

*the
Frum
Voters
Guide*

for the
NEW YORK CITY
Primary Elections

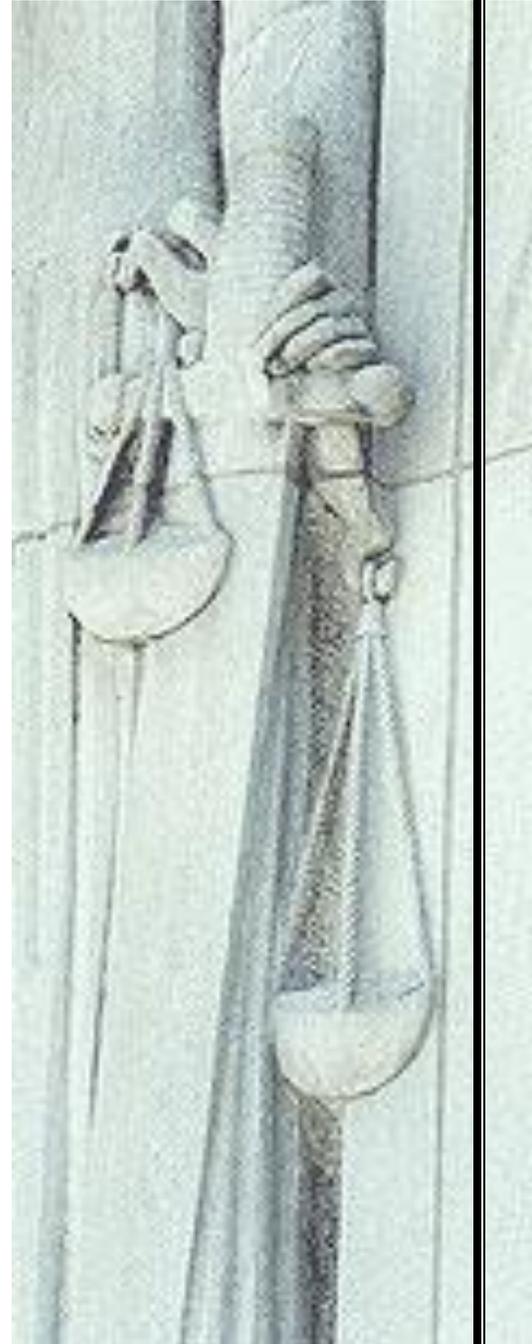
VOTE on
- Tuesday, September 10, 2013 -

The Community Guardians Group

Dovid Z. Schwartz

(917) 680-6632

cgg@zehjournal.com



WHY ITS SMART POLITICS TO VOTE THE MORAL ISSUES

By Dovid Z. Schwartz

There's no higher ideal in America, New York City in particular, than to look past our differences with other kinds of people, to recognize their basic goodness and to work together in the name of the common good. In our own kehillos, disagreements are often settled by *bais din* with *peshara*, where each side gives a little and gives up from what they feel they are entitled.

So where is there a place for the Jewish community to insist that our ideas about abortion, homosexuality and euthanasia, for instance, are espoused by our elected representatives?

Let's get one thing straight. I'm not saying that every politician needs to be proficient in the laws of *tumah* and *tahara*. Nobody has suggested that in order to vote for a candidate, he has to be as pious as the *Chofetz Chaim*. Let's face it, the people who are most often drawn to the power and fame that comes with public office are more often than not motivated by desires that are completely antithetical to the development of good character traits.

What needs to be acknowledged is the fact that there's an outer border to the model of secular society. At a certain point, the spirit of "progressivism" that broke down the walls holding back women's rights, and civil rights, then "reproductive rights" are eventually going to seek to break down the walls that need to be left standing to ensure a civil society.

We may not have the power in our hands to turn the tide on America's sliding view of acceptable conduct. But we must not be complicit in that destruction by acting like it's a done deal.

MORAL EQUIVALENCE AND ANTI-RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

You might remember about 12 years ago, at a time before the Jewish community turned out in massive numbers in Washington DC to protest against the Bush administration's hard posture against the state of Israel. Jewish people were getting exasperated by hearing this broken record of hackneyed phrases criticizing the Jewish state. "We must reduce the violence on both sides." "Israel needs to show restraint." "We need to break the cycle of violence."

Underlying all these seemingly rational statements was the assumption that a hundred Jewish civilians being blown up on a bus was the same thing as a handful of jihad terrorists being shot as they prepared to launch another attack. At that time, it was quite clear to anybody with a shred of decency, to ask how could Condoleeza Rice rationally compare the intentional targeting of civilians with the painstaking, surgical accuracy of the Israel Defense Force in stopping terrorists?

I bring up this painful moment in Jewish history to draw a parallel here. Let me ask you, at that time, when the streets were flowing with Jewish blood every day of the Intifada, what did you think of the politicians who said, "I support Israel, but I also recognize the plight of the Palestinian people." Would you say that this person is just being balanced and fair-minded? Of course not. You'd say this person is an anti-semite, and he's bought into a program intentionally designed to de-legitimize the claim of our brothers to the Jewish homeland.

There is a spiritual war being waged right now in America, fighting for the souls of the next generation. It may look superficially like a quibble over technicalities. A marriage license here, a discrimination statute there, what's the big deal. But make no mistake, there are people who absolutely despise everything we stand for as *ovdei Hashem*.

It is not a coincidence that one of the first proposals to ban *bris milah* outright, with no religious exceptions, appeared in San Francisco. Another place was Massachusetts, the

birthplace of gay marriage in America. A group that claims their personalities are defined by their physical desires are quite naturally outraged by the presence of a people who stand for the principle that man is subservient to his Maker and must restrain his own will in deference to the will of Ha Kadosh boruch Hu.

What it means to have "American" values is rapidly being redefined through the efforts of people who are using government, entertainment and news media to legitimize licentious conduct and de-legitimize religious viewpoints.

A politician cannot claim he simply respects all points of view. Because when push comes to shove, politicians who buy into the social acceptance of homosexuality become frighteningly insensitive to Jewish principles when they really matter. I hate to have to paint this in such stark terms, but when it comes to electing a representative, if they're with Them, they're against Us.

WHAT AN OFFICIAL STATE RELIGION LOOKS LIKE TODAY

The New York City Commission on Human Rights issued fines to Williamsburg storeowners for asking their customers to dress in a modest fashion. The City claims that the storeowners violated the civil rights of customers by imposing their religious beliefs on them.

Regardless of the fact that there are five star restaurants in Manhattan that require diners to wear a jacket, and also the fact that the City can cite not one actual customer who complained about being "discriminated" against before the summons was written, the rationale behind the City's action is striking. New York City has literally elevated a person's desire to dress in an immodest fashion to the same status of a protected civil right. The City is saying that immodest clothing is on par with religion, race and ethnicity that trumps a businessman's ability to refuse service.

It used to be the accepted wisdom that Jews must support the Democratic party and liberal social policies, because we didn't want to allow religious gentiles to use the power of government as a means for imposing their own religious message as the law of the land. But the past 10 years has turned this principle on its head. Now the "progressives" with their celebration of "equality" have become the bearers of a national theology, which is actively being used to defame religious belief rooted in the Torah.

We have reached a threshold in our relationship with the government of America. Until now, an administrator of our organizations could not be expected to risk alienating a government official who might provide a significant source of revenue by taking a confrontational posture on social issues. Jewish voters have often been swayed by the age-old mantra, "who's better for yeshivos?"

The Jewish people can no longer remain passive partners to the demonization of our most cherished beliefs. Jewish support, votes and financial assistance that goes to politicians who espouse the normalization of licentious behavior makes us complicit in the slander of our Torah.

In secular terms, it's called a "zero sum game." What you give to one party can only come at the expense of the other. The honor that is owed to Torah is directly affected by the popular acceptance of heretical viewpoints. This may be the essence of the prophecy to Rivka Imenu, that in her womb two nations were developing, and one would rise only at the fall of the other.

THE TREASURERS OF THE KING

Holding our elected officials accountable to reflecting Torah values on social issues isn't simply an effort to impose our views on others. It may be part of the fulfillment of the destiny of Klal Yisroel.

As the Chosen People, the Jewish nation is charged with the responsibility of increasing the awareness of the sovereignty of Ha Kadosh boruch Hu. This awareness is associated with yiras Shomayim, a precious substance that Chazal tell us is the only thing in the treasury of Ha Kadosh boruch Hu.

The Torah tells us that when the Jewish people keep the mitzvos they will be "am segulah." This might be more than just a statement of value. The role of the Jews as the people of Hashem might be to serve literally as the "treasurers" of the Heavenly Government.

The role of the Treasurer is to stimulate the development of the kingdom, and facilitate commerce by extending loans, grants and guaranteeing debts. So too, the Am Segulah might be charged with facilitating the development of the world on behalf of Ha Kadosh boruch Hu. The Jewish people balance kindness and restraint based on the wisdom of the Torah to counsel others and disseminate yiras Shomayim.

But what would happen if government officials were to accept payoffs in exchange for providing safe haven to people who were actively aiding and abetting an enemy regime? Just as the U.S. Government would be expected to not look kindly on such dereliction of duty, so too, the Heavenly Government, l'havdil, might be equally displeased where members of the Chosen People provide moral cover to those who have actively assisted the movement against Torah values.

LOVE OR FEAR

Respected members of our communities have impressed upon us the importance of maintaining a relationship with elected officials. From the perspective of the administrator of a charity organization or its supporters, a stable relationship with the political establishment can be the key to successful advocacy. However, from a community perspective, a philosophy of electing candidates based upon maintaining the relationships with our community spokesman is literally selling our community needs for pennies on the dollar.

The sad fact that most Jewish people don't realize that while a close personal relationship between askanim and politicians are often useful in securing "earmark" grants (otherwise known as "pork" to the secular world) for a few institutions, on the main the rest of the community doesn't benefit from the "close relationship" at all. In fact, the continued support from askanim gives these politicians a sense of entitlement and being insulated and protected in their continued opposition to things that really would help yeshiva families, like enacting tax credits for tuition dollars.

If we simply vote for a politician because he's going to win anyway, then he's not going to listen us, because he knows we're going to vote for him anyway. Why should a political figure make any sacrifices or risk crossing powerful anti-Torah social movements or unions, if he knows we're going to vote for him simply because "he's going to win anyway?".

The lifeblood of a vibrant democracy depends upon the fact that the elected officials are held accountable to the public for re-election. A politician who does not fear that he will be voted of office by his constituents will feel virtually no responsibility to respond to their needs and desires.

Until now, our adversaries have demonstrated far more commitment to holding their elected officials accountable for supporting their ideologies that are counter to ours. This is called a "litmus test." Our adversaries have demonstrated time and time again that they are willing to vote a politician out of office if he doesn't support their agenda. As a result, when an elected official for our communities is put under pressure to bow to their anti-Torah measures, it takes virtually no time for him to weigh the threat of punishment from our adversaries against the promise of support that he's received from our communities to choose the bad measure.

The Jewish people has shown incredible ability to rise to the occasion to rally and protest when things like eretz Yisroel become urgent concerns. But the most important time to act should not be when the evil decrees are proposed. We need to make our voices heard before then, at election time, to make sure our elected representatives know we mean business. A protest can only have value if the elected officials know that we are prepared to carry through on election day.

Now is the time to make our voices heard. It's not Thompson, Quinn or DeBlasio that needs to hear our voices. Whichever one who wins is not going to come back to ask our opinion once they've won office. Mayor Bloomberg held a meeting with Rabbonim and askonim regarding metzizah b'peh when he was running for office. But he had no problem reversing course when he no longer needed something from us.

The key act of speech is directed for the future candidates. Elections happen every year. Overreliance on the philosophy of choosing the "lesser of two evils" based on who is likely to win has led us to the situation where the lesser evil keeps getting more evil every election cycle.

THE DIFFERENT OBLIGATIONS IN VOTING

Many people's confusion about voting might be the result of mixed messages. This comes from the fact that there are actually several independent responsibilities a Jew has when it comes to voting.

First Aspect: Just Showing Up

The city, state and nation keep meticulous records about who shows up to vote and how often. By tracking voter turnout, the elected officials evaluate just how seriously they need to pay attention to the concerns and answer the requests of those communities. Specifically, if a community has low voter turnout, the people are invisible politically. Their needs will get ignored and their opinions overlooked time and time again, because these voters have forfeited their ability to use their power to elect representatives who would listen to them.

Second Aspect: Holding Them Accountable

Once there are voters showing up at the polls, the next thing that officials look at are pockets of resistance. That is, politicians are able to identify what issues they run on simply by looking at what people get angry about and what people want changed. The wisdom of representative democracy is that it forces government to be responsive to the people. But the only reason an elected official needs to be responsive is because he fears being voted out of office if the people choose to back someone who better represents them.

Third Aspect: Voting Together (as a Bloc)

One of the most powerful positions a community can take politically is when nearly all the members agree to vote together for the same candidates. The raw power of a bloc of several thousand votes gives a substantial incentive to elected officials to work to gain the favor of the community by heeding its requests. However, absent the centralized authority a kehilla structure, the ability for individual voters to agree to put aside their own ideas in favor of joining with their neighbors does not often arise.

RATING SCALE

To communicate the moral fitness of candidates, this Guide borrows from concepts in halacha regarding classes of spiritual status. We ranked the candidates who committed themselves to support anti-Torah measures with the scale of spiritual contamination (avos ha'tumah).

Candidates who we do not have information on the moral values, we have rated as "Parave". Candidates who are upstanding in protecting moral values earned the distinction of "Toshav."

For an election where all the candidates are equally bad, we suggest using the box to "write in" a message. This records the fact that someone actually showed up to vote but cared enough not to put his support behind someone who opposes Torah values. There should be a box to check and a space following the other candidates. It may be helpful to state clearly, "PROTEST AGAINST IMMORALITY."

Mayor of the City of New York

Democrat

Sal Albanese	RISHON L'TUMAH
Bill De Blasio	AV HA TUMAH
John Liu	RISHON L'TUMAH
Erick Salgado	TOSHAV
Christine Quinn	AV HA TUMAH
Bill Thompson	RISHON L'TUMAH
Anthony Weiner	AV HA TUMAH

Sal Albanese declares himself a "a strong supporter of LGBT rights" who "helped pass one of the first bills in the nation that prohibited housing and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation." This means he is proud of a law that would force make a religious family face fines and lawsuits if they choose not to rent an apartment in their home to two men or two women. He calls himself "absolutely pro-choice."

Public Advocate Bill DeBlasio vowed to work more "aggressively" for gay issues in the city. He is opposed to any government help for private schools. He supports the city distributing "morning after" birth control pills to 14 year old girls in the public schools. He supports the government interference with circumcision, saying he only disagreed with the "way" in which Mayor Bloomberg introduced the metzizah b'peh consent form. He says he thinks it's the government's responsibility to interfere with circumcision to protects the health of children.

John Liu is one of the few candidates to say he would change the law interfering with metzizah b'peh, saying that he would defer to the Rabbis. However, he has been a vocal supporter of the normalization of same-gender relationships.

Erick Salgado, the only candidate of either party who stands for traditional values, has received the endorsement of over 45 leading Rabbonim, with a letter signed by the one of the most diverse collection of respected leaders of Klal Yisroel. Signatories includes the heads of YU and Young Israel shuls, Chassidic, Sephardic and Litvish communities, rabbonim, poskim and roshei yeshivos.

"Mayoral candidate Erick Salgado is the only known candidate... committed to safeguarding our moral values," the letter reads. "He is opposed to the forced acceptance of toeiva, which we know normalizes lifestyles that are forbidden (Assur)." Noting that "our response needs to be analogous to our response to a charity organization," the Rabbonim unambiguously state that it is "halachically (according to Jewish law) incumbent upon every Jew to assist Mr. Salgado's campaign in its needs, in order for Erick Salgado to win the mayoral race. Every Jew, registered as a Democrat at the time of the Primary, is obligated to vote for Mr. Salgado."

In addition to the strong and clear language, the letter also contains a high caliber of signatories, including such renowned talmidei chachamim as Rav Eliyahu Ben-Haim, Rosh Yeshiva at YU/RIETS, Rav Simcha Bunim Cohen, posek and author of respected halacha sefarim; Rav Yitzchok Cohen, Rosh Yeshiva of YU/RIETS; Rav Avrohom Y. Nelkenbaum, Rosh Yeshiva of

Mirrer Yeshiva; Rav Yisroel Neuman, Rosh Yeshiva of Beth Medrash Govoha; and Rav Moshe Wolfson, Rov of Emunas Yisroel and Mashgiach of Torah Vodaas, among many others.

Mr. Salgado proposes that on a city-wide level, parents who send their children to private schools should receive a deduction in real estate taxes corresponding to tuition paid. Parents who rent might receive a voucher to give their landlord who can then can redeem the voucher for money back. He opposes the Bloomberg administration's regulations on metzizah b'peh and said he would fire the head of the city's Department of Health and repeal the regulation.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn is one of the most militant proponents of anti-religious morality in American politics. She supports the City's restrictions on bris milah, and supports the fines the city issued to Williamsburg shopowners for displaying signs with a dress code (see introduction for more details).

Speaker Quinn played a key role in the infamous "Chick Fil-A" debacle last year, joining with the mayors of Boston and Chicago in a call to withhold business opportunities to the fast-food chain based on the company's donating money to groups that promote the traditional family.

On City Council letterhead, Ms. Quinn wrote to NYU, "I urge you to sever your relationship with the Chick fil-A establishment that exists on your campus. This establishment should be replaced with an establishment where the ownership does not denigrate a portion of our population... I urge you to join with me in ensuring that our city does not become a place where those who do not share our commitment, have any place to espouse those views." The Speaker of the City Council stated openly that she is use the influence of her office to make her personal viewpoint the only acceptable speech in the city.

Chick Fil-A had committed zero discrimination in practice, neither discriminating in hiring or in serving gay customers. Ms. Quinn and her colleagues simply didn't like the fact that the company proudly called itself a company that embodies Christian values. Ms. Quinn's actions were reprehensible by any liberal standard of tolerance or freedom of speech.

Bill Thompson is endorsed by the teacher's union, which makes his ability to support anything in favor of yeshivos questionable. Since all schools draw funding from the same pot (the Education budget) the teacher's union zealously opposes any funding for private schools. When he served as City Comptroller, before same-sex marriage was legalized in New York, Mr. Thompson blackmailed companies doing business with the city by conditioning government contracts on those companies extending spousal benefits to same-sex couples living as "domestic partners." Mr. Thompson has said that he will be glad to "revisit" the issue of Mayor Bloomberg's regulation of metzizah b'peh, but he has avoided saying that he will do away with the regulation.

Anthony Weiner resigned from Congress after sending nude pictures of himself to random women. Despite the loss of his position, he continued to engage in this behavior. Along with this unsavory conduct, Mr. Weiner is a vocal supporter of the normalization of same-gender relationships and abortion. He has a bombastic personality and typically creates confrontations where none are necessary.

Republican

John Catsimatidis	RISHON L'TUMA
Joe Lhota	RISHON L'TUMA
George McDonald	RISHON L'TUMA

RECOMMENDATION: Write in a Message of Protest!
 Sadly, all the Republican candidates for mayor support the normalization of same-gender relationships and abortion.

NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER	
Scott Stringer	RISHON L'TUMAH
Eliot Spitzer	AV HA TUMAH

RECOMMENDATION: Write in a Message of Protest!

The public attention in this race has centered around the fact that former governor Spitzer broke the law to be with prostitutes. He was also an avowed supporter of same-gender relationships, being the first to introduce the law to legalize same-gender marriage in New York. Mr. Spitzer's record also includes a scandal involving his use of the police force to track his political rival, Republican Senate Leader Joe Bruno, in an attempt to expose Mr. Bruno's misuse of state aircraft.

While Attorney General, Mr. Spitzer made a name for himself by essentially blackmailing Wall Street investment firms by announcing lawsuits, which is devastating to the stock price of a public company, if they didn't settle with the State. Now he pledges to use the City Comptroller position as an ideological instrument, threatening to withdraw city pension investments from companies that don't, in his words, "share our values."

Mr. Stringer has a much more lower profile. However there are many troubling aspects to Mr. Stringer's record. For instance, Mr. Stringer made a vow that he would not wed his then-girlfriend until gay people were allowed to get married under New York law. As an assemblyman, he was one of the few votes to oppose stripping tax-exempt status to a company affiliated with the "North American Man-Boy Love Association," an organization that promotes child molestation. Mr. Stringer stated, out of principle, that removing tax-exempt status from such a group would set a "bad precedent."

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Daniel Squadron is rated AV HA TUMAH for repeatedly voted in favor of same-gender marriage and holding himself out as a firm supporter of gay rights and abortion.

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Rory Lancman	AV HA TUMAH
Andrea Veras	PARAVE

Rory Lancman repeatedly voted in favor of same-gender marriage and holds himself out as a firm supporter of gay rights and abortion, earning him a rating of AV HA TUMAH. He is endorsed by the teacher's union, which makes his ability to support anything in favor of yeshivos questionable. Since all schools draw funding from the same pot (the Education budget) the teacher's union zealously opposes any funding for private schools.



Copies of this Guide will be available online at www.zehjournal.com. Please feel free to duplicate, email, and otherwise share this information with your family, friends and neighbors. Questions and comments can be sent to cgg@zehjournal.com.