

7 Core Values of Philanthropy



Justice - Tzedek - צדק

"Isaiah then established the 613 mitzvot upon two, as it is stated: "So says Adonai: Observe justice and perform righteousness" (Makkot 24a:27)"

All philanthropy (and social justice activism) is built on the imperative to build a just world. Justice is the heart of our social system and helps define relationships and all social structures.



Service - Avodah - עבודה

"He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither you are at liberty to neglect it." (Pirkei Avot 2:16)

The Hebrew word "Avodah" carries multiple ideas that are inherent to a commitment to social change's dedicated labor, active involvement in the world, service on behalf of others and personal commitment.



Preservation - Shmirah - שמירה

"Adonai took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it." (Genesis 2:15)

We are tasked with preserving, or taking care of, our world and resources within it. Sometimes our desire to make social change is actually a desire to look after, or maintain, what we already have.



Human Dignity - Kavod - כבוד

"Ben Zoma said ... Who is one that is honored? One who honors their fellow human beings." (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

The belief in the equal and innate worth of every human being is central to many causes that focus on making the world a better place.



Lovingkindness - G'milut Chasadim - גמילות חסדים

"Shimon the Righteous... used to say: the world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple service (Avodah), and the practice of acts of lovingkindness." (Pirkei Avot 1:2)

Acts of kindness are the building-blocks with which to help others. Giving and receiving Chesed is one of the most powerful things we can experience.



Responsibility - Areyvut - עריבות

"All Jews are considered guarantors, i.e., responsible, for one another." (Sanhedrin 27b)

Responsibility is the belief that it is OUR duty, that we hold some responsibility for those in need or for making our world better. It is a driving force behind all social change work.



Hope - Tikvah - תקווה

"Optimism is the belief that things are going to get better. Hope is the belief that we can make things better. Optimism is a passive virtue, hope is an active one. It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it does need courage to hope." (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z"L, Celebrating Life, p.175)

Hope is the belief that we can make things better. We aspire to make change, fueled by hope that helps us preserve and keep going even when things are hard.