



THE OPEN TEMPLE
RE-ENCHANTING JUDAISM
IN VENICE, CA

Days of Dialogue with The Open Temple

Shabbat Take Me Higher
at The Electric Lodge

1416 Electric Ave, Venice CA 90291

January 12, 2024



**Rabbi Lori Shapiro and Open Temple presents:
Shabbat Take Me Higher
Isn't It Ironic?**

January 12, 2024

Shabbat Service with Dialogue

Participants

Rabbi Lori Shapiro

Intern Rabbi CJ

47 Attendees

14 Open Temple Band Members + Staff

3 Days of Dialogue Facilitators



On January 12, 2024, Days of Dialogue participated in the Open Temple's "Shabbat Take Me Higher".

DOD was invited by Rabbi Lori Shapiro to weave a dialogue into the immersive Shabbat service.

With songs, prayers in Hebrew and English, somatic exercises, videos and an intense participatory dialogue, Open Temple created a moving and thought-provoking evening.

In keeping with Jewish religious service, Rabbi Lori led "Yahrzeit" - lighting candles for the dead- honoring loved ones as well as the victims of the war in Israel and Gaza



Jewish Identity and DEI: Days of Dialogue



How do we respectfully express ourselves through these times when DEI Etiquette, Cancel Culture, Middle East Politics and More Make Being Vulnerable and Open an Uncomfortable Option?

A Daring Dialogue Expressing Our
Observations - Feelings - Needs - Requests

The Dialogue

Founding Rabbi and Artistic Director, Rabbi Lori Shapiro's description of Open Temple states: "for the Jew-ishly Curious and for those who love us." Everyone is invited to attend events here. Those who come to this place seem open to listening to varying points of view. Guests are eager to communicate with each other- respectfully- about controversial topics.

This dialogue session was designed as "a way in" for the congregants and guests to begin to discuss their feelings about the war between Israel and Hamas in Palestine.

Participants were encouraged to express **observations, feelings, needs, requests.**

Some felt triggered, others described heartfelt relief.

Three groups, each with approximately fifteen people in each group, explored this prompt:

How do we respectfully express ourselves through these times when DEI Etiquette, Cancel Culture, Middle East Politics and more- make being vulnerable and open an uncomfortable option?



Facilitators' Feedback from the Dialogue

The experience of my first Shabbat was interesting. It felt freeing and opening. Everyone was gracious and welcoming. It felt like a neighborhood get together except at a Temple. As far as the dialogue, I sensed a lot of emotion coming from the participants. I had a group of about 15. One young lady was the president of a high school Jewish group. She felt frustrated with her DEI counselor because she was told, "Jews ain't suffered like black people." Another person talked about a restaurant in Culver City that was pro-Israel but had pictures on the window that showed suffering children in Gaza and a link to raise money for the kids. Someone said they disagreed with that because if you support Israel then you should be all in and no mention of Gaza. A few people talked about how they don't feel safe in Beverly Hills as a Jew, she said BH is getting "bad". Overall as always wish we had more time, many participants said that they'd like to do this again, go deeper.

- Rashad Sharif, Facilitator.



Facilitators' Feedback from the Dialogue

This was my second time attending Open Temple.

I am amazed at Rabbi Lori's ability and commitment to creatively weave together relevant current events with what is at the heart of Jewish tradition and studies... Love! Every aspect of Open Temple invites you in... into that Love... into connection with others and into community with the larger World- a community that is actively igniting and expanding empathy and compassion beyond the self imposed-fear-based borders of limitations of our human needs.

The Participants in my group were all focused on igniting and expanding compassion and empathy that is a requirement for healing the Jewish/Palestinian conflict and that honors the dignity and worth of all individuals. Individuals in my group were all Jewish- and all shared their inability to understand how anyone- of any race- can justify 25,000 innocent men, women, and children being deliberately killed- maimed and displaced in retaliation for 1200+ people being massacred in Israel on October 7, with hundreds taken as hostages.



Facilitators' Feedback from the Dialogue

Continued

One person stated that there is absolutely no equivalency formula that justifies the war that is unfolding in Gaza- there is no number of people to be killed that will ever equal the pain and suffering of those 1,200 people who were killed and their families' loss and grief.

“Nothing will ever balance the scale of grief.”

Grief is not dissolved or minimized by more killing. Others expressed their deep concern that the world has normalized all this killing- it is simply the news of the day- and accepted.

There was anger expressed- heads shaking in disbelief that so many in the World seem to think that if you are pro-peace- then you are anti-Israel. These individuals being of Jewish descent and actively practicing the Jewish teachings they grew up in are experiencing a deep sadness that so many of their Jewish friends and family are in agreement with what Netanyahu- in the name of Israel- is doing. They don't know what to do- or how, or what conversation to have with these individuals. It is having them question who they have known these individuals to be. And that is causing them to experience a great deal of despair.

- Candace Carnicelli, Facilitator



Facilitators' Feedback from the Dialogue

Isn't it ironic?

- Killing in the name of love
- Social media is so... anti-social
- I find it ironic that I get most angry at the people I love the most
- The Holy Bible is the most shoplifted book in America
- All genocides are committed by people who say that they are victims.

We talked about: forgiveness and having an open heart, allowing ourselves to receive others.

Be here now. Let's turn off TikTok and Instagram.

Listen for the still small voice within.

Respect that voice- I may not agree with you, but I can honor you.

Have compassion. Transform me. Build a bridge.

Let us enter into the breath space, the listening space.

Video (trigger warning):

“Tziporela_West is the next story_Hamas the Musical”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ielqi4OkTbc>

Shabbat service music included: Ringo Starr “Octopus’ Garden”, The Ramones, Alanis Morissette, Nina Simone, Hebrew liturgical songs + chanted prayers





The Road to Peace in the Middle East:
Those who fight for it
may never live to see it.
527 (z"l)





**Facilitators at The Open Temple:
Jill Frank, Rashad Sharif,
Candace Carnicelli**

**For more information please
contact:
Avis Ridley-Thomas
info@daysofdialogue.org
avisridleythomas@me.com**

Report prepared by Jill Frank