

Principles Governing our Educational Programming

Derived from the Values-Based Decision process engaged in by members of Kol HaLev from September 2004 through May 2005

Preface: The following principles were developed as a result of the Values-Based Decision process engaged in by members of Kol HaLev from September 2004 through May 2005. This process focused initially on distinguishing a set of Kol HaLev values, and then in using these values, in addition to a set of Shabbat-derived values representative of Jewish thought over hundreds of years, to guide a discussion and decision process on an identified issue within our community with respect to our communal Shabbat practices. The issue ultimately chosen for this process was "Writing and Other Creative Activities." This issue was intentionally chosen with the belief that a set of principles with respect to this specific area would influence and guide our planned educational programming given the immediacy of its launch and the importance of this program for our community.

It is important to note that the group of people who participated in these ongoing discussions focused themselves specifically on this issue and this issue only. This is not to imply that this group believes the issue of Writing and Other Creative Activities is the most important issue to consider in our educational programming. We understand there are other important areas of commitment and accompanying principles representing these commitments which are being used to guide and inform our educational programming, e.g. commitments to: Jewish Learning, Israel, Jewish Family, Tikkun Olam, etc. We also understand that our educational programming will focus on spanning Jewish education and Judaism and not focus exclusively on Shabbat-related topics. However, given that our educational programming is going to take place on Shabbat, we believed a set of principles was needed to help guide the programming with respect to the issue of **"Writing and other Creative Activities."**

1. Many of our members are committed to having an experience of Shabbat that is special, holy, sacred, joyous and is differentiated from the rest of the week. Others wish to have an experience of Shabbat which while differentiating it from the rest of the week, is focused on establishing a connection of community with other members of Kol HaLev and more broadly with the Jewish people. As an overall congregation, we're committed to these experiences, and to creating a space and structure which makes it easy for other people to share these experiences of Shabbat.
2. Offering a rich, expressive and expansive educational experience is critically important for us. It's also essential, given that we've chosen Shabbat as the day in which we're going to offer this educational experience, that the educational program is planned with the kavannah of promoting and creating access to these experiences of Shabbat to which we're personally and communally committed. This holds regardless of the form and structure the educational program and activities take.
3. We know and understand each one of our members is on an ever evolving pathway in his or her personal Jewish journey, and that a good part of this pathway is the personalization of what being a Jew is for each individual. In this sense, each one of us is simultaneously a creator, interpreter and transmitter of Judaism. We also understand there is a natural tension and balance point constantly

being discovered for each individual on this evolving pathway between our collective past, present and future as individuals, a community and a people. It is our heartfelt belief the struggle with this tension, and the natural actions which occur as a result of this struggle, represent an opportunity for the ordinary to reveal the extraordinary, the extraordinary to reveal the ordinary and thus for the individual and community to experience growth, learning and development. Our commitment is that whatever structure and format the educational programming takes, it incorporates this struggle and as a result, encompasses this inherent opportunity for growth, development and learning.

4. Because our members are on different and evolving pathways on their own Jewish journeys, it is critical that each of us brings to our relationship with the other a profound respect for the unique Jewish journey of each individual. This then can lead to an understanding of the range of ways in which each person chooses to create and have a meaningful experience of Shabbat. Our intention is that the educational programming incorporates our community commitments to experience the power, sacredness and holiness of Shabbat, the experience of Shabbat as being distinct from the rest of the week, and the experience of Shabbat as a vehicle to create community within Kol HaLev and more broadly the Jewish people. And just as each member of Kol HaLev is on a different and evolving pathway on their own Jewish journey, the form and structure of our educational programming should acknowledge the reality of these different pathways and the different "routes in" which create these experiences.
5. We also understand the educational process itself is one that leverages different modalities of teaching and of learning, and that by choosing to have our educational programming on Shabbat, we potentially could place ourselves inside a structure which would limit certain modalities of learning and teaching to be explored. While we are not committed to throwing caution to the wind and opening up the total exploration of these different modalities of teaching and learning, we equally are not committed to the total restriction of these modalities. Therefore, we're committed that our educational programming embark on a mindful exploration of these varied modalities, and that there are processes put in place which both evaluate and adjust the effectiveness of the tools and methodologies deployed in this intentional, mindful and careful exploration.
6. We understand that in order for these principles to tangibly exist in the structure and format of our educational programming, it will require creativity, out-of-the-box thinking, and for both the planning of the programming and the programming itself to be undertaken and implemented with both tremendous *kavannah* and *ruach*. It is our intention these principles are used as both a source and influence for our educational programming, sparking individual and collective *ruach* and sharpening individual and collective *kavanah*.

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