

# Joyful but Mainly Somber

By Phyllis Chesler

Why am I so unnaturally somber on this day of all days—when Hamas released 20 living Israeli hostages?



Welcome home, darling boys. These returnees from Hell are so young, mainly in their 20s, only a handful in their 30s—perhaps their youth may save them from a lifetime of PTSD and immune-related diseases. But perhaps not.

President Trump and PM Netanyahu have pulled off a miracle. Trump has just told the Knesset that “this is not only the end of the war but of the age of terrorism and the beginning of the age of peace and of God.”

This sounds extraordinary—and it would be a first in all of human history.

However, as of this moment, or so I’ve been told, Hamas has not yet decided whether it will give up its arms, nor have

they returned all the Israeli corpses who died in Gaza. I guess I do not have much faith in the possibility of “peace” ahead. I hope I’m wrong but, based on what I’ve learned, I know that, historically and theologically, Arab Muslim leaders have never given up their obsessive commitment to bloody Jihad, to gender and religious apartheid, to slavery, and to conversion via the sword.

Would economic incentives and the promise of prosperity and stability change that? In the early to mid-20th century, Arabs who flocked to the Holy Land did not rejoice in the possibility of a progress that would have included them when Jews made the desert bloom—no, instead they murdered as many Jews as they could. Why would this stop now?

I cannot even imagine how Gaza would become “deradicalized.” That would require a complete Israeli military victory, Hamas’s abject surrender and judicial punishment for their war crimes—not amnesty, not safe passage, not the return of Hamas terrorists—and even then, it might take at least one hundred years of re-education.

Based upon recent history, why would anyone trust Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey and/or the international “community” to supervise a peaceful transition and to build up Gaza? This so-called “community” has never ended war-zone rapes or a genocide; it has only succeeded in one goal, namely that of demonizing and isolating the only Jewish state.

But that’s not what’s making me sad on a day of rejoicing. Here’s what is.

The Israelis kept booing PM Netanyahu when Trump’s emissaries, Steve Witkoff and the Kushners, spoke in Tel Aviv in Hostage Square. They were far too similar to the huge worldwide demonstrations for “Palestine,” which were, essentially, blood thirsty and terrifying Nazi-style mobs.

Then there is this. The loud crowds, including the media, the

professoriate, the politicians, the celebrities, the “progressive” students, the antifa-style agitators who began calling for a “ceasefire” even before the IDF entered Gaza in Israel’s war of self-defense—well, where are they now? How eerily silent they’ve become. Perhaps they did not envision a “cease-fire” if it included Israel’s survival.

I am sobered by the total lack of civility in the public square, the breakdown of all and any respect for any perceived authority or for one’s political and ideological opponents. In short, for other human beings. And by the continued viciousness towards Israel, which defines the world’s media.

Today, of all days, the *New York Times*’s lead article is titled, “Test for Israel: Repairing Ties to U.S. Voters. Image Stained by War. Criticism of its Conduct Grows Increasingly Bipartisan.” The *Washington Post*’s front-page photo is of victorious Arab Palestinians returning to Gaza; they make a V for Victory sign just as terrorist leader Yasir Arafat always did. To its credit, *The Times of London* has a digital front page that alternates between returning Arab terrorists with that of returning Israeli captives. The French remain so very French. *Le Monde*’s front-page photo is of Macron and Le Cornu, under which is a small article about Gazans flooding back into a “devastated” North.

I congratulate President Trump and PM Netanyahu for this moment of joy and for a potentially new Middle East. May you both be spared further outsize hatred and all and any assassins’ bullets.

God forgive me, but I am sharing something that a colleague, Howard Rotberg, just sent. He writes:

“We are optimistic about the situation in Israel even as Hamas is already breaching the agreement; we know that the *raison d’etre* for Hamas is murdering Jews.”

And then he shares some very strong lines from the Book of

Jeremiah, chapter 6, verses 10 – 14:

“To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in: ...for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord. From the least of them to the greatest of them everyone is greedy for gain; and from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people, **superficially** saying Peace, peace **when there is no peace.**”

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