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Hillary Clinton to Speak on Forgiveness at Temple

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) will speak on Yom Kippur, Oct. 13, at Temple of the Arts in Beverly Hills.

Clinton will deliver a 10-12 minute speech on forgiveness, as part of Rabbi David Baron's "living sermons," which typically feature well-known guests.

Past participants have included Dr. Judea Pearl, father of slain journalist Daniel Pearl; Steve Emerson, a counterterrorism expert; Peter Zvi Malkin, the Israeli agent who captured Adolf Eichmann; Cmdr. Scott Waddle, whose nuclear submarine accidentally killed a group of Japanese tourists; Bill Bingham, whose father rescued artist Marc Chagall; and John Miller, who left ABC News to handle counterterrorism for the Los Angeles Police Dept.

"A living sermon means instead of me quoting them or their books, I can present them in person," Baron told The Journal.

It was after reading the senator's book, "Living History," that Baron asked Clinton to speak to his congregation, which numbers as high as 1,800 on Yom Kippur. The service will be held at the synagogue's new permanent home at the historic Wilshire Theatre, 8440 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills.

"Living History" was the former first lady's 2003 perspective on events in the Clinton presidency.

"For me, [her book] was about forgiveness and functioning, when you have people who want to harm you on personal or professional level, and she was an exemplar of forgiveness," Baron said.

He began communicating with her a couple of years ago — she was even considering coming last Yom Kippur, but her husband's health problems detained her.

Baron believes that his guests — Jewish and non-Jewish — always have something to teach him and his congregation. "Most of us are talking about [forgiving] in the private arena, and I think someone who has to do that on both levels" — public and private — "has a lot to offer," he said.

Forgiveness is only one part of the day's theme. Another is how to move forward after a life-altering experience, Baron said. In that vein, another Yom Kippur guest this year will be mountain climber Aaron Ralston who had to cut off his arm in order to survive.

Will some congregants be upset that such a political persona will be speaking in temple on the holy Day of Atonement?

"I'm sure that will be the case," Baron said, emphasizing that Clinton's speech will be completely nonpolitical. "But again, I would hope that people will see this for what it is — an opportunity to meet someone who has something in-

structive to say, and that to me is the most compelling reason why I have her here."

Her political aspirations notwithstanding, the rabbi said, "I hope that on Yom Kippur of all days people will suspend their judgment and criticism."

For more information about Temple of the Arts tickets, call (310) 444-7500. — Amy Klein, Religion Editor

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