

## **PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (January 12, 2015)**



**Fiery cloud over Mt. Zion this past Sunday Afternoon**

*“This is what the LORD Almighty says:  
‘I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her.’”  
(Zechariah 8:2 NIV)*

### **1. MAY THE TIME OF JEWISH SOJOURN IN THE LAND OF FRANCE BE DRAWING TO ITS END?**

*\* “O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure” (Psalm 7:9 NIV).*

*\* “And it shall come to pass in that day that YHVH will thresh...and you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel. So it shall be in that day: The great shofar will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish...and they who are outcasts...and shall worship YHVH in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 27:12-13).*

**Our hearts go out in compassion and prayer for the people of France, in the trauma and loss they have suffered during this week of horrors in and around their capital.** Yesterday morning (Sunday) Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Lieberman, Economy Minister Naftali Bennett and Jewish Agency head Natan Sharansky were en route to Paris to take part in a massive “silent march” against terrorism and commemorating the 17 mercilessly slain by Islamist terrorists during the past week. Palestinian President Abbas will also be present at the march, along with other recognized leaders from around the world.

Friday, while the two brothers who had perpetrated the massacre at the offices of the satiric magazine *Charlie Hebdo* were under siege by Parisian authorities, an Islamic French national stormed into a kosher supermarket in a suburb of Paris, killing four French Jewish men shopping in the store and, during the seven-hour standoff which followed, threatening others unless the brothers were allowed to go free. In the end, all three of the Islamist attackers were shot. French President Francois Hollande condemned the supermarket attack as a “dreadful anti-Semitic attack”—as did the U.S. State Department. This anti-Semitic turn which the violence had taken resulted in Paris law enforcement shutting down the city’s famous Jewish district, putting synagogues throughout the city under heavy guard; and, for the first time since the Nazi occupation, Paris’ Grand Synagogue closed on the Sabbath which followed.

To the 650,000 Jews living in France (the largest Jewish population in the world behind the U.S. and Israel itself), this latest attack was only one of an ever-increasing string of anti-Jewish incidents taking place in their country over the past few years. It was also the most deadly since the shooting in a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012 which left a rabbi and three children dead. Saturday's *Le Figaro* newspaper spoke of the "palpable" fear now present in the French Jewish community. One young rabbi told the paper he didn't know if he would re-open his synagogue, "*It's not even panic, it's worse. The people of the community do not dare leave their homes.*" ("Jews' fear is 'palpable' following France terror attacks": *The Times of Israel*, 10 Jan 2015, 8:44 a.m.). In an article for the *Telegraph*, the editor of The Jewish Chronicle spoke of a growing "exodus" from France—after the events of this week, he expects the 10,000 who had been already forecast to leave to rise significantly, "*Every French Jew I know has either already left or is working out how to leave. When it comes to home grown anti-Semitism, France leads the world*" (Ibid.).

***There is no question that aliyah (immigration to Israel) has been growing in the minds of French Jewry.*** Last year, of 26,500 new immigrants, France, for the first time ever, led the list of countries of origin with almost 7,000 (more than double the number from that country in the previous year) ("Aliyah Figures at Highest in a Decade: France Leads the Way": *Arutz Sheva* News; 31 Dec 2014, 2:00 PM). And in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post* last week, Jewish Agency leader Natan Sharansky divulged how some 50,000 French Jews from within the area of Paris alone enquired of the Agency concerning *aliyah* last year. The Agency is now holding two information seminars a day, whereas a year ago it held only one a month. Sharansky estimates the number of those in the country interested to currently be within the "hundreds of thousands" ("Sharansky to 'Post': 50,000 French Jews inquired about Aliya in 2014": *JPOST.com*, 01/08/2015 15:14 IST). On Saturday evening, in a denunciation of the terror attacks in Paris, Israeli PM Benyamin Netanyahu spoke out to Jews in the western world, "***To all the Jews of France, all the Jews of Europe, I would like to say that Israel is not just the place in whose direction you pray, the state of Israel is your home.***"

**The previous week, France' Prime Minister Manuel Valls had, in an interview for *The Atlantic*, passionately voiced a sentiment held by many French citizens, "Were 100,000 French people of Spanish origin to leave, I would never say that France is not France anymore. But if 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure."** He stressed that the French Republic was founded on equal rights being extended to Jews, but how this is now being threatened by an influx of Muslim immigrants bearing a kind of anti-Semitism different than that experienced in the past. On Saturday, he echoed the statement, calling for a millions-strong march against terror and again saying, "France without Jews is not France." ("French PM: France without Jews would be a failure": *The Times of Israel*, 11 Jan 2015, 7:02 am). We are in sympathy with the words of the Prime Minister. There are many, many French citizens who love and value the presence of Jewish people in their society. Indeed, God has, throughout the long history Israeli dispersal brought blessing upon those nations within which they were blessed and welcomed.

***Yet a nation's official stance towards God's chosen people and their land can bring either blessing or cursing upon that nation.*** It is painful, but we believe necessary, for us to suggest that the government of France may have itself very recently opened up a breach in the spiritual protection over its nation. It was only a week and a day before last week's carnage began to be unleashed, that France's member in the UN Security Council was instructed to cast a vote in favor of a resolution which, among other things, would have effectively forced Israel, with or without further negotiations, to completely withdraw from Judea and Samaria by the end of 2017, relinquishing all the lands captured from Jordan in 1967 to a newly established Palestinian state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital. In the event, the resolution failed by one vote when Nigeria at the last minute unexpectedly chose to abstain. (The only countries to vote No were the United States and Australia). This is a case of working against the plan of God for bringing His people back to their land. The very "Mountains of Israel" which Ezekiel 36:8 prophesied will "*shoot*

*forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel [who] are about to come” all lie within the West Bank which under that resolution Israel would be coerced into leaving behind. Taking part in bringing pressure against the people of Israel to vacate territory the God of the universe has labeled “their own land” (Ezek. 37:21) is coming against a covenant of Life—which can only be expected to open the door to its opposite, death.*

***May the time of Israel’s sojourn in France be drawing to an end?*** We will not presume to say. “Our times are in His hands”—and so are the times of Israel, his “first born” (Psalm 31:15; Ex. 4:22). Yet God has promised to sound His shofar to bring this covenant son back to his land (Ezek. 37:21, and many others). Ezekiel 36:20-21 strongly suggests that the very fact of Israel’s dwelling outside of her Land brings profanation to His Name. When He chooses to call her back, she must come. If not, His grace will still bring them back. The “hunters” of Jeremiah 16:16 are almost certainly to be identified with a persecution which may be required to get his people to return to their land if, when it becomes possible, they will not do so of their own volition.

**For it is there, and most particularly on the disputed “Mountains of Israel,” that they will find their cleansing and the living destiny promised to their fathers—a land upon which they will walk, and which “will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.” (Ezekiel 36:12).**

#### **PLEASE PRAY:**

- \* For the people of France, that during this awakened scourge of violence the hearts of many will reach out for the Prince of Peace: “Confuse the wicked, O Lord, confound their speech, for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night they prowl about on its walls; malice and abuse are within it. Destructive forces are at work in the city; threats and lies never leave its streets” (Psalm 55:9-11).**
- \* For the government of France to find and implement measures to protect and care for the rights of the great Jewish community in its midst.**
- \* For the voices of godly French citizens to be heard in the government influencing it to bless Israel—and to draw back its hand from seeking to force its government into measures contrary to God’s word.**
- \* For the Jews in France to recognize and allow themselves to be “drawn with loving kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3) towards the One Who is calling them to Himself.**
- \* That those whom God is calling to immigrate to Israel, will hear the call and begin to move in that direction.**
- \* That Israel (and Her Land) will be prepared for the influx of French Jews who are among those whom God has promised “will soon be coming” (Ezekiel 36:8).**
- \* That the Messianic Body in Israel will be prepared to welcome them here into the life and community of their Messiah and Savior Yeshua**

#### **THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:**

*From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parasha) from the first five books of Moses (The Torah) and an ending (Haftarah) from the Prophets read on the Sabbath in synagogues around the world. This portion is given a Hebrew name drawn from the opening words of the Torah passage. An illustration of this practice appears to have been recorded in Luke 4:16 where Yeshua (Jesus) arrived in the synagogue in Nazareth and was asked to read the portion (Isaiah 61) from the Prophets. We have found that in perusing these weekly readings, not only are we provided opportunity to identify in the context of God’s Word with millions of Jewish people around the world, but very often the Holy Spirit will illumine specific passages pertinent that week in our intercession for the Land and people of Israel. All texts are those of English translations of the Scriptures.*

The readings for 11-17 January 2015 are called *Va’Era*—“And I Appeared” (--to Abraham, to

Isaac, and to Jacob as El Shaddai).

**TORAH: Exodus 6:2—9:35**

**HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 28:25—29:21**

**\*Exodus 6:26b; 7:4.** *“These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom YHVH said, ‘Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.’”* (NKJV)...*“And Pharaoh will not heed you, and I shall set my hand against Egypt and I shall bring out my battalions[or, “armies”], My people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt with great retributions, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD [YHVH], when I stretch out My hand over Egypt and bring out the Israelites from their midst.”* (Alter).

YHVH (The LORD) is Sovereign over many “armies.” This is first shown in **Genesis 2:1** when *“The heavens and the earth, and all their armies/hosts (Hebrew: tzeva’ot) were finished.”* In **Joshua 5:14**, a Being appears before Joshua who is *“Captain of the Armies of YHVH”*. From **I Samuel 1:3** onwards, he name *YHVH-Tzevaoth* (Yehovah of Armies/LORD of Hosts) will be used over two hundred-fifty times in the Hebrew Bible. As we have often pointed out, when David meets Goliath in battle, he testifies his trust in this Name: *“I come to you in the name of YHVH of Armies...”* —but he also adds another name, *“Elohei-Ma’arkhot Yisrael” —God of Israel’s Arraying.* The masses of Israelites in Egypt had no idea that they were already an army—yet, as the above verses show, in God’s eyes, they were. Indeed, we shall see in **Exodus 12:41** how *“all the armies of YHVH”* would go forth from the land of Egypt; and **Exodus 13:18** (NAS) adds, they would be in *“martial array!”* When we enter the Kingdom of God, we soon become aware that we have entered a realm in which a war already is raging. Yet, not to be bewildered or fear! Our Captain has a positioning especially waiting for us in which to begin, and He will oversee our advancement.

**PLEASE PRAY:** *That the latter-day Army of the Lord in Israel will have confidence in its Captain, and come into array at His command!*

**\*Exodus 7:1.** *“So the LORD said to Moses: ‘See, I have made you Elohim (Literal Hebrew) to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.’”* In a very real way, we are God’s body through whom He looses His will *“on earth as it is in Heaven.”*

**\*Exodus 7:9-10.** *“When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, ‘Show a miracle for yourselves.’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and let it become a serpent’...and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent”* (NKJV). The Hebrew here translated “serpent” is a different word and may designate a different creature than that used for the snake from which Moses fled (Exodus 4:3 and 7:15). There the word was *nakhash*, the common Hebrew word for snake (such as that which tempted Eve in Eden). Here the word is *tanin*, used in modern Hebrew for “crocodile” or “alligator” (The *Nile Crocodile* has been feared from ancient times for its propensity, more than any other of the species, to prey upon humans). In Genesis 1:21 *tanin* is a “great sea creature” *created by God*. But this creature is also often used as a metaphor for spiritual or physical powers in opposition to God. In Ezekiel 29:3 (part of this week’s Haftarah), this word *tanin* is translated “monster” (NKJV), and depicts another Pharaoh (or the spiritual power controlling him), *“Behold, I am against you, O Pharaoh king of Egypt, O great monster (tanin) who lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, ‘My River is my own; I have made it for myself.’ But I will put hooks in your jaws...”* (The word is also translated “monster” in Jeremiah 51:34 where it pictures Nebuchadnezzar swallowing up sinful Israel “like a tannin.”). In Psalm 74:13 it is depicted as a many headed “sea monster” (NASB) whose heads God can break in delivering those who trust in him. And in Isaiah 27:1 the NASB reads, *“And He will kill the dragon (tanin) who lives in the sea.”*

In the Modern Hebrew translation of the New Covenant Scriptures, the “great, fiery red dragon having seven heads” of Revelation 12:3, who stands before the woman clothed with the sun to devour her baby, is call a *tanin*...and in 12:9 both *tanin* (dragon) and *nakhash* (serpent) are equated with “the Devil and Satan.” Lastly, in Psalm 91:13 (NASB, margin) *“tanin”* is ***the dragon which those who dwell in the***

*shelter of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty, will trample underfoot!*

And so, the rod which had become a serpent *nakhash* (Exodus 7:15), through Moses' obedient faith became in his and Aaron's hands "*the rod of God*" (4:20), which could become a different fearful creature (*tanin*) which swallowed up other fearful creatures (7:12), or it could become a scepter of authority which could turn the waters of the Nile, over which the Pharaoh's claimed sovereignty (Ezek. 29:3 above), into blood (7:17).

In short, the rod became the symbol of authority through which Moses would "be God" to Pharaoh (7:1), through whom YHVH would manifest Himself as the supreme spiritual Power who would defeat, subdue and swallow up all other opposing spiritual powers.

**\*Exodus 7:14.** "*So the LORD said to Moses: 'Pharaoh's heart is hard; he refuses to let the people go.'*" The LORD knew that Pharaoh's heart was hard (Two words are used for "hard" or "hardened" in these passages, one meaning "heavy" or "settled", the other "tightened", "strengthened" or "fortified"). Through the early signs, wonders and plagues, we see Pharaoh's heart growing hard according to its own nature (7:13, 22), or his actively hardening his own heart (8:15). In 8:29, 32, after the plague of flies, Moses especially warns him against continuing to do this, "*But Pharaoh made his heart heavy and insensitive this time also.*" Finally, in 9:12 it is specifically stated that "*the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh.*" We have here depicted both the choice and responsibility of man—and the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God. After Moses prays that the rain, hail and thunder cease, Pharaoh "*sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard.*"

**\*Exodus 8:23.** "*And I shall set a ransom between My people [in Goshen] and your people.*" (Robert Alter Translation; see also NASB margin). The word "ransom" is often translated here as "difference"—but everywhere else in the Bible the root means "to ransom, to redeem, to rescue from danger". It is in the last sentence of Psalm 25— "*Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*" Israel would learn that God was already redeeming him out of his troubles...and, through the work of his Messiah would eventually redeem not only Israel but all peoples from the bondage of sin.

**\*Ezekiel 28:25-26.** "*Thus says the Lord GOD: 'When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I am YHVH their God.'*" In praying for Israel's restoration, it is important not to merely pray for her return to the Land—rather, that *within the Land* the God of her Fathers will come to be hallowed in her midst. Nowhere is Israel promised safety for herself or her roots in the Land just because she has been returned there. **We pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in awakening awareness of sin and uncleanness and a longing for cleansing, holiness and restoration—for removal of the veil over Jewish hearts, and illumination of the truth of the love and life of Israel's God and Savior.** Zion will always be a "signpost" to the nations (that is what the root of the word probably means)...but it is God's heart and desire that she will be a signal in the eyes of the world of a place where HE is hallowed! He has promised a day when He will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem (Zechariah 2:5) ***and her glory within!***



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**[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 18-24 January 2015 are called *Bo* –“Come”:  
TORAH: Exodus 10:1—13:16; HAFTARAH: Jeremiah 46:13-28]**

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