

Sat 3 March 2007 [Shabbat Zachor]
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Congregation Adat Reyim
Lunch and Learn

Persia, then and now

Shabbat Zachor - The Shabbat of remembrance
(Shabbat before Purim)

Theme:

Remember Amalek!

Remember Haman!

Remember Ahmadinejad!

-Amalek attacked us from the back when we left Egypt, weak, defenseless. God said to wipe him out, his descendants and his memory.

-Talmud (wisely): We have lost the tradition of telling Amalekites from others, so can't comply with the killings, but must still remember.

-We destroy by remembering - we destroy their memories, their good names, we vilify and badmouth them.

-Haman is one of Amalek's descendants.

Purim recalls the last-minute deliverance of the Jews of Persia, during the Babylonian exile. Haman hailed from Persia.

-Fast forward to today's Persia. History repeats itself.

-Iran, with its modern Haman, President Ahmadinejad, who

-said Israel must be wiped off the map,

-is building nuclear weapons for that purpose, and

-denies the Holocaust, presumably so he can bring it about himself.

-His boss, Ayatollah Khamenei, the modern King Ahashverosh, is not saying much, which implies tacit approval.

-No history of strong antisemitism in ancient or modern Persia - one wild card in position of power

What to do? Options:

- Hope that Ayatollah Khamenei's wife is secretly Jewish. (But who is Mordechai?)

- Wait till God redeems us at the last minute in the manner of His choosing. In the meantime, think about what will replace hamentaschen.

- Don't dismiss him: "Remember" him. Keep talking about him and the threat he represents, keep the issue on the front burner of the world agenda, hoping for a global solution. No ostrich philosophy.

- Take him out and neutralize him.

 - Haman was hanged on the very gallows (50 cubits high) he had built for Mordechai. Will Iran be neutralized with nuclear weapons, the way it threatens to neutralize Israel?

How do you think we should handle this threat, given our history and traditions?