

For one of the two holidays that many Jews consider the holiest days of the Jewish year, Rosh Hashanah gets very little attention from the Torah:

*In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a יום תרועה— a day when the horn is sounded.*

יום תרועה here can be understood as a day of sounding an alarm. And indeed, these are days of *teruah*, days of alarm. I'm almost embarrassed to say so, as if I didn't know that indeed in Israel, every day could be a day of alarms sounding. Rockets are fired from Gaza into Israel on a regular basis. And yet, there had been a silver lining to the cloud of rockets which still rain down on Israel hundreds at a time, tens of thousands in total.

The past few years have seen extraordinary developments with Israel's neighbors. Four countries from the Arab League have normalized relations with Israel. I remember my own skepticism when the announcement was first made, but just this past year in March, leaders from three of these countries, plus Egypt, which already has a peace treaty with Israel, met *in Israel* with Israeli and American officials for unprecedented

discussions about their joint efforts in the region. According to those more expert in Israeli politics than I, more Arab countries will be doing the same thing. It is becoming a widely recognized that for a country in the Middle East to flourish, peace with Israel is the wise path to take, to say nothing about the obvious moral issues in play. But the reality is much more complicated.

Only a couple of weeks ago, two Palestinian terrorists, one a member of Western funded Palestinian Security Services, shot and killed an Israeli officer, and then they themselves were shot and killed. The Palestinian Authority official media and Fatah, both headed by Mahmoud Abbas, have responded with support for the attack that killed the Israeli officer. But even more significantly and ominously, following the attack Fatah officially announced that it is returning to terror.

Around the fourteenth of September, Fatah released a video on its official Facebook page celebrating the terror attack. During the video, a text appeared on the screen with three important messages:

1. “The Al-Aqsa-Palestine [Martyrs’] Brigades is officially announcing its operations (i.e., terror attacks)”

2. “The Fatah Movement takes responsibility for the operations of its military arm [the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades]”

3. “The Fatah leadership announces that it has returned to the phase of the armed struggle (i.e., Fatah’s euphemism for terror)”

Imagine any government on earth announcing its plan to return to terrorism against a civilian population. Imagine the international outcry. But that very thing happens in the Middle East with Israel as the target and the world stands silently by.

Do not let my focus on Fatah mislead you into thinking this is the only existential danger facing Israel. Iran—the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism—remains Israel’s and America’s greatest threat in the Middle East. A nuclear Iran would pose a direct danger to American interests and an existential threat to Israel. In Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza, Iranian backed terrorists are attempting to surround Israel with increasingly advanced weaponry. Make no mistake—they are preparing for their next major assault against Israel. And again, the threat is not to Israel alone. Hundreds of Americans have been killed by terrorists. They threaten our own forces, they

attack civilians, and they embed terrorist outposts among their own civilian populations, all part of their preparations.

Not every enemy Israel faces wears a keffiyeh. Israel is also embattled on the diplomatic and economic fronts. These are organized attempts to weaken, isolate, and delegitimize Israel. The actions of the UN, the ICC, and the BDS campaign are all evidence of this. As long as Israel's enemies believe they can achieve their goals through international institutions instead of through direct negotiations with Israel, there will be no direct negotiations with Israel. And once again, both directly and indirectly, these actions threaten America. It is in this hostile climate that Fatah has announced its return to terrorism, and so we must redouble our efforts to fight it.

What can we do from America to support Israel? Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow, all components of Israel's lifesaving missile defense system—we have to be familiar with these things, in part because the United States helps Israel to pay for these essential, life preserving technologies. That means we need to speak to our representatives in Congress to ensure continued funding for these systems. Not that the funding seems to be in any danger. The last time it came to a vote, it passed the

House of Representatives 420-9, with one of the nine coming from a member from our own state.

What we can do from America? Another thing we can do is raise our collective voice and demand that Fatah be put on the official United States list of terrorist groups. This is not merely symbolic. This designation frequently hampers the ability of terrorists to carry out their agenda. By their very own admission, Fatah belongs on this list. Although putting it there means working through the government, this is not an American political issue. This is an Israel advocacy issue, and we cannot sit in silence as the governing body in the West Bank boldly announces a return to terrorism to a silent international audience.

כל עוד בלבב פנימה, נפש יהודי הומיה—As long as in the heart, within, The soul of a Jew still yearns, there is hope. There is hope for peace. There is hope for security. The future of the Jewish state is assured. And the Jewish people have arisen from the ashes and turned the desert green.

In Ezekiel's famous vision about the valley of dry bones, the bones knit themselves back together and become alive again, Then God says to Ezekiel, "O mortal, these bones are the whole

House of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, *our hope is gone*; we are doomed.’”

Our hope is gone—ואבדה תקותנו—our hope is lost. But HaTikvah insists עוד לא אבדה תקותנו—still our hope is *not* lost, and indeed it is not. But when it comes to the hope of living in peace and security in our homeland becoming a reality, no act of support is too insignificant, no Zionist voice too small, no resistance to actions like those taken by Fatah is not essential. We know we have Israel in our hearts. Let us be sure this year that it is in our minds and mouths as well.