

Subject: Post-Election and Jewish Values

Dear Friends,

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, I reflect on all I am thankful for including my family and being a member of the Jewish community of the Pioneer Valley. There is so much good work being done by our Jewish institutions and in our community. As we begin to prepare Thanksgiving meals and to see family, our country grapples for unity after a divisive presidential election. Regardless of how one voted there are serious concerns about our nation, the Jewish people and the most vulnerable in our midst. Many of us struggle with the current political environment and potential directions of our newly forming presidential administration.

The post-election rise of racist, anti-Semitic, sexist and xenophobic acts and rhetoric is intolerable. Our Jewish values of *b'tzelem Elohim*, valuing and honoring the sanctity and worthiness of all human beings and *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world are being challenged. Now is the time for the Jewish community to unite, even amid political disagreements. We will fight anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance and hatred. We will work with the Interfaith community and other partners promoting a civil just society - an America we will continue to be proud of and foster for our children and generations to follow.

I recently attended the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America where Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks spoke of Abraham and Moses, who left their native lands and tried to create a world of "justice, compassion, and healing." Insisting that "the politics of anger comes from fear," he asserted that the Jewish people are "uniquely poised to show the world the gift of hope."

"When the world is divided, let us be united as Jews," he said. "Where there is despair, bring hope. Where there is hurt, bring healing. Where there is division, be united."

Let us continue to work together promoting social justice values for the betterment of our nation, our people, and the world.

Happy Thanksgiving, with hope and in peace,

Bob

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