

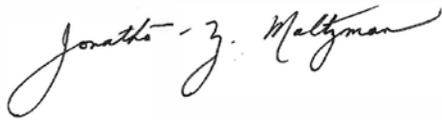
## Kol Ha Rav

When it comes to government, almost all liberal democracies separate church and state. And yet, when thinking of how we want our government to conduct business, we almost all wish that the government would reflect the values we cherish most. Some of those values are undoubtedly rooted in Jewish tradition. And that being the case, we may just prefer to vote for candidates that most closely align with our own sense of justice, our own sense of right and wrong. As long as those values are not identified as Jewish per se, our conscience is clear in having not intermingled religion and politics.

And can it be any other way? How much dissonance can there possibly be between one's religious life and one's political life before we go crazy or before someone charges us with hypocrisy? One aspect of Jewish life I find most reassuring is that the values espoused have been put to the test over centuries. The result is a set of values so solid, they may serve as beacons in the darkest of political nights.

We are taught, for example, to not hate Egyptians (Deuteronomy 23:8). Really? Why not? The Egyptians enslaved us, beat us, and sought to kill our children. We have every reason to hate the Egyptians. Nonetheless, the Torah forbids it, and by extension, forces us to think of the role hatred plays in our lives. When we hate our oppressor, do we become like our oppressor? How much personal energy do we wish to expend on hatred? Couldn't we use our energy in a more positive way? Will our hatred serve as a stumbling block to a future rapprochement with our former enemy?

Like so many Americans, we cannot turn a blind eye to illegal immigration or to the flood of refugees running from the atrocities of ISIS operatives. Still, is the answer to these problems hatred—framing illegals and immigrants as rapists, criminals, or terrorists? That message apparently resonates with many Americans because hatred, like a drug, affords a temporary high, a burst of feel good self-righteousness. And like a drug, a steady diet of hatred leads one down a road of increasingly poor judgments, finding fault and criticism with everyone and anyone who doesn't support the hater's point of view. It may work to get votes, but it cheapens all who employ it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Z. Maltzman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name of the author.

Rabbi Jonathan Maltzman

Note: Any resemblance of these positions to the positions of actual candidates running for the presidency is purely coincidental.