

For Israel, Purim Is Anything But an Irrelevant Ancient Holiday

In the words of Ecclesiastes, there is nothing new under the sun. This is especially true when it comes to the nation of Israel. The ancient foes of Israel are the current foes of Israel. And to this day, the nation faces existential threats from its ever-present enemies.

This week, Jews around the world celebrated the holiday of Purim. It is a festive holiday in which the Jewish people remember how God delivered them from Haman's plans to exterminate them throughout the Persian empire. All of this is recounted in the book of Esther.

But today, 2,500 years later, Persia (now Iran) still wants to wipe Israel off the map. For Iran, the Jewish state is a cancer that must be removed, and massive crowds of Iranians shout, "Death to Israel!"

As noted in a March 21 report, "Iranian leaders are very outspoken about their plans with Israel and have repeatedly warned that the 'Zionist project' or the Zionist 'cancer tumor' will be erased very soon."

Did I say that there is nothing new under the sun?

It's also striking that, for centuries, ancient Israel was in pitched battle with the Philistines. These were non-Semitic peoples who took up residence in what is now the Gaza Strip. Ironically, today, Israel finds itself in constant conflict with Hamas terrorists who have made the Gaza Strip their home. Talk about history repeating itself.

This is not to say Israel is blameless or perfect, nor is this

to say that there are no peace-loving Iranians or Palestinians. Not at all.

But it is to say that, just as the Jewish people faced an existential threat in the days of Esther, the Jewish people have faced existential threats over the centuries. The villains may change from Haman to Hitler or from Pharaoh (of ancient Egypt) to Khomeini, but the story remains the same: The Jews (or, the nation of Israel) must be eliminated.

That's why the Palestinian authority continues to make terrorists into martyrs, most recently this very week.

As reported by the Palestinian Media Watch, "Omar Abu Laila, the terrorist who killed two Israelis in a shooting attack near Ariel on March 17, was shot dead by Israeli special forces during a gunfire exchange when the forces came to arrest him.

"In keeping with Palestinian Authority and Fatah tradition, Abbas's Fatah movement immediately glorified the dead murderer as 'the perfect person,' in addition to his being a 'heroic martyr' deserving of a 'military salute.'"

And remember: The PA and Fatah are Israel's supposed peace partners, less extreme and more moderate than Hamas. Yet for them, the murder of an Israeli soldier or an Israeli settler (even if he's the loving father of 12 children) is an act to be celebrated.

If the murderer is killed, he's a martyr, and his family will be financially supplemented for life.

If he's caught and imprisoned, he's a living hero, a freedom fighter to be salaried by the PA.

Because of this state sponsorship of terrorism, President Trump decided to defund Abbas and his PA, a decision connected to ATCA, the Anti-Terrorism Cooperation Act, which Trump

signed into law last October.

But rather than capitulate, the PA stood strong. To paraphrase, "We would rather fund terror than have US support."

To quote the words of PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, "The government of Palestine respectfully informs the United States government that, as of January 31st, 2019, it fully disclaims and no longer wishes to accept any form of assistance referenced in ATCA ... the government of Palestine unambiguously makes the choice not to accept such assistance."

And this simply reinforces what the PA declared loudly and clearly last March.

As an investigative report on CAMERA notes, "In March 2018, the U.S. Congress passed the Taylor Force Act, which proposed to halt American aid to the P.A. until it ceased sending money to terrorists and their families via the so-called Palestinian Authority's Martyrs Fund. P.A. President Abbas responded in a July 2018 speech, swearing: 'Even if we have only a penny left, we will give it to the martyrs, the prisoners and their families.' He added: 'We view the prisoners and the martyrs as planets and stars in the skies of the Palestinian struggle, and they have priority in everything.'"

So say the enemies of Israel in every generation, making the celebration of Purim not simply a memory of the past.

Instead, Purim is played out annually with a host of new hostile characters—or should I say, with the same old characters, just in different uniforms.

The good news is that the God who delivered Israel in the past, even through great suffering, will do so once again.