

Prayer Update From Israel (February 15, 2016)



“They shall bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to raise up a lamp perpetually...” (Exodus 27:20—See Torah Section below)
“You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light”
(Psalm 18:28 NIV)

1. EGYPT and ISRAEL—PRAY FOR THE GROUNDWORK OF THE HIGHWAY!

As reported by Arab media, Egypt’s President al-Sisi on Sunday abruptly called off a high-level meeting scheduled for March in Cairo with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Although the PM’s office had until now carefully denied that such meetings were officially scheduled, other reports indicate that delicate final arrangements were on the brink of being completed when they were called off. Cause of the failure is being linked with public remarks made by an Israeli minister earlier this month who declared publically that security cooperation between Israel and Egypt was “better than ever” and claimed that an Egyptian initiative in dealing with Hamas tunnels connecting the Sinai with the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip was “due to Israel’s request”. The minister’s remarks angered Israel’s security department, which feared what effect they might have on Israeli-Egyptian relations, fears which now appear to have been justified.

Israel has had official ties with Egypt since signing a treaty in 1979. Relations have ebbed and flowed since that time, but with the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in 2013 and the ascension of Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to power, there have been symptoms of steadily warming relations between the two governments. But this is a very delicate business. The horrendous loss of life experienced by Egypt in its four wars with the Jewish State since Israel’s birth in 1948, has, along with attendant propaganda, contributed to the instilling of a deep-seated hatred among much of the Egyptian public towards Israel and the Jews—a hatred which continues to be passed on with each new generation. Any move by the two governments to try and work together (Egypt views the anti-Israel Hamas as in league with its own outlawed Muslim Brotherhood; Egypt is also in need of benefitting from the vast gas resources Israel is beginning to reap from her recently activated off-shore facilities), must be very delicately handled with great secrecy so as to not stir up anger in the population, which would still see them as

collaboration with a hated enemy. Consequently, as the recent remarks by the Israeli minister about “better than ever” relations with Egypt were unfortunately picked up and broadcast far and wide by the Arab press, the Egyptian government felt compelled to officially take occasion to the remarks and cancel the Israeli prime minister’s visit.

We believe the perceived “warming” between leadership of the two nations to be a gift from God. There is a redemption planned for Egypt, that vast land which once provided hospitality to Abraham, Joseph and his brothers, the Holy Family. Chapter 19 of Isaiah stands as a testament of hope to God’s good plans for her, culminating in a blessing in verse 25, “*Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.*” We are not convinced that Egypt’s destiny is to remain an enemy of Israel until the time of the end. It is notable that in Biblical passages such as Psalm 83 and Ezekiel 38-39, which appear to depict military alliances coming against Israel in the last days, Egypt is absent.

It has been heartening in recent years to receive first-hand reports regarding a growing army of tens of thousands of Spirit-filled believers who have awakened and are networking and multiplying in Egypt. And with those reports, to hear of a deep, burning love which the Spirit is placing in them towards God’s covenant people Israel and their land, which they had been taught to hate; and of the many houses of prayer which are springing up there. In recent months we know of teams from Israel which God has sent in to visit and encourage the brothers and sisters in some of these houses—some in Alexandria, some down the length of the Nile. Only two months ago an incredible network of African believers from South Africa to Northern Egypt, joined together on short-notice in corporate prayer for the bondages of occult darkness to be broken off of this so-called “Dark Continent” so that the nations within might be released and filled with Light.

PLEASE PRAY:

- * That the ancient enmity between Israel and Egypt would be broken. That both nations would come into their redemptive destinies before God.**
- * That God will guide the leaders of both countries into deepening favor. That the powers set against such a warming of relations will be bound.**
- * That believers within both Israel and Egypt would continue to become networked. That they will love and pray for and encourage each other in the Lord!**
- * That healing from bitterness and hatred towards Israel, which can only come with a revelation of the Son of God, will be poured out on the people of Egypt. A spirit of Truth, Love, and Hope.**
- * That ancient occult powers working evil influence from strongholds within Egypt would crumble, and the people be set free to worship the true and living God.**

(Portions of this report were drawn from “Report: Minister’s comments lead to Egypt canceling Netanyahu meeting”: *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 Feb 2016 10:33 IST)

2. JUSTICE OVER THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE LAND.

“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous” (Exodus 23:8, From Torah reading two weeks ago Mishpatim).

“You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your cities which YHVH your God is giving you...they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy 16:18-19).

At 10:00 this morning, a day of shame and sadness for Israel, Ehud Olmert became the nation’s first former prime minister to go to prison. In 2014 Olmert was convicted of having taken bribes while mayor of Jerusalem in the early 2000s, and was sentenced to six years in prison. The sentence was later reviewed by the Supreme Court and reduced to 18 months. Last week, another month was added to his sentence for recent attempts to obstruct justice. Olmert served as mayor of Jerusalem from 1993 to 2003, and it was during this period that most of the offenses for which he was convicted took place. Returning to national politics, he ascended to the office of Israel’s Prime Minister from early 2006, when he took over for an ailing Ariel Sharon, until 2009, when he was forced from office due to mounting allegations of previous wrongdoing.

Proverbs 29:4 says, ***“The king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it.”*** Olmert’s period in office was indeed a time of instability and weakness for Israel, including a war which was certainly the most disastrously managed in our modern history. *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).* To see a man once entrusted with representing Israel’s grace and honor before heads of state around the world, now ignominiously consigned to a cell within the bars of a penitentiary—we find ourselves sharing in the disgrace. Yet we are at the same time grateful that in our nation, justice is being served. As one Labor Knesset member commented at Olmert’s sentencing, *“Today was a day of optimism, a day of purging corruption, a day in which everyone knows that every person—rich or poor, strong or weak—is equal before the law in Israel.”*

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That the One upon whose shoulders Government rests, and whose throne’s foundation is Righteousness and Justice, would continue to purify the government of His covenant people, whom He has returned to their Land.**

*** That the fear of the Lord would come upon Israel’s government.**

*** That men and women of righteousness and integrity including Messianic believers would begin rising into Israel’s Knesset and Court systems.**

*** That righteousness in the government in Jerusalem would begin to “go forth as brightness” (Isaiah 62:1)**

3. KALANIOT.

After cold and rain, Israel is currently experiencing an early mid-February “heat wave”. And right on schedule, just after the awakening of the almond blossoms, are coming out the scarlet anemones, known lovingly in Israel as *Kalaniot*. These tiny specks of red adorn the fields throughout the Middle East about this time each year. Their annual return is celebrated in a 70-year old popular Hebrew song by that name, one whose chorus most Israelis know by heart. Although a few will continue to bloom throughout the spring, their peak lasts for only a few weeks, during which time Israelis will flock to the hills on pretty days with picnic baskets and cameras, before a storm arrives to blow them all away.



Norma Sarvis in a field of koloniot west of Bet Shemesh.

It is a sweet diversion, these outings. Because people are uneasy. The violence has continued and there doesn't appear to be an end in sight. Knife assaults, car rammings. While across our borders, unthinkable violence and desolation in Syria, Iraq—so many woundings, violations, deaths; so much blood has been shed.

Yet, as we wrote a year ago, in gazing upon these fields covered in scarlet, we find ourselves strongly impressed with the one weapon and defense which surpasses all. It is the Blood of the Lamb. The “life is in the blood”, the life of the One who has defeated death and hell, who is our salvation, presently and in what is to come. It is the blood of One who loves us (love casts out fear), and released us from our sins (Rev. 1:5); it is the blood of the Anointed One (Messiah, the Christ) which cleanses our consciences from death to serve the God of Life (Hebrews 9:14); it is the blood which overcomes the Accuser with the word of our testimony—because, though our own lives fail, our hope is in *His* life which is in His blood. This is our living Hope and the Hope of Israel.

PLEASE PRAY: For a deep revelation amongst believers in Israel of the shed blood of our Messiah—which, because in it is unquenchable life, we find renewal, courage—our strength, our love, our hope!



And even as the *calaniot* remind us of the life shed yet springing up on behalf of our fallen souls and minds, they also are a harbinger of the redemption of this land out of which they spring—indeed, of the whole world which has been held bondage by man’s sin. This is beautifully expressed in the last verse of a song written some years ago by a friend Rachel Boskey,

***LORD WE LONG TO SEE THE DAY
WHEN MOURNING WILL BE DONE
YOUR GLORY IN JERUSALEM
THE PRESENCE OF YOUR SON
HE IS THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST
WHO SAT DOWN AT YOUR RIGHT HAND
HIS BLOOD WAS SHED
TO CLEANSE AND HEAL YOUR LAND
TO HEAL YOUR LAND***

From : “Good to Israel” by Rachel Boskey
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THIS WEEK’S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parashah) 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. The Haftarah, unless otherwise noted, will be that read in Ashkenazy synagogues around the world. The references for all texts are those found in English translations of the Scriptures.

The readings for this week 14-20 February 2016 are called *Tetzaveh*—“You Shall Command”

TORAH: Exodus 27:20—30:10

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 43:10-27

Lights and Illumination

This week’s Torah reading begins and ends (Exodus 27:20-21; 30:7-8) with *Light and Illumination* (and in the middle are “Lights and Perfections”—See *Urim & Thumim* below).

Moses is told to command the Children of Israel to bring to him “*clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to raise up a lamp perpetually.*” Near the close, the High Priest’s duties will include servicing the wicks and flames each morning and evening, at which time he will also be burning incense before the LORD.

Chapter 28 contains instructions related to the holy garments for Aaron the High Priest and his sons, with special instructions regarding the clothing of the High Priest: the ‘breastplate’, the ‘ephod’, the robe, tunic, turban, and sash.

Chapter 29 addresses the consecration and ordination of priests, the altar at which they would be serving and the sacrifices required.

Ch. 30:1-10 describes the Alter of Incense, which would be placed before the veil.

All of this is “Holy Ground” indeed. Ask the Lord to “illumine” your reading! We would also recommend reading Zechariah 3 along with this, where the LORD Himself is revealed as standing against our enemy, and supplying the purification truly necessary for priests in ministering righteously before Him.

NOTES

***Exodus 27:20; 30:7,8:** “*And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you clear, pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually...And he shall burn it [fragrant incense] every morning when he trims the lamps. When Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense...*”

Plain olive oil doesn’t burn well if at all. It needs to be *tzach*—refined, pristine, transparent, pure, clear. The Light from the Menorah illuminated the Holy Place; its lamps were also positioned so as to shine onto the table bearing the Bread of His Presence. **Pray that we keep the lamps of our spirits trimmed, and fueled with the Holy Spirit, so that the truth of His Word and Presence will be illuminated.**

“*Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning . . .*” (Luke 12:35 NIV);

“You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light” (Psalm 18:28 NIV).

“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Yeshua the Messiah” (II Corinthians 4:6).

***Exodus 28:3:** “So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans (Heb: “wise-hearts”), whom I have filled with the spirit (wind) of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.”

Pray for those whom God has especially gifted in the Body of Messiah as ‘craftsmen’, that they realize their talent and grace in developing their artistic skills have been breathed into them by the Holy Spirit—and that they will devote their creativity to that which is holy. In Israel as in other countries, there is a ‘thief’ waiting to divert the artistic giftings of God’s people away to the adulation of the world.

Urim and Thumim

***Exodus 28: 29-30.** “Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. You shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thumim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.”

The exact nature of the *Urim* and *Thumim* and how they were used is no longer known to us. But we may assume this: they were a divine means used by the High Priest in making ‘wise judgment’ for Israel (Num. 27:21; Nehemiah 7:65). *Urim* is a special superlative for “Light”—as it were, “Light of Lights” – and *Thumim* a superlative for “Perfection”—as it were, “Perfection of Perfections”. Light (*or*) is related to “revelation and illumination”, while (*tome*) the Hebrew root for the word perfection is often translated “integrity” (cf: Psalm 25:21—“Let integrity (*tome*) and uprightness preserve me, for I wait in hope for You.”). Righteous judgments for His people is near to God’s Heart, and He desired it to be near to the hearts of His priests. This required supreme *Illumination and Integrity*.

Finally, *Urim* begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet *ALEPH*, while *Thumim* begins with the last *TAV*. *Aleph* and *Tav* (Hebrew) / A and Z (English)/ *Alpha* and *Omega* (Greek). In the Hebrew translation of Revelation 22:18, Yeshua (Jesus) declares,

“I am the Aleph and the Tav, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last”.

PLEASE PRAY that intercessors in Israel would be guided by a longing for righteous judgment, a plea for revelation and integrity to the One who is the “FIRST and the LAST,” the “Righteous Judge” (II Tim. 4:8)—the true Light shining in Darkness, who illumines everyone who comes into the world (John 1:9).

****Exodus 29:43-46. “I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. They shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am YHVH their God” (Emphases ours).***

We called attention last week to God’s desire to “dwell with”, to “neighbor closely”, to *shokhen* with His people. **PLEASE PRAY: for a longing among the sons and daughters of Israel after the presence of our LORD—for an awakened desire to be “consecrated” by HIS glory.**

In the Synagogues there is an oft-recited prayer for the *Shekinah* (manifest presence of His glory) to return to Zion. He longs to “dwell among the children of Israel and to be their God”—but there must be a purification and consecration to prepare the way (Malachi 3:2-3).



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 21-27 February 2016 are called : *Ki Tisa-*-“When You Elevate”: TORAH: Exodus 30:11—34:35; HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:1-39]

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