

Think again - Barak Obama visits down under

Whether you agree with the policies of the President of the USA or not; or whether you are of the opinion that Obama is a friend of Israel or not; there still remains an underlying duty, to respect the position and the authority of the leaders of the free world and to value the institutions of our democracies. Democracy is undeniably the best form of government that we have; History has overwhelmingly proved this. As citizens of democracies we are responsible to uphold its principals and values and above all not to take our way of life for granted.

I took the time to listen to the addresses of Barak Obama to the parliament and to the addresses of both the prime minister and the opposition leader. All expressed a deep held commitment to the principals of democracy of freedom of race creed and religion. They expressed their commitment to fight for our comon values and to stand up for the common beliefs of our nations. They all spoke of the commitment to the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq but with special emphasis on the Asia Pacific regions both culturally and economically. They all underlined that all countries and cultures should have the potential of freedom and to allow for the expression for the will of the people and power of the people.

Conversely, it is also important for the people to allow the processes of democracy to work. It is important that the people respect the institutions and its represented leaders. After all you have a chance to vote them out in the next election. Without respect of our form of government, anarchy would rule and there would be blood in the streets every time you desired a change of government. The last time I checked that we had a change of government, in Australia, and next morning all was quiet on the streets.

It is for this reason that I believed that the removal of Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister of Australia by the faceless party factions had a fundamental flaw. It was not the will of the people although it was indeed the process of our democracy. We lost respect for the position of Prime Minister on that day.

I personally was heartened by the rhetoric of the President - he underlined his faith and trust in God. He recalled how the founding fathers of the USA crossed the seas, travelled west and opened its doors for immigration based on Godly principals. He inferred that the principals of America were based on the principals and belief in a God. And that belief in God provided a moral foundation upon which our way of life can express the rights of freedom, ethics, morality, equality and dignity of all people. I have often in my speeches referred to the idea that religion provides the soul and spirit to our way of life.

He concluded his speech with the words" God bless America, God bless Australia, God bless all of mankind" Indecently Tony Abbot ended his speech with the same words "God bless America God bless Australia"

As always see you in shule
Good Shabbos
Elozer Gestetner
rabbi@coogeesynagogue.org