



United Jewish Center Religious School

# Kesher L'Bayit

## Our Partnership between Home and School

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*Kulanu b'Yachad "All of us together"*

May 2006

### **Peace in the Home, Peace in the Family: *Sh'lom Bayit***

We translate the words *Sh'lom Bayit* as "peace in the home," but the words suggest more. The root of the word "*shalom*" is *sh-l-m*, meaning completeness or wholeness. *Bayit* literally means house or home, but can imply family, too. Hence, this *Middah* projects a home that feels complete, a family in which members are connected with one another, a home in which fractures are healed and brokenness is made whole, family harmony.

All this begs the question, what is family? "Family" here means something beyond mother, father, and children. There are families in which children live with grandparents, with one parent, or with adopted parents. There are families which are headed by two men or two women. There are homes in which there has been a divorce or in which a widow or widower lives alone. There are homes in which lives a single person who may connect with extended family that lives in different physical locations. Perhaps what distinguishes families is a sense of connectedness that exists among the individuals that together make a whole. Families/households/homes are comprised of individuals who come together to create their own sanctuary of peace.

Peace is not passive; it doesn't just happen. We need to go after it, chase it, become pursuers of peace. Peace requires action. Pursuing peace and maintaining peace are lofty aims in Jewish life. We are urged to work for peace in the community and in the world. Ideal peace may be the workings of God, but practically speaking the real work of Shalom on earth begins in our most immediate and intimate surroundings—with *Sh'lom Bayit*.

Trust, respect, affections, honesty, humility, good manners, humor sensitivity, and the ability to listen are qualities that are needed to maintain *Sh'lom Bayit*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Teaching Jewish Virtues, Chapter 17*