

TORAH THOUGHTS – CONFLICT, REPRESENTATIVE OMAR, RESOLUTION

Recently Congresswoman Ilhan Omar (MN) implied on Twitter that Jews, specifically the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), pay members of Congress to support Israel. This is factually inaccurate – AIPAC does not direct funds to politicians. More importantly, it is deeply disturbing that a representative in Washington would engage in Anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jews and money. Further, that she did so in such a casual and uninformed manner is, in my opinion, outrageous.

The Torah guides us on how to respond when someone offends us. “Do not hate someone in your heart. Reprove him but incur no guilt because of him.” (Leviticus 19:17) In other words, we should not stay silent but rather engage the other party. I wish that Ms. Omar would have gathered facts and sought dialogue, and I plan to contact her office to express my concerns.

The Congresswoman has apologized, but actions speak louder than words. I hope that she will listen to advocates for a strong America-Israel relationship, and learn more about the dangers of Anti-Semitism.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. AIPAC responded on Twitter: *"We are proud that we are engaged in the democratic process to strengthen the US-Israel relationship. Our bipartisan efforts are reflective of American values and interests. We will not be deterred in any way by ill-informed and illegitimate attacks on this important work."* For more, go to <https://twitter.com/AIPAC>, and to www.aipac.org. The AIPAC annual Policy Conference is March 24-26 in the nation's capital.
2. Rep. Omar's comments were widely denounced by politicians and others. For more on this and on her apology, go to https://www.timesofisrael.com/ilhan-omar-issues-apology-after-condemnations-over-aipac-money-tweets/?utm_source=The+Daily+Edition&utm_campaign=daily-edition-2019-02-12&utm_medium=email
3. Anti-Semitism rose 57% in 2017 in the U.S., according to the Anti-Defamation League.
4. The Marlboro Township Council also put out a statement. *"It recently came to our attention that a member of Congress from Minnesota made comments that can only be described as Anti-Semitic. The comments served no purpose other than to disparage a group and dig up what many of us recognize as centuries old myths about people of Jewish faith, ones that have unfortunately regained traction in the past few years. We condemn these remarks as wrong and hurtful, and stand firm, together in declaring that such comments have no place in our dialogue, let alone the United States Congress."* For full statement go to <http://www.marlboro-nj.gov/press/2019/statementontolerance2-2019.pdf>

5. I have been in touch with Scott Metzger, Township Council President and a longtime member of MJC. We are working together on a program about anti-Semitism – please watch for details.
6. Allan Sugarman is addressing anti-Semitism on March 28, as part of his lecture series. More information is available in the weekly email.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Pont