

Statement of Human Rights by Rabbi Nydle

Hillel says: Be among the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to the Torah. (Avot 1:12)

Justice

The Torah demands of us “*Justice, justice, shall you pursue*” (Deut. 16:20).

We are committed to the principle of justice for all Elohim’s creatures, as stated in the Torah and as elaborated in Yisrael’s Declaration of Independence which notes that the purpose of the State is:

“...To foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants, based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; To ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race, and gender; To guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; To guard the holy places of all religions...”

YHWH and Human Beings

We affirm in our daily blessings and prayers that YHWH is sovereign over the universe, and we believe that humanity is created in the Divine Image (Gen 1:27) and is an active partner in perfecting the world (Shabbat 10a, 119b).

Avraham - A Source Of Blessing To All People: Upon choosing our father Avraham, YHWH promised:

- “*All the families of the earth shall be blessed through you*” (Gen. 12:2) and “*I know him [Avraham], that he will instruct his children and household after him to keep the way of YHWH by doing what is just and right*” (Genesis 18:19).

As descendants of Avraham, we must exemplify this legacy of “*compassion, generosity and sensitivity*” (Yevamot 79b), and the world will then declare:

- “*What great nation has laws and rules as just as all this Torah that I set before you this day?*” (Deut. 4:8).

Sanctity of All Human Life

The Mishnah teaches:

- “*Therefore was Adam created single, to teach you that the destruction of any person’s life is tantamount to destroying a whole world and the preservation of a single life is tantamount to preserving a whole world*” (Sanhedrin 4:5).

And again in the words of Rabbi Akiva:

- “*Beloved are human beings, for they are created in YHWH’s Image*” (Pirkei Avot 3:18).

We are deeply concerned for human dignity and the preservation of life for Jews and Yisraelites and non-Jews alike, and we are deeply disturbed by, and seek to remove, excesses and abuses whenever and wherever they occur.

Kiddush HaShem

Exemplary conduct of Ysrael is a sanctification of YHWH's name ("Kiddush HaShem"); shameful conduct is a defamation of YHWH's name ("Chilul HaShem"), a term specifically used to condemn the act of robbing a non-Jew (*Tosefta B.K. 10*). YHWH's name is sanctified through the respect we show for human worth and the dignity of all creation.

Torah

The essence of Torah, as summarized by Hillel's statement "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow" (*Shabbat 31a*), reflects the experience and ethical consciousness of people. The Torah states explicitly:

- "Do not wrong a stranger who resides with you in your land. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens: you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the YHWH your Elohim" (*Lev. 19:33-34*).

Our historical experience of exile and redemption, as well as our ethical consciousness, must sensitize us to the suffering of others and compel us to defend the rights of all who dwell among us.

Holiness and Ethics

We are admonished to be holy by leading a moral life in relationship to all:

- "You shall be holy, for I YHWH your Elohim am holy...You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger...You shall not steal. You shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another...You shall not defraud your fellow. You shall not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer should not remain with you until morning...You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your people. Love your neighbor as yourself, I am YHWH." (*Lev. 19:2,10,11,13,18*)

Shalom

Yisrael's Declaration of Independence ends with an appeal for cooperation and good neighborliness from its surrounding states for the advancement of the whole Middle East. "Who is the greatest hero?" asks *Avot d'Rabbi Natan (23: 1)*, and answers "One who makes an enemy into a friend."

Based on these principles of faith, we pray and work for peace as envisioned by the prophets of Yisrael, when:

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore" *Isa. 2:4*

Justice will well up high as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream *Amos 5:24*