

Prayer Update From Israel (February 27, 2012)



Menorah before the entrance to the Knesset, Jerusalem

“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)*

We have entered the Hebrew month of *Adar*—Thursday begins the month of March according to the Gregorian calendar. Although it will necessitate this week’s Update being more lengthy than usual, we have thought it important to include as Part II a special analysis and direction for prayer this month written by our friend Rick Ridings. Rick and his wife Patti are founders and senior overseers of *Succat Hallel*, a 24/7 worship-intercession ministry in Jerusalem.

PART I—THE MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON

Today Israel’s Defense Minister Ehud Barak leaves for Washington for conferences with Vice President Biden, US Secretary of Defense Panetta and National Security Advisor Tom Donilon and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper (Barak was in Washington only two months ago, and recently hosted the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in Israel). He will return to Israel on Thursday to brief PM Netanyahu before both the Prime Minister flies to Washington to take part along with Israeli President Shimon Peres in the annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). ***While in the Capital, both leaders will confer with American President Barak Obama—Peres on Sunday, Netanyahu on Monday.*** The frequency of such high-level talks between the two countries is being called “unprecedented”. The Prime Minister leaves no doubt that while addressing “the deplorable massacres that we see being perpetrated against innocent civilians in Syria”, his talks with the American President will center around “the continued strengthening of Iran and its nuclear program”. **We see these meetings in**

Washington as of critical importance, and believe it crucial that they be attended by much prayer.

This week the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency released an extremely troubling quarterly report to the effect that Iran has significantly increased the pace of its uranium enrichment program, having produced almost 110 kg of uranium enriched to 20% since 2010 (Around 250 kg is needed for a nuclear weapon). On Tuesday, even as American intelligence analysts reported that they see no hard evidence that Iran is intent on building an atomic weapon, the wife of Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, a top Iranian nuclear scientist assassinated in Tehran in January, stated that her husband's ultimate aim in his work had always been the annihilation of the Zionist regime (Israel)...that he had often expressed to her his desire to become a martyr to this cause.

We find it significant that on his way to Sunday's meeting in Washington, Prime Minister Netanyahu will stop first in Ottawa Thursday evening to consult with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, a man with whom the Israeli premier feels perhaps more acceptance and friendship than with any other national leader. Mr Harper, whose strong commitment to his Christian faith is well known, has often gone "against the flow" by taking stands on Israel's behalf, both in his own government and in meetings of the G-8.

As Israel's Defense Minister, her Prime Minister and her President are engaged in high-level talks in Washington this and early next week,

PLEASE PRAY:

*** That the Holy Spirit of God will overshadow the leaders conferring in Washington. That angels will be released to fight on behalf of the counsels of the LORD as opposed to those of man (Psalm 33:10-11). That the Fear of the Lord will be over each of these council meetings.**

***That there will be a unity in the messages and bearing of Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Peres. In 1981, Peres was publically against the bombing of the Iraqi reactor at Osirak, even sending a last-minute plea to PM Begin not to allow it. This past week a *HaAretz* report claimed that Peres was expected to tell the US President that he believes Israel should not attack Iran in the near future. Peres' office has denied this, yet it has already awakened suspicion amongst other leaders here. Under Israeli law, it is the elected government headed by the Prime Minister which makes decisions and negotiates and discloses policies, not the office of President, whose duties are primarily ceremonial.**

There has been much pressure on Israel to reveal her intentions regarding the Iranian threat. Pray that any Israeli state secrets or plans which need to be guarded will not be divulged. In an intercession meeting in Jerusalem Friday, we were reminded of Judges 16:16 where Samson resisted telling Delilah the secret of his strength, but "*when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death...and he told her all his heart*"—and II Kings 20:12-19 where Hezekiah unwisely showed the Babylonian envoys "*all that is in his house; there was nothing in his storehouses

that he did not show them.” Pray that God will stop any mouths from speaking that which would bring harm to His purposes for Israel or the United States at this time.

***For Prime Minister Netanyahu’s meetings with Prime Minister Harper, that their trust be strengthened; that Words of Wisdom and courage to be released to Mr Netanyahu by the Canadian leader.**

PART II Word from Rick Ridings, Jerusalem

The Convergence of Purim, Iran, and Washington, DC

The days leading up to Purim this year may well bring a convergence of decisions in Israel, Iran, and Washington, DC that will affect the future as dramatically as the biblical account of Esther.

March 6th on the Gregorian calendar, at sundown, the Hebrew Fast of Esther begins (*Ta’anit Esther*, the beginning of the 13th of *Adar*). March 7th, at sundown, Jews worldwide will begin to celebrate Purim, and rejoice in the “reversal of decrees” that saved the Jewish people from destruction (the 14th of *Adar*).

For the last several months, the Lord has been speaking to me, and to others in Jerusalem, to be very alert to pray concerning shakings that would accelerate during the month of March, 2012.

I would like to call believers worldwide to join our Jewish friends in the fast of Esther from sundown, March 6th through sundown, March 7th. Let us pray for the intervention of the Lord of the Armies of Heaven to save Israel from the annihilation being threatened by Iran.

An Urgency Concerning the Month of March and Washington, DC

I had the great privilege of being asked to dedicate a new house of prayer in Washington, DC, on the evening of January 13th this year. As I was praying in preparation, I felt in my spirit that, as in the time of Nehemiah, there was a great urgency to pray for a shifting in systems and structures, and for a wall of spiritual protection to be built to protect ground that would be gained in intercession. **I felt that much of the future of America and Israel would be decided between January – March this year, and it would be too late if intercessors wait to “kick into gear” in the Fall, right before the elections.**

I encouraged the Washington DC intercessors the night of January 13th, to study the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and to be focused on building a wall of protection around Washington, DC, just as Nehemiah was very focused to see the wall around Jerusalem built in 52 days. I think it is very significant that the end of the 52 days is sundown March 5th, the day before the Fast of Esther, which begins sundown March 6.

In the time of Nehemiah, the Lord used Ezra to call for a sacred assembly to confess Israel’s sins, and the sins of their fathers, and to renew covenant with the God of Israel. Our good friend, and co-laborer, Jon Hamill, is working with spiritual leaders in the Washington, DC area to have such a sacred assembly on March 3rd, and onsite prayer on March 6th. I would strongly

encourage those in the Washington, DC area to join them in imploring the Lord's mercy over that city, and the decisions being made there. For more information, see Jon Hamill's website: <http://www.lamplighterministries.net/>

The Importance of a Right Understanding in Washington

In the story of Esther, King Ahasuerus was somehow blinded to the evil conniving of Haman to destroy the Jews, and played into Haman's hand. But through the fasting and prayers of Mordecai, Esther, and the Jewish people, the king had his eyes opened and took the steps necessary to intervene.

Are we really at such a serious point in history again? Is Iran (ancient Persia in the story of Esther) truly an existential threat to Israel? Many in Washington are deceived by a political doctrine from the era of the Cold War Soviet threat. That doctrine is called "Mutual Assured Destruction", and stated that the fact that either side could respond with a nuclear strike, assuring the destruction of the aggressor, would be incentive enough to keep the other side from starting a nuclear confrontation. Although that was true of those two cultures, it is not true of Iran today.

As is well explained in a recent Jerusalem Post article: *"Nuclear deterrence will not help prevent Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons since the Iranian regime has religious motives to bring about the return of the Mahdi and is prepared to die for it.*

Iran is led by a group of irrational men who believe they can hurry the arrival of the Mahdi – the 12th Imam who, according to Shi'ite Islamic tradition, went missing in 874 CE and will return under conditions of global chaos. The Iranian leadership appears willing to sacrifice the population of its own country to achieve this goal.

In his book The Rise of Nuclear Iran, former Israeli ambassador to the UN Dore Gold writes, 'Mahdi Khaliji, an Iranian Shi'ite scholar... has noted that there are apocalyptic hadiths [received Shi'ite traditions] that the Mahdi will not return unless one-third of the world population is killed and another third die. But Ahmadinejad and his followers believe man can actively create the conditions for the Mahdi's arrival in the here and now...'

In 2006, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting website said in a program called 'The World Towards Illumination', that the Mahdi will reappear in Mecca and form an army to defeat Islam's enemies in a series of apocalyptic battles, in which the Mahdi will overcome his archenemy in Jerusalem.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a member of the Hojatieh society, a group which believes it can and should hasten the arrival of the Mahdi. According to Islamic tradition, the Mahdi's arrival will be accompanied or followed by near destruction of nations. The group appears to maintain a deep desire to create the necessary global chaos. And Ahmadinejad has publicly called for the Mahdi's speedy return"^[1]

How Should We Pray?

1. Let us pray that the Mordecais and Esthers of our time will hear the call of the Holy Spirit concerning the urgency of the hour, and will not be distracted or lulled into slumber by a false sense of security.

2. Let us pray for continued success of the covert war against Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon. On Nov. 8, 2011, I received a vision in one of our watches here in Succat Hallel in Jerusalem. I saw something resembling a Tower of Babel being built in Iran, representing a working together of various nations to stand against God. I sensed it represented their nuclear weapons program. As they were bringing final stones to place on top, then lightning from heaven struck it, and the top level of stones fell off (not all), producing a setback to their nuclear efforts. Then waves coming from the worship in houses of prayer in the Middle East washed away sand in Iran, and uncovered and exposed hidden things. I felt this vision was confirmed by news reports on Nov. 11 of a great explosion at an Iranian top-secret, military facility, which “shook windows” 30 km. away in Tehran.

Let us believe for much confusion and division upon the demonic powers bent on destroying Israel (2 Chron. 20).

3. Let us pray for a clear understanding to come to the decision-makers in Jerusalem and Washington, DC to do the right thing at the right time. (Esther 7:3-6)

4. Let us proclaim a reversal of every Satanic decree to destroy Israel, and that “Haman” will be hung upon his own gallows. (Esther 7:9,10; Ps. 33:10-12)

5. For Iran (Persia), let us pray for the Lord to bring shame upon His enemies in such a way that they will begin to seek the Name of the Lord, to know Who is the True and Living God (See Psalm 83, especially verse 16).

6. For Israel, let us pray that the God of Esther will once again bring great deliverance and joy to His ancient people, and that they will give all the glory to Him (Esther 9:20-22).

Note: Just after I had written this article stressing the strategic importance of March 3-6 for both Israel and Washington, DC concerning Iran, the following article appeared in an Israeli daily news source noting that it was very unusual that both Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres would be in Washington, DC March 4-6, and were slated to meet with President Obama about Iran. You may read more at this link:

http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=29961

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[1] *Jerusalem Post* article, Feb. 10, 2012, “A View From Israel: Deterrence is Irrelevant” by Israel Kasnett.

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. All texts are those of English translations of the Scriptures.

The readings for this week (26 February--3 March) are called *Tetsaveh*—Command/Charge (“*And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil...to cause the lamp to burn continually.*”).

TORAH: Exodus 27:20—30:10

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 43:10-27

Lights and Perfections

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 the enemy and supplying the purification really necessary 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 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 Thummim, 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 for You.”). Righteous judgments for His people are near to God’s Heart, and He desired it to be near to the heart of His priests. This required supreme *Illumination and Integrity*.

Lastly, *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 28:43-46.** “**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 read last week of God’s desire to “dwell with” to “neighbor closely” 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 (Mar 4-10) is called *Ki Tisa*—“When you Raise” (“*When you raise the head* (i.e. take a census) *of the children of Israel...*” and will include TORAH: Exodus 30:11—34:35; HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:1-39; PURIM (8 March): *Scroll of Esther.*]

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