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What Marjorie Taylor Greene’s win

tells us about what Trump really is

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To all within the American Jewish community who believe Donald Trump is the Great White Hope for this country (or Israel), let me offer three words of caution (well, a name, actually): Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Greene won the recent GOP runoff primary in Georgia’s 14th Congressional District. Among other faults we need to truly worry about, she is an avid supporter of QAnon, the far-right conspiracy theory-spouting group that rants and raves against the non-existent “deep state” and the child sex trafficking ring run by what QAnon refers to as its satanic pedophiles and cannibals. Greene’s own racist comments include anti-Semitic ones, not unlike the comments many others post on the QAnon website.

Chester Doles, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, calls Greene a “friend” and she has proudly posed for photographs with him. Doles heads a chapter of the racist skinhead Hammerskins Nation, which the Anti-Defamation League calls “the most violent and best-organized neo-Nazi skinhead group in the United States.” The Hammerskins Nation, the ADL says, is “active and dangerous.”

Anti-Semitism is part of Greene’s makeup. She “has a history of propagating anti-Semitic disinformation,” according to Allison Padilla-Goodman, vice president of the ADL’s Southern division. Her “continued insistence on propagating such anti-Semitism,” coupled with her refusal to disavow her relationship with Doles or to “retract [her] past anti-Semitic statements,” are causes for serious concern, Padilla-Goodman says.

Greene, in fact, wants to take her racist and anti-Semitic beliefs into the GOP mainstream. “If Republicans want to win in 2020,” she said after her victory, “they need to listen to the message that I’m speaking.”

We, too, need to listen to her message and how it is received by the GOP. Curiously, while the Republican Jewish Coalition did not endorse Greene, it waited until late in the race to endorse her conservative opponent, the neurosurgeon Dr. John Cowan. In late June, as its executive director Matt Brooks admitted, the race was not even on the RJC’s radar screen. It should have been, though, and right from the start.

One reason Greene won was because she had strong support from some famous GOP office-holders, including shirt-sleeved Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), he with penchant of replacing the S in the liberal activist Tom Steyer’s name with a dollar sign (Tom $teyer), apparently to call attention to the fact that Steyer has Jewish blood in his veins (Steyer’s father is Jewish). The House Freedom Caucus not only endorsed Greene’s candidacy over Cowan’s, its Freedom Fund donated nearly $200,000 to support it.

Greene’s biggest endorsement, however, came from Donald J. Trump. He endorsed her over Cowan, even though Cowan’s website made it clear he was “pro-Trump, pro-life, [and] pro-gun,” and despite the fact that a number of other influential Republicans urged him not to back Greene.

After Greene’s victory, the president crowed in a tweet that Greene was a “future Republican Star,” and “a real WINNER!”

Why did Trump actively support a known racist and anti-Semite over an equally conservative Republican, but one who is outspoken in denouncing bigotry of all kinds? As I have argued in this space several times, it is because he, too, is a racist and an anti-Semite. His words testify to that, and so do some of his actions.

Just a year ago last Friday, for example, on August 14, 2019, after a pickup truck plowed into hundreds of Jewish protestors at an ICE detention center in Rhode Island, Trump neither commented nor condemned the attack.

After initially downplaying the pro-Nazi riots in Charlottesville, Trump was forced into delivering a speech in which he attacked race hatred and anti-Semitism. He later said that speech was “the biggest [expletive] mistake I’ve made,” according to Bob Woodward’s book “Fear,” which was based on interviews with White House staffers, among others.

Trump once told a roomful of Jewish Republicans they would not vote for him because “you want to control your own politician.” “The only kind of people I want counting my money,”
 he once said, “are short guys that wear yarmulkes every day.”

Trump has intimated that Jews are not real Americans, or at least not loyal ones. In 2019, for example, he told a Jewish audience that Israel is “your country,” Benjamin Netanyahu is “your prime minister,” and if the Democrats had their way, it could “leave Israel out there all by yourselves.”

On the first International Holocaust Remembrance Day after he took office, Trump deliberately deleted all references to the Jews from the statement prepared for him by the State Department’s Holocaust issues office. Trump, it must be noted, has reluctantly admitted to once owning a copy of Adolf Hitler’s book of speeches, titled “My New Order”—he kept the book by his bedside for many years—and has also expressed his admiration for the late automaker and virulent anti-Semite Henry Ford, whom Adolf Hitler once said was his “inspiration.”

Since 1989, every president and vice president of the United States who visited Poland has visited the Warsaw Ghetto to pay tribute, but not Trump. White House staffers also sought to keep daughter Ivanka’s visit out of the public eye media by not inviting the media to go along.

After being ordered to do so by Trump, the Department of Homeland Security disbanded the very unit charged with monitoring domestic terrorism, which is mainly right-wing extremist terrorism according to the FBI. DHS did so at a time when right-wing attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions began to skyrocket.

There are many more examples.

The Book of Psalms is filled with warnings against putting our faith in an individual. Among these: “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man” (see Psalm 118:8) and “Put not your trust in the great, in mortal man who cannot save” (see Psalm 146:3).

Trusting someone who says and does the things Trump says and does about Jews and other minorities, however, is far worse. As I noted in a previous column, the Babylonian Talmud tractate Sota 22a teaches us that once a person commits a transgression and repeats it, it becomes something he or she finds acceptable to repeat. For Trump, anti-Semitic behavior and statements are acceptable to repeat. (So are birther statements. He tried that with President Barack Obama; last week, he questioned whether the Oakland, Calif.-born Kamala Harris was qualified to be vice president because her mother came from India and her father from Jamaica.)

Make no mistake. Trump does not support Israel because he likes Jews, but because he needs the votes of the Evangelical Christian Right—and it supports Israel for a reason that should worry all of us. Evangelical Christians see Jewish control over “the Holy Land” as the final step in bringing about the “Second Coming” of Jesus. When they realize that will not happen, they will turn on the Jews the way the Catholic Church turned on us when it launched the First Crusade.

To not put “your trust in the great,” of course, applies to every candidate, including Trump’s opponent, Joe Biden. Yet we have to make a choice on this and every Election Day. For this, the Torah and the prophets provide guidelines. As Jews, we have to do “what is right and good” in God’s eyes, as the Torah says over and again in the weekly portions now being read in those synagogues holding services.

Among those things we need to do that is “right and good,” as the prophet Jeremiah told the Jews of the First Exile quoting God, is to “seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper.” (See Jeremiah 29:7.)

That includes, as the prophet Isaiah quotes God as saying (which we will hear read on Yom Kippur), “to unlock fetters of wickedness, and untie the cords of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free; to break off every yoke..., to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your home…; to clothe [the naked], and not to ignore [the needs of] your own kin.” (See Isaiah 58:6-7.)

We must do so not just for our own, but for the welfare of all among whom we live, including the non-Jews, as Jeremiah said and as Maimonides, the Rambam, codified it. (See his Mishneh Torah, Kings and Wars 10:12.)

The candidates who fit that bill are the ones we should vote for.

To support Trump on November 3 is to support more Marjorie Taylor Greenes (there are about a dozen other QAnon supporters running on the GOP line countrywide), but it also is a rejection of Jeremiah and Isaiah, because Trump has shown little interest in caring for “the hungry…, the wretched poor…, [and] the naked,” whereas Biden and Kamala Harris are committed to doing so.

To support Trump over Biden in no way is to do “what is right and good in the sight of the Lord.”