



Mishpacha

Mishpacha is the Hebrew word for family. B'ney Yosef North America (BYNA) is developing an association of families and gathering those families into a recognizable group. For this reason, we have chosen the word *Mishpacha* to designate those Congregations, Home Fellowships and Individuals who have chosen to walk alongside of BYNA to further the Kingdom of God. We are a family in unity sharing an understanding of the Messiah and His call to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." We are a family in fellowship in that we come together to encourage and support one another. We may even be a family in long lost heritage. Our unity and fellowship are not based on a common doctrinal statement, but an embracing of who we are as family. Independently, we are families who have recently awakened to the understanding that we are related. We are individuals who once thought we knew who we were, but through a revelation from God have discovered our previous understanding may have been missing important information.

Today many people are awakening to their Hebraic Heritage. BYNA has been gifted with the calling to participate in the assembling of the exiles of Israel (our family) into a visible, recognizable, family unit. BYNA is helping family find family, to enable the many small voices of individual people embracing their Hebraic Heritage to join in solidarity and the understanding that we are great in numbers and are the prophesied sons of Yosef (Joseph). Our portion of the family in North America is coalescing in order to put a face on a once scattered group of individuals. We are becoming a people based on family values, family identity, and the hope of helping to build the family of God.

Within every family, there are certain rules of behavior on how family members should act. BYNA is no different. We desire to establish our rules for behavior so that we better represent the gracious, merciful God we serve and protect the family name. Our first effort was to create a document called [The Articles of Declaration](#). The family that BYNA assembles agrees with those articles, knowing that they are a basis on which to move forward with our vision. While the Articles may not be perfect and we realize that some people may not feel comfortable with some of the points, we desire to establish BYNA's presence with the understanding presented in them. For that reason, all who desire to align with the BYNA family will be asked to affirm [The Articles of Declaration](#). An article discussing details of our understanding called [Position on the Articles of Declaration](#) is available on the BYNA Website.

There are other points of behavior that we consider to be important as we properly establish a face of Yosef in the nations. There are scriptural descriptions that establish proper behavior, and while we may not be perfect representations of our God, we desire to clearly articulate appropriate and inappropriate behavior clearly for those embracing our family. Torah (the law of God in the five books of Moses) is the foundation of our beliefs. The Apostolic Writings (New Testament) and Prophets have interpreted Torah in a manner that show how certain fruit can be found when people properly interpret Torah. In fact, all of scripture is focused on the balance between instruction and grace. Torah

without grace is not Torah, and grace without Torah is not grace. Our desire is to return as the house of Yosef to be restored to the family and reconciled to the Jewish people, who we understand to be our older brother Judah. We believe we are walking out the experience of the Prodigal Son, who had to repent before he rejoined the family. If our words state that we have repented and want to return home to our Father and brother, but our actions portray an arrogant, prideful son, we may need to consider our repentance. Consequently, we seek to act humbly in accordance with these precepts, even though there are many in our family whose views may differ from our own.

You do not have to align with BYNA to be a part of the restoration of the House of Israel, but if you choose to, these are terms for being aligned with our part of this family reunion. We all have our parts in joining together with the sons of Yosef.

There are many actions which can be done in the name of God and proper interpretation of Scripture that cause division rather than draw people together. BYNA is here for the purpose of drawing people together and celebrating unity. We recognize that unity cannot be based on an established belief since not all of Yosef has developed at the same time and not all are in the same place or understanding. The variation of belief does not mean a person is not Yosef, but those gathering together must unite with an understanding of what behavior is destructive and what brings about cohesion. We must encourage unity and properly point out destructive behavior. This means that as we form our alignment with others, that alignment must be built upon a foundation of unifying attributes. Yeshua interpreted Torah on these precepts. To establish ourselves as Yosef, the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel, who have been gathered by Meshiach ben Yosef (Yeshua), BYNA desires to assess our progress by His standards.

Exploring the Heart:

A list the size of the Bible could be compiled of proper and improper behavior. We will only enumerate a few items that seem to be prevalent in our society. The real issue lies in the heart. We must examine our hearts to see if we will work for the common good of the entire family or if, instead, we will look after our personal best interests. People who overcome their self-interests are those who will seek to fulfill not only their own needs, but the needs of others as well.

A community cannot be formed if participants are only looking out for number one (themselves). The lists of appropriate and inappropriate behavior presented below are only looking at a polarized assessment of how we act. Yeshua took this assessment to a higher level in examining the intent of each individual. He knew better than all of us that intent cannot be judged by another person. Only God can examine a heart and discover its hidden agendas, motives, and needs. He can reveal that to the individual with a heart problem, but we often find it hard to listen when it is our own heart being examined. Pride will resist the exposure and our actions will continue to be part of the problem. Hence, we hinder our own success in developing community, which means we are constantly opposing the Kingdom of God.

It is the desire of BYNA to bring the community together. This means that we must lay down our specific self-interests (which can be manifested as doctrines, calendars, insights, and desires, etc.) while taking hold of our brother's and looking out for their best interests - which include respecting their doctrines, insights, calendrical convictions and needs. Everything we do reflects on them because they are a part of us. Everything we do individually reflects on all of us, because we form one community. This is the only manner by which we can participate in preparing the way for the Kingdom of God. In saying this, we preface our lists of appropriate and inappropriate behavior with a few questions to assist each of us in determining if we really wish to align our name with the BYNA principles.

Self-Examination:

1. **Speech:** No one is an island. Everything we say has a domino effect on those who believe like us. If we speak bitter words, our group looks like a bitter group. This bitter judgment reflects on all who are associated, whether by name or belief. If we speak sweet words, our group looks gracious. So how does what I say reflect on myself and others? Would others want to be associated with my rhetoric?
2. **Certainty:** Is my judgement about whether a person is right or wrong as certain as I believe it to be? Have I fully examined their position? Do I fully understand the circumstances? Could there be a possibility of error by either party? Am I judging others in the manner I want YHWH to judge me? If we all know in part, what part do I not know?
3. **Going the Extra Mile:** Have I asked myself if I have done all I can do? Restoration in relationships can only be accomplished if we have been persistent. Have I considered a third and fourth option? Have I sufficiently engaged the other person with kindness and respect to determine if we together have exhausted all options?
4. **Reflection:** Am I treating others in the manner I wish to be treated? How would I feel if I were the other person?

Appropriate Behavior:

1. **Mutual Respect:** A compassionate realization that not everyone understands or is at the same place in Torah observance. We choose to leave it up to the Father to sort out the details rather than judging others by our standards. (Amos 3:3)
2. **Positive Focus:** Focusing on the beliefs we have in common while accepting the difference in beliefs and doctrines of others. (Romans 14:13-23)
3. **Joy:** Sharing our values, traditions, and festivals with a spirit of joy, thereby showing that Torah is a blessing and not a curse. (Romans 14:16-18)
4. **Humility:** Being willing to subject ourselves to wise and temperate counsel and desiring to continue in fellowship even when we do not like that the counsel given indicates we are wrong or in need of change. (Deuteronomy 10:12, Micah 6:8)
5. **Peace:** Holding a desire to walk in peace with others exhibited by a peaceful countenance and a sincere belief that God will bring about His purpose without us having to make it happen. This desire moves us to do all that we can to live in peace with everyone. (Leviticus 19:17, Romans 12:18)
6. **Assuming Good of Others:** If they are not against us, they are with us. When we

assume that everyone is against us, they will be. When we assume everyone is for us who has not declared themselves as an enemy, we allow ourselves the opportunity to bring them into our family.

7. **Sharing the Good News:** Specifically when asked, sharing the hope of Messiah we have within. **1 Peter 3:15** “[treat] the Messiah as holy, as Lord in your hearts; while remaining always ready to give a reasoned answer to anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you - yet with humility and fear, 16 keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are spoken against, those who abuse the good behavior flowing from your union with the Messiah may be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:15-16 CJB)

8. **Considerate Speech:** Using words in the manner the audience uses words. To add meaning to words that the user or hearer does not believe will create division. For example, it has been said by some that the English name Jesus sounds like a Greek deity and therefore is connected with that deity, and that when people say they worship Jesus they are really worshiping a Greek deity. Such statements offend the hearer and put up a wall of division that will not easily be overcome. Even if this theory were to be correct (which it is not), it misrepresents those who worship the Messiah they know as Jesus. People who feel misrepresented will respond negatively to whatever you said because you misrepresented them. You will create a barrier to communication. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)

9. **A Corporate Vision:** Recognizing the need for a definable and visible presence and being willing to put personal ambitions and proclamations under the needs of the bigger community. (Philippians 2:3-4)

10. **Respectful Identification:** Calling people what they would call themselves. People who would not identify themselves as pagan should not be called pagans. We should not describe their doctrines in a manner that they would not describe themselves. Do unto others as you want others to do to you. (Luke 6:31, Leviticus 19:18)

11. **Commitment:** Standing with someone, even when we don't understand why they stand differently than we do. Everybody is prone to think they are right all the time. Scripture encourages us to allow iron to sharpen iron. Our standard for alignment with leadership must be based on a trust in God and a confidence that the leadership has the best interests of the mishpacha at heart. To submit to someone with whom we disagree is a solid sign of maturity. Sometimes it takes years for us to understand why someone has taken a different approach to an issue than the one we embrace. We accept counsel from those who have tested Scripture and rely on divine providence in order to be firmly established on solid ground. Spiritual isolation often leads to exclusivity, stagnation, and other disastrous consequences. (Proverbs 27:17, Ephesians 5:17-21)

Inappropriate Behavior:

1. **Heresies:** The attempt by someone to force his or her doctrine upon others. The word translated as heresies in the Bible is not speaking of beliefs that differ from an approved doctrine established by a religious board. A heresy could actually be correct in doctrine, but wrong in presentation. See article on heresy from the BYNA website: [Heresy in the Hebrew Roots Movement?](#)

2. **Name Calling:** The labeling of a person in any manner that they would not label themselves. We could enter a doctrinal debate concerning whether traditions for Christmas and Easter have pagan sources. However, calling Christians pagan or their

festivals pagan is a certain way to build up walls of division. BYNA does not wish to establish an approved doctrine on this topic. Without regard to the festival's source, calling people by terms that they would not identify themselves as is offensive to them and would not benefit our cause or further our message.

3. **Inappropriate Evangelism:** When speaking of inappropriate evangelism, we are speaking of making a person an object of conversion in an attempt to persuade him or her to accept Yeshua as Messiah. This is not the same as sharing a testimony when asked. (1 Peter 3:15) Our point is to limit our testimony to people who desire to hear our message. If we do not want to allow all religions the ability to evangelize us and our children using similar methods we use, then the Golden Rule demands that we not do so to them. Articles discussing evangelism can be found on the BYNA website.

- [Dealing with those Unwanted Sales Calls](#)
- [Evangelism, Historically and Hysterically](#)
- [The Great Commission and its Relationship to Judaism](#)

4. **Negative Focus:** The definition of one's belief by what he or she does **not** do, or what he or she does **not** believe, which sets up walls of division. Having a conversation based on our disagreement with other people or religious groups sets up walls of division. So also is sharing our tradition or practice by explaining what festivals we do **not** keep. Avoid the negative and get positive results.

5. **Setting up standards for other people:** The practice of making one's own guidelines applicable to everyone. It is evident that God laid down specifics in Torah, yet the propensity for us to make fences around those guidelines and apply those standards to all our friends is divisive. Yeshua addressed this often in the Apostolic Writings.

6. **False Associations:** To associate an individual with some act, symbol, belief or group that he would not desire to be associated with is wrong and divisive, especially if the group is villainized. General associations are generally inaccurate.

7. **Assuming Bad Motives:** We always have a choice to believe whether someone has good motives or bad. If we are wrong about them having bad motives, we are speaking *lashon hara* (slandorous speech) and accusing our brothers, destroying someone's character for nothing. This is the work of HaSatan (the destroyer). If we are wrong about them having good motives, God will reveal their intent in time and we will have been gracious. Assume the best and most of the time you will not be disappointed.

8. **False witness:** The practice of testifying negatively about someone's character when we personally were not present. This is often done in reference to historical figures or to someone in the movement we have not met. We too often take one or two known facts and then assume bad motives, associate them with things with which they would never have been associated, and then portray them as evil. We should not make judgment on a small portion of statements someone has made.

9. **Justifying one's own bad behavior because of someone else's bad behavior.** To act unkindly to a past minister because he kicked you out of his congregation is still improper, even though he may have treated you badly. We should learn from our experiences and not use them to justify bad behavior. The question is whether good seed was planted which someday may be watered by others or bad behavior has created bad seed that will die because of the manner in which it was delivered.

Ephesians 4:32

10. **Offensive Speech:** To speak in a derogatory manner about others, especially those whom we believe God desires to unite. Offensive speech divides rather than unites.

11. **Dogmatic Projection:** The practice of stating your opinion as fact in such a way as to demand the listener agree. Gross assessments of entire religions and people groups are opinions, not facts, and expressing them may cause a division.

As we learn to walk as family, we will explore these thoughts together. Please sign up for the BYNA newsletter and peruse our website at bneyyosefna.com.

B'ney Yosef North America is a Torah Observant Community. The association with BYNA is understood to be within the guidelines of the Bible and the additional guiding documents for BYNA. BYNA reserves the right to disassociate from any congregation, home fellowship, family, or individual for any reason in violation of Torah or the guiding documents as determined and understood by the BYNA Elders.

This document is a beginning to a discussion. These topics might be difficult to discuss, but it is a good start for dialogue.