



Congregation Beth Israel Board Covenant

(Adopted on January 16, 2019)

“In everything you do you encounter sparks full of life and light, aspiring to rise toward the heights. You help them and they help you,”¹ so...

- We agree to show up fully to Board meetings:
 - When materials are sent before a meeting, we commit to reading them in advance and being prepared for discussion.
 - We agree to arrive on time, and thereby show respect for the value of each other’s time.
 - We will strive to restrict distractions (e.g. phone).
- We agree to “lean into possibility” by affirming that we want to seek ways to make things work, instead of looking at ways they will fail. We acknowledge that things can always change; can always be better than they have been.

“The world stands on three things: Torah, prayer and acts of loving kindness,”² so...

- We acknowledge that everything we do is imbued with spirituality, and that we will strive to act as spiritual leaders, mentors and models for the community.
- We commit to being engaged in congregational life by attending and learning about all areas and offerings of our synagogue.
- We will honor and uplift the spiritual diversity among Board members and within the community.

“Everyone is created in God’s image,”³ so...

- We assume the best intentions on the part of others.
- We agree to speak for ourselves, not as representatives of any group, and we will not ask others to represent, defend, or explain any group of people.
- We will strive to use “I” statements, rather than “we” or “you” statements.
- We will speak and serve with an air of positivity.
- We commit to being respectful.

“Words carry the power of life and death,”⁴ so...

- We will own our impact.
- We strive to listen and hear each other as members of a holy community.
- We resolve to not engage in *lashon hara* -- gossip, rumor-mongering, slander.
- We recognize that “and” is usually better than “but.”

“Everyone has a place in the Torah,”⁵ so...

- We appreciate the spirit and passion of our community as it is reflected in diverse opinions. We will keep our minds and hearts open as we seek to understand the opinions of others.
- Reflective listening is a core skill that we cultivate so that everyone can be heard.
- We agree to share airtime, and will refrain from interrupting others.
- We will make sure everyone has had an opportunity to speak before we share again.

“Disagree for the sake of Heaven,”⁶ so...

- We will seek to clarify misunderstandings productively.
- We will express our different viewpoints in a thoughtful manner and without an insulting spirit. We may respectfully disagree with others and will resist the urge to convert them to our way of thinking.
- We will treat our conversational partners as we would want to be treated.
- We agree to acknowledge dissent, and not disrespect the person with different views.

“There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak,”⁷ so...

- We will take a deep breath when we hear something that is hard to listen to. We will take a five-minute break when we find that we are no longer able to listen with an open and clear mind.
- We strive to consider all possibilities without being defensive, remaining open to new solutions and alternative viewpoints
- We will not engage in “Parking Lot Agendas” -- discussions in the parking lot after a meeting or in secret, usually about items of contention.

“Even a child makes himself known by his acts,”⁸ so...

- We agree to honor the group process.
- Once a decision is made, we agree to honor and support the group decision, even if one is in the minority or if the decision didn’t go the way one wanted it to.
- We will not engage in speech or action that will undermine group decisions.

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***Although we strive to keep this covenant, sometimes we fall short.  
We try to recognize those times and apologize to those we have harmed.  
We try again. We are human.***

1. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook 2. Pirkei Avot 1:2 3. Genesis 1:27 4. Proverbs 18:21 5. Sefat Emet on Parashat Bamidbar 6. Pirkei Avot 5:19 7. Ecclesiastes 3:7 7. Proverbs 20:11