

Some Post Yom Kippur Thoughts



by Phyllis Chesler

Since I can no longer hold my own in crowds and am temporarily on some heavy medication, I could not join my beloved shul for Yom Kippur. However, I did zoom in to several shuls and was grateful for the opportunity. (And yes, I apologized to the Holy One before Nei'lah).

However, I was both devastated as well as outraged by a drash delivered by an otherwise very competent rabbi who shall remain unnamed.

He asked—no, he implored the assembled Jews to consider taking the road most traveled among American Jews, namely that we consider the Palestinian narrative as well as the Jewish one. Strive for the middle path, take the road of compromise to peace. Consider what the Other has to say.

I could not believe my ears. On this day of all days and at this moment in history—the rabbi is advising us to sit down

with Hitler, divide Europe (or rather Israel) up again; allow Amalek to murder only half the number of Jews our sworn enemy originally had in mind. Allow Hamas and Hezbollah to continue to launch rockets, missiles, and drones against civilian Israelis both in the north and the south for as long as they wish, maybe forever. The Arab world is well known for eternal feuds and for grudges that never quit.

Afterwards, a member of his congregation urged me to write something. "He deserves to be exposed and raged against."

I said: "But I feel so bad for him. He is one of us and he is so lost—even as he believes that he is transmitting wisdom from Sinai and from the Talmud. He used the example of Hillel who, in this rabbi's words, said: "Do not do unto others what is odious to you." Therefore, he concluded, we should not hate the haters, we should not adopt their way.

Wait a minute. We are also commanded to stop anyone who is coming to kill us and our people; in fact, we are advised to pre-empt them in the service of self-defense.

After the Yom was over, I spoke to another member of this rabbi's flock and we shared the same dismal view about his words. However, she said:

"My mother was a Shoah survivor. She always told me that the Jews in America, especially those who were born later on, simply refuse to believe what Man is capable of. They think that they've escaped evil or that they can reason with evil. They are so wrong."

I was so glad to learn that some rabbis actually taught Torah from the Bima on the Yom and that some spoke the truth about the danger that Israel currently faces and what it means to stand alone.

First published in [Substack](#).