

Strong Advice But Will Anyone Pay Attention?

By Phyllis Chesler

The prophet Samuel anointed Israel's first King, Shaul. It was a terrible idea from the beginning. And why? Because the Jews wanted to be like other nations, all of whom had a King. They begged Samuel for a King of their own.

Jews are in danger when we try to be just like others. Enough said.

But the people cried out piteously for a King. Thus, both God and Samuel finally relented and Shaul was duly appointed. And how might this be at all relevant today?

We are commanded to never forget/to always remember the gratuitous cruelty, the pure evil, with which Amalek afflicted us after God redeemed us from slavery in Egypt; when we were new to wandering in the desert. God, off stage, so to speak, tells Samuel to instruct Shaul in the following way:

"I have remembered what Amalek did to Israel (the ambush)...now, go and strike Amalek down and destroy everything he has. Have no pity on him—kill man and woman alike, infant and suckling alike, ox and sheep alike, camel and donkey alike."

It seems that the death-eating fiends known as Hamas listen to such advice. But the Jews still do not. Like King Shaul, we, (and practically everyone else), take pity on our enemies—but above all, upon those who have been snatched from us and plunged straight into a living nightmare.

The Gazans and their terrorist leaders certainly act as if they are at least first cousins of Amalek. If not Amalek himself. Do I think that generations later people should be

collectively punished for the sins of their ancestors—I do not—but I am no God, no prophet, no King. Do I think that unrepentent evil in our time should we wiped out? Yes, I do.



There is no right or wrong here except I must note that people are usually unable to sacrifice what is personally most dear to them for the sake of the collective good. In this case, the still-living Israeli hostages are being chosen over and against the future survival of the Jewish state. Even now, jihadists are operating within Israel and on all her borders. We are all being held hostage in a very different way than those being held in tunnels far beneath the earth with no food, no water, no company, and very little air.

As someone said: "I cannot breathe."

King Shaul did as he was told—except he did not. Yes, he killed the Amalekites and captured their King, Agag, but Shaul kept Agag alive. Did Shaul have compassion for a fellow King?

Worse, Shaul took back the best of Amalek's sheep, the cattle, the fattened bulls—ostensibly, he said, to sacrifice to God. But this is not what God wanted. Shaul was removed from the throne and replaced by God's choice, the young shepherd, David a descendent of the great Moabite convert, Ruth.

King Agag and his people are the descendants of the original Amalekites.

Shaul was eventually captured and killed; his was corpse hung on the city walls by his barbarian enemies. His corpse had to be rescued in the dead of night. It is terrible story best left for another day.

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