

Prayer Update From Israel (February 22, 2016)



1. A'YELET HA'SHAHAR—the MORNING STAR.

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you; that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Torah of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45).

*Ayelet and Shahar are two lovely Hebrew words often used as personal names in Israel, Ayelet for girls, Shahar by both men and women. Ayelet (ah-yeh-let) is a poetic name for a hind, a doe, a female deer. We find it in Proverbs 5:19 used as a simile for a beloved wife, “a loving deer, a graceful doe.” Shahar (the second syllable pronounced with a slight rasp in the throat) means the dawn, daybreak, the morning light. There is one place in the Hebrew Bible where these two words are found joined together to make a compound word. It is in the instructions to musicians at the beginning of Psalm 22, “For the choir director, on Ayelet-haShahar.” It may have been referring to the name of a known melody, “To be sung to the melody of ‘The Hind of the Dawn.’” Or perhaps there was a musical instrument with that name, which would have been used as an accompaniment when the psalm was read. In any event, the expression *Ayelet haShahar* has survived into Modern Hebrew, almost always used as a poetic simile for the *Morning Star*—imagined as a graceful deer making its way across the sky. It was this ancient symbol, *Ayelet haShahar*— the Morning Star, which was to set the atmosphere for reciting Psalm 22.*

Towards the end of the New Covenant Scriptures, we again find the name *Ayelet haShahar*. Here it is as a Hebrew name for the victorious, risen, glorified Messiah, the Son of David and Son of God: *“I, Yeshua, have sent my angel to testify to you these things for the*

churches. *I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star* (Revelation 22:16; Modern Hebrew translation).

It is a holy wonder to us that here the Jewish Messiah who had suffered, died, and risen would refer to Himself as the Morning Star of Psalm 22. Immediately following, *“the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!...Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely!’*” This call is certainly here sounding forth to all children of Adam—but in the context of Yeshua’s appealing to his lineage with David, and revealing His name *Ayelet haShahar*, its peal goes forth with a special resounding ring to His brothers and sisters the Jews. For it is this prophetic Hebrew psalm, released by David 3000 years ago, which, along with Isaiah 53, carries the reader more graphically than anywhere else in Scripture into the very presence of the sacrifice of *Yeshua*, the Jewish God-Man, suffering on behalf of all humankind on a hill outside of Jerusalem.

David’s first words, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?”* would burst forth from the mouth of his holy descendant and redeemer of the world as He hung on a cross and found Himself “smitten of God” with the sin of the world placed upon Him. It is all here—He is surrounded by a raging crowd who reproach, despise, ridicule Him. They bind and pierce through both His hands and His feet. Hanging there, He is poured out like water, all his bones out of joint, his tongue clinging to his jaws in thirst as He is brought to taste the *“dust of death”*—not for Himself, but for Everyman. Both Jew and Roman gawk and sneer at His nakedness (Who had once clothed the nakedness of their first father and mother); they cast lots for his clothing.

But this is not the end. When all is done, His Father does “answer Him” (vs. 21b). He who had felt so abandoned, finds that His Father had *not “hidden His face from Him, but when He cried to Him, He had heard.”* He comes back to life, and this sacrificed one will now *personally* declare His Father’s name to His brothers and sisters—who now may become part of His heavenly family! All who will revere the LORD may now praise Him—including the *“descendants of Jacob, the offspring of Israel.”* The poor may eat and be satisfied, and the rich—all who seek Him will find and enter into the Praise—and their *hearts will live forever!* This living forever, this eternal life will in fact extend to the *“ends of the world, all the families of the nations shall worship before you”*—just as had been promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), his blessing will extend to all families of the world. And this salvation will extend down into the grave, whose power has been conquered. Whereas many psalmists had supposed that worshipping God beyond the Grave could never happen, now *“All those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, those who could never keep themselves alive”*. And it will be recounted of this suffering Servant, this *Adonai*, throughout the generations—that it is *He* who accomplished this! All of this is present here, in this *Morning Star* psalm!

There is one other place in the New Covenant where “ayelet hashahar” appears—II Peter 1:19 (Hebrew translation): *“So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.”*

Here Peter speaks of a wonderful transformation which will occur in his readers as the prophetic words spoken of Yeshua in Hebrew Scriptures are brought into clarity and formed in their

hearts! There can be little doubt that the primary recipients of both of Peter's letters were Jews dispersed in the nations (I Peter 1:1). They had been awaiting a *star*. A Word released into their Torah by the pagan prophet Bil'am (under the control of YHVH, Numbers 24:17) had spoken of One which would come out of Jacob. Now that prophetic word was being "made sure" by revelation of the Son of God—the same who had also been portrayed in their beloved twenty-second Psalm.

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That Jews throughout the world will have revelation about the One portrayed in the Psalm 22; that they will "pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the Morning Star arises in their hearts!"**

*** For Orthodox Jewish women—who spend much of each day reading rapidly through the Psalter—yet without understanding. Pray that they will slow down and pay attention as they read this and other Messianic Psalms. Pray that the Spirit of Truth will awaken them to Whom they are referring!**

*** That even as Gentiles saw a light from heaven which drew them into paths leading from the far East to Bethlehem, present-day Israelis will be guided by the light of God's grace—by Yeshua—*Ayelet haShahar*—into the path of truth and righteous.**

"The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day" (Proverbs 4:18).

"The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the Good News of the glory of Messiah, who is the image of God" (II Corinthians 4:4).

"God's own purpose and grace which was given to us in Messiah Yeshua before time began...has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Yeshua the Anointed One, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Good News" (II Timothy 1:9-10).

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 21-27 February 2016 are called *Ki Tisa*—“When You Raise Up”

TORAH: Exodus 30:11—34:35

HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:1-39

***Exodus 30:11-12.** *“Then YHVH spoke to Moses, saying: ‘When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number...’* “Take the Census” is “to raise up (*Ki Tisa*) the heads”, in some ways similar to our English expression “to take a head-count.” This was to be accompanied by a ransom, shekel tax, being paid by everyone counted, otherwise the people would find protection lifted and themselves opened to plague (vs 12). Perhaps it was through neglect of these instructions that King David would bring plague upon his own people in II Samuel 24.

***Exodus 31:2-5.** *“See, I have called by name Betzalel...and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom in intelligence, in knowledge, and in all craftsmanship, to design artistic works...and I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiav...and in the heart of all gifted artisans [Heb: wise-hearts] I have put wisdom to make all I have commanded.”*

The name *Betzalel* means, “In the shadow of God.” *Aholiav* means, “Father is my tent.” We are all creative beings, made in the image of our Creator. Some have been granted a special measure of gifting in order to artistically fashion articles (or sounds) which will reflect certain aspects of God’s glory and thus bring Him honor (such artists are called “wise hearts” in Exodus 28:3). The safe place for all with such callings is under the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1)—within the tent of our Father (Psalm 27:5). It is He who desires to fill artists (there are many artistic skills mentioned here) with His Spirit to “*make all that He commands.*” Tragically, at the very time these instructions were being given to Moses on the mountain, Aaron (most certainly not moving under “the shadow of God”), was being coerced by the desires of those around him to use his creative gifts in fashioning an idol (Ex. 32:4). Rather than being used by the Holy Spirit to aid the people in worshipping the true God, the creative fashioning of his hands would itself be worshipped.

PLEASE PRAY: for godly “Betzalels” and “Aholiavs” to be nurtured and brought forth in Israel today, that they will move in a humble awareness that their creative gifts, wisdom, intelligence, knowledge and craftsmanship are from God, to fulfill a work for His glory—His is their high destiny. Pray that they seek to be filled by His spirit—and resist the spirit of the world which seeks to divert the creativity of the children of Adam (who were made in the Image of a creative God) away from honoring their Maker. Pray that they realize that He knows them and (as with Betzalel) calls them by name!

***Exodus 31:17.** *“It [i.e. the Sabbath] is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days YHVH made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased work and was refreshed.”* We should be cautious about saying things like “Although God ceased

work on the seventh day, it wasn't because he was tired and in need of a rest, etc.” Of course there are mysteries here deeper than we can understand; nevertheless, this passage states clearly that on the seventh day God “ceased work and was refreshed.” The Hebrew word for “refreshed” literally could be rendered “*was souled*”. So David could confidently speak of the LORD as One who intimately understands his weary servant’s needs so as to “*restore my soul!*” (Psalm 23:3).

***Exodus 32:1-5, 19.** The children of Israel were a people sovereignly chosen and set-apart by God. Last week we saw how from among these people Aaron and his house were themselves chosen to minister before the LORD as His priests (Exodus 28:1). And of course, Moses was raised up from birth to oversee and lead the people. Yet it will become abundantly clear in this reading that none of these callings, choosings and positionings were because of the righteousness of the people; alas, all are under sin (Romans 3:9). That will have to be faced, acknowledged and dealt with. The people, who, a short time before, had “with one voice” twice promised, even in the context of covenant, that “*All the words which YHVH has said we will do...we will be obedient*” (Exodus 24:3, 7), this people, after Moses is gone for less than a month, abandon their promise and demand of Aaron to make new gods to go before them (32:1). Aaron, who had been warned against giving in to “mob rule” (23:2), under the first pressure does so—in so doing breaking the 1st and 2nd Commandments. He then breaks God’s command (20:23) not to “make anything to *be with Me*” by proclaiming a feast to YHVH along with the worship of the idol he has just fashioned. And Moses, to whom God had *given* the tablets of stone, Commandments which would be the basis for all other Law, tablets which *God had written*, to be used by Moses in teaching the people (24:12)—tablets which were themselves the “work of God” upon which was engraved the “writing of God” written with “the finger of God” (32:16; 31:18)—Moses, in a fit of anger, pays no attention to all of that and smashes them to pieces.

***Exodus 32:11-13.** “*Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God [Hebrew: ‘yearned after the face of YHVH his God’] and said, ‘LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people...Turn from Your fierce wrath and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.”’*” In Exodus 32:32 Moses continues to stand in the gap, pleading that they be forgiven for their sin.

PLEASE PRAY: for spiritual leaders to have the zeal, unction, love and grace to seek the face of God on behalf of errant Israel; to prevail in intercession to turn away His just wrath that His eternal will for her will be fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven.

***Exodus 32:19.** “*So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.*”

PLEASE PRAY: for the *souls* (Psalm 25:1, 20) of Israeli spiritual leaders—that they not be controlled by their emotions—that they allow the Holy Spirit to work His self-control. There is a place for godly zeal, but the “*anger of man does not work the righteousness of*

God” (James 1:20). It would be an eruption of this same anger some time later which would in the end bar Moses from entering the Promised Land.

***Exodus 33:7-11.** *“Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the ‘tent of meeting’. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp...And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tent, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tent, and talked with Moses...So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tent.”*

In Exodus 25:22, the LORD had given instructions regarding the disposition of the *Mishkan* (Dwelling Place/Tabernacle) so that He might meet at appointed times with a representative of His people. But here, Moses prepares a place so that he *or anyone else* might choose to make his own appointed meetings with God—and God honored those times with His presence. Although His face would not be seen (vs 20), He nevertheless met face to face with those who chose to draw near. Alas, besides Moses, only Joshua (who would one day be prepared to lead Israel into Canaan) appears to have taken advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

PLEASE PRAY: For Israeli believers, in all the rush and hurry, to go beyond ‘head knowledge’ of the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel—and avail themselves of the privilege of setting aside a ‘place’ for private, intimate times Face to Face with God!

***Exodus 33:15.** *“Then he said to Him, ‘If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here...”* Here the word “presence” is literally “Face”. Psalm 44:3 says, *“It was not by our sword that we took the land, nor did our arm bring us the victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the Light of Your Face, for You loved us!”*

***Exodus 33:13, 18.** *“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people....Please, show me Your glory.”*

PLEASE PRAY: for leaders in Israel (both believers and those still secular), to like Moses be moved to call on the LORD for guidance to be shown His way. Pray that we find grace in His sight, that our leadership will be fueled and heartened by longings after his Glory and glimpses of His Beauty (Psalm 27:4).

***Exodus 33:18-19.** *“And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’ “Then He said, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before you...”*

We think it to be very significant that although Moses requests to be shown the LORD’s glory, what he needs first is a revelation of His *goodness*. Doubts as to that goodness were among the first strategies used by the Evil One in the Garden, and is still what he attempts to use to undermine our faith today. The most-repeated song of Faith in the Scriptures is, *“Give thanks to the LORD for He is good, and His kindness endures forever.”* And David was convinced that since the LORD was his shepherd, *“Goodness and kindness will pursue me all the days of my life*

(Psalm 23:16), and would have despaired had he not had faith to see the “goodness of the LORD in the land of the living” (Psalm 27:13).

Exodus 33:21-22. “*And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.’*” Centuries later, the prophet Elijah fleeing from the wrath of Jezebel would come to this same mountain; and the Hebrew of I Kings 19:9 says He went into *the* cave to spend the night—and there the Word of the LORD came to him. Jewish teachers have traditionally identified this cave with that same “cleft” in which Moses had been placed by God.

***Exodus 33:22-23.** “*So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.*” Might there be significance in the fact that the word translated “hand” is not that usually used for hand, but the word for “palm”? In answer to Moses’ request to be shown the LORD’s “glory”—God had responded that His *goodness* would pass before him...a Goodness which in following verses (34:6-8) would be shown to include forgiveness—the very “bearing away of sin.” Might the “goodness” in the One who would descend and stand with him there (vs.34:5) have included a glimpse of what those palms and that back would one day be required to bear on Man’s behalf?

***Exodus 34:6-7.** “*YHVH, YHVH-Elohim, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in loving kindness and truth (Hebrew: *chesed v’emet*), keeping loving kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...*” The Hebrew word used here for “forgiving” is *nasah* (That for “pardon” in vs 9 is a different word). *Nasah* has to do with “lifting, carrying, bearing away”—something which only God Himself would be able to do for the “iniquity, transgression and sin of thousands”. This is the word used in Hebrew translations of John 1:29 when John announces the Son of God, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who bears away the sin of the world!*”



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week 28 February—5 March 2016 are called : *VaYakhel*--“And He Assembled”: TORAH: Exodus 35:1—38:20; *Shabbat Sh’kalim*: Exodus 30:11-16 HAFTARAT *Shabbat Sh’kalim*: II Kings 12:1-17]

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