non-Jewish poor with the Jewish poor, visit the non-Jewish sick with the Jewish sick, and bury the non-Jewish dead with the Jewish dead, for the sake of peace. *Babylonian Talmud, Gittin 61a*

- We value every member of our society and believe that everybody has something valuable to give; we must protect our most vulnerable members
- We value the strength that comes with diversity; we welcome those strangers who have chosen to become British citizens into our society
- We value our beautiful country and incredible planet; we must all act responsibly to maintain a clean, safe, sustainable environment

Education

תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפִן יִסּוּרוּ מִלְּבָבְךָ כִּל יָמֶי חַיֶּיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וּלְבְנֵי בְנֶיךָ:

So that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes and so that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live. And make them known to your children and to your children's children. *Deuteronomy 4:9*

- We value lifelong learning and ongoing personal development; universal education underpins equality of opportunity and social mobility
- We value the role of education in developing responsible citizens; good education endows us with an appreciation of our rights and responsibilities
- We value the importance of families in developing social responsibility and values; we recognise the family as the fundamental unit of our society

Judaism teaches us to value equality, justice, freedom, education and a strong, healthy society.

We welcome this chance to play a part in building British society.