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Netanyahu comeback propelled by hardline rhetoric, calls for unity on right

Source: JTA-3/18/2015



Netanyahu's family and supporters sing Hatikvah at his reelection

TEL AVIV (JTA) — On Sunday night, when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ascended the stage to address the crowd, he needed their votes. On Tuesday he got them. “[A]s long as I am prime minister, and as long as Likud is in government, the nationalist camp is in government,” he said in his speech at the rally. “And as long as the nationalist camp is in government, we won’t divide Jerusalem, there won’t be concessions and there won’t be retreats.” Now Netanyahu has what he said he wanted when he called in December for new elections: a relatively easy path to forming a coalition with his so-called “natural partners.”

On Election Day, Netanyahu also played on his base’s wariness of the left wing and Arab opposition. In a controversial video released Tuesday morning, Netanyahu warned of increased Arab-Israeli turnout and asked right-wing voters to come to the polls in response. “Right-wing rule is in danger,” the prime minister said in the video. “Arab voters are coming out in droves to the ballot box. Left-wing NGOs are bringing them on buses. ... We have only you. Come to the ballot box, bring your friends, your relatives, vote [Likud]. We’ll close the gap between us and Labor.”

The results show that his constituents heeded his calls. Likud won 10 more seats than last time, while the right-wing nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu and Jewish Home parties, and the haredi Orthodox parties all lost seats. Likud also increased its vote totals in the large settlement of Maale Adumim and in southern cities like Beersheba and Ashkelon.

Diplomatically, Netanyahu’s rightward shift may make his life more difficult. The Obama administration said it would work with whomever leads the next Israeli government. But Netanyahu’s revived opposition to Palestinian statehood will clash with Obama’s staunch support of the two-state solution and do little to heal the leaders’ acrimonious relationship.

Challenges foreign and domestic, however, are nothing new for Netanyahu. His goal in this campaign was to receive a stronger mandate to lead Israel, and to do so with like-minded partners. And at the potential cost of embittering enemies and distancing his policies from the international consensus, that’s exactly what he accomplished. “Now it’s on us to create a strong and stable government that will care for the security and welfare of all of Israel’s citizens,” Netanyahu said in his victory speech. “Very large challenges face us.”

Obama calls Netanyahu to congratulate on reelection

Source: JTA-3/19/2015

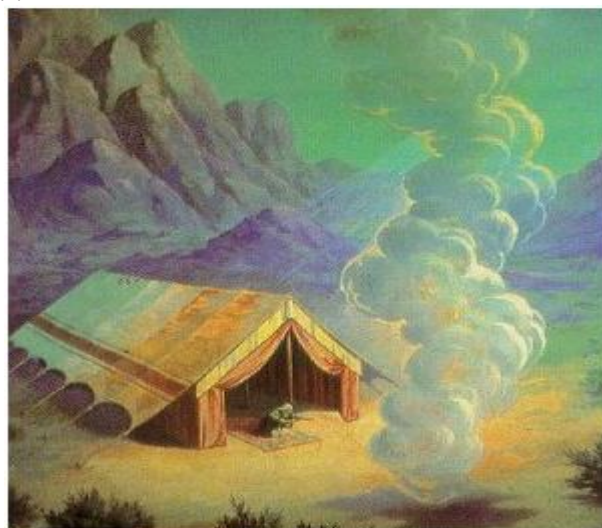
WASHINGTON (JTA) — President Barack Obama called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to congratulate him on his reelection and to reaffirm the U.S. commitment to a two-state solution. “President Obama spoke today by telephone with Prime Minister Netanyahu to congratulate the prime minister on his party’s success in winning a plurality of Knesset seats,” the White House said on Thursday. Obama had come under criticism from congressional Republicans for not immediately congratulating Netanyahu when his reelection became apparent on Wednesday morning. Rep. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) had by Thursday garnered over 150 signatures from Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives to sign a letter congratulating Netanyahu. “A strong U.S.-Israel relationship is critical to combating the rise of Islamic jihadists in the region,” DeSantis said in releasing the letter earlier Thursday, before Netanyahu and Obama spoke. “The White House has so far failed to recognize the Prime Minister’s success, and this silence has been deafening.”

Vayikra

Leviticus 1:1-5:26

G-d calls to Moses from the Tent of Meeting, and communicates to him the laws of the korbanot, the animal and meal offerings brought in the Sanctuary. These include:

- The “ascending offering” (olah) that is wholly raised to G-d by the fire atop the altar;
- Five varieties of “meal offering” (minchah) prepared with fine flour, olive oil and frankincense;
- The “peace offering” (shelamim), whose meat was eaten by the one bringing the offering, after parts are burned on the altar and parts are given to the kohanim (priests);
- The different types of “sin offering” (chatat) brought to atone for transgressions committed erroneously by the high priest, the entire community, the king or the ordinary Jew;
- The “guilt offering” (asham) brought by one who has misappropriated property of the Sanctuary, who is in doubt as to whether he transgressed a divine prohibition, or who has committed a “betrayal against G-d” by swearing falsely to defraud a fellow man.



Vayikra Haftorah

Isaiah 43:21-44:23.

This week’s haftorah starts with a rebuke to the Israelites for abandoning the Temple’s sacrificial service. Sacrifices are the dominant topic of the week’s Torah reading, too. The prophet Isaiah rebukes the Israelites for turning away from G-d and refraining from offering sacrifices, turning to idolatry instead. G-d exhorts the people to return to Him, promising to forgive their transgressions, as is His wont. The prophet then mentions the futility of serving empty idols which may be crafted by artisans but “neither see nor hear nor do they know...” The haftorah concludes with G-d’s enjoinder to always remember Him and to return to Him.

Ha’chodesh

The Hachodesh reading (Exodus 12:1-20) recounts G-d’s historic communication to Moses in Egypt on the first of Nissan, two weeks before the Exodus, regarding the establishment of a Jewish (lunar) calendar, the Paschal Offering, matzah, bitter herbs, and the seder. The special Hachodesh haftorah (Ezekiel 45:18-46:15) is a prophecy regarding the Paschal Offering that will be brought in the Third Holy Temple.

Abbas: Will talk to any Israeli gov't that backs Palestinian state

Source: JTA-3/18/2015

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said he will talk to any Israeli government that accepts a two-state solution as the basis for negotiations. "It doesn't matter to us who the next prime minister of Israel is, what we expect from this government is to recognize the two-state solution," Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said Wednesday in a statement, the French news agency AFP reported, in the aftermath of Israel's national elections the day before. Without a commitment to a Palestinian state, any future peace negotiations have "no chance," the statement also said.

Chief Palestinian peace negotiator Saeb Erekat condemned the election results. Erekat blamed the result on the international community, which he said has not "held Israel to account for its systematic violations of international law."

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Wednesday said that the EU "is committed to working with the incoming Israeli government on a mutually beneficial relationship as well as on the relaunch of the peace process." Mogherini congratulated Netanyahu for garnering the most seats in the new Knesset.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman told reporters in Tehran that the results of the elections were not important, since "for us there is no difference between the Zionist regime's political parties. They are all aggressors in nature," Reuters reported, citing the semi-official Mehr News Agency.

Y.U. to merge Stern, Yeshiva colleges' faculties

Source: JTA-3/18/2015



NEW YORK (JTA) – Yeshiva University announced plans to merge the faculty of its two undergraduate schools, Yeshiva College and Stern College. Richard Joel, president of the university, which is under Orthodox auspices, told students Wednesday that as of July 1, it will begin consolidating all arts and science departments.

Stern, a women's college, and the all-male Yeshiva have separate faculties and their campuses are located more than five miles apart from each other. Joel said the move will allow for more diverse course offerings and will not affect faculty teaching loads. The university has faced numerous financial challenges in recent years, and last week Yeshiva College faculty overwhelmingly passed a no-confidence resolution against Joel, who has been president since 2003. The university board responded with a statement in support of Joel.

Parents of Turin chief rabbi survive Tunis terror attack

Source: JTA-3/18/2015



ROME (JTA) – Two Italian Jewish tourists survived the terrorist attack on the Bardo Museum in Tunisia. Alberto Di Porto, 71, and Anna Di Porto, 60, of Rome both managed to escape the shooting attack Wednesday in the capital city of Tunisia by gunmen wearing what appeared to be military uniforms which, according to reports at press time, left at least 19 people dead, including 17 tourists. The Di Portos, who were visiting Tunisia as part of a cruise, are the parents of Ariel Di Porto, the chief rabbi of Turin, Italy. According to a report by the Italian Jewish magazine Pagine Ebraiche, Alberto Di Porto injured his leg while running from the museum and was taken to a local hospital. The Italian news site La Voce reported that the couple was separated, with Anna Di Porto taken by police with other rescued visitors to a safe and secret location. "They are both safe and that is the most important thing," their daughter told Pagine Ebraiche. "I hope that they can get back to Italy as soon as possible. Hopefully even tonight." Prime Minister Habib Essid said in a news conference that security forces had killed two gunmen inside the museum but that two or three accomplices might still be at large. He said 17 foreign visitors – including Polish, Italian, Spanish and German tourists – as well as two Tunisians, one of whom was a member of the security forces, had been killed in the attack. At least 22 others were wounded.

Public announcement to inform visitors about Shabbat's start

Source: JTA-3/19/2015

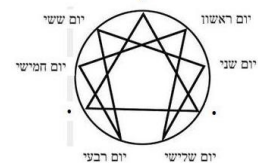
JERUSALEM (JTA) – Visitors to the Western Wall will be informed of the beginning of Shabbat with a new public announcement. In addition to the traditional siren heard throughout Jerusalem at the start of Shabbat, an announcement will be made over the public address system, beginning this Friday, according to Western Wall Heritage Foundation. The announcement will say: "Dear guests, welcome to the Western Wall. In a few minutes the Sabbath will begin. Please respect our traditions and avoid taking photographs and refrain from using mobile phones at the Western Wall. Shabbat Shalom!" The announcement will be delivered in Hebrew, English and Russian in the moments before the start of Shabbat. The Western Wall Heritage Foundation said in its statement that it "believes that it is appropriate to apply the sanctity of the Sabbath properly to the Western Wall, a holy place." The foundation said it will distribute leaflets to visitors that talk about "the honor of the Sabbath."

Influence of the Lamedvavniks

From: JEWISH STORIES by L. Grunfeld

CHAPTER #9- Summations

The rabbi continued, "Yakov Arie's pendant shows a symbol that is very ancient. It has been said that when two travelers met in the deserts of old times, they would draw this symbol in the sand and each would take turns telling what they knew about it. In this way, they established which of them the student was and which the teacher was. The symbol has been depicted in various formats throughout the ages. This diagram is not very different from the seal of Solomon, which at one time was utilized for transmitting knowledge to those who had the ability to understand. For us Jews, it corresponds to the days of the week when we need a little spiritual push to inspire us -or perhaps, if we've been overly fanatical, a bit of humility. How the combined interaction of these activities will result, depends on what you experience on Shabbat. As you can see, it would make sense that each of the three points of the triangle correspond to reading the Torah. It is the Torah that can keep our external physical lives and our internal spiritual evolution on the right path. And there is no stagnation here. On Shabbat, we have either ascended to newly developed heights or we have descended to apathetic lows." The rabbi finished speaking and concluded the nightly discussion. He motioned to Yakov Arie to meet him in his study.



"So you see...Yakov Arie, this symbol is not a static teaching tool but rather one that carries a dynamic knowledge to be imparted to us in order that we may be able to develop into a more whole human being with increased potentials to help the world evolve. The person, who gave this to you, did so with multiple intentions. Who knows... perhaps he was a Lamedvavkov. For you, it was in order to help with your attaining of semicha. For the other members of the class... well each of them are connected to various parts of society into which they in turn will effect some form of change necessary for society at large to be directed toward a better path. As for me, I will be ending our class. What will you do with your amulet Yakov?" Yakov Arie gave a smile, shrugged and left to take a walk on the beach. The tide was far out and he was able to walk quite far toward the gentle waves that were smoothing the receding shore line. He walked next to the rock jetties and climbed on one of the boulders jutting into the deeper parts of the dark blue abyss. Gazing out toward the horizon, he took the amulet from his pocket and as the second commandment flashed through his being, he flung the bibelot into the ocean and whispered, "I was born into this world -but this amulet... it is in the world, but not of it." (End.)

AMIT needs your help! צדקה



Founded in 1925, AMIT educates and cares for Israel's youth, including the most vulnerable children in Israel. The AMIT schools promote religious tolerance, service to the state and the recognition that every child is blessed with unique talents and abilities.

Contact: Rabbi Avi Kasten



שבת שלום

BAT KOL NEWS

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NEXT WEEK'S SERVICES*

Candle lighting	6:57 PM
FRIDAY Minha / Maariv	7:00 PM
SATURDAY morning	9:30 AM
SATURDAY Minha / Maariv	7:00 PM
Shabbat ends	8:02 PM

*Subject to change per Rabbi's announcements.