

-To the Netzarim Diaspora,

Our Grandfather died 12:19 PM Monday. I want to thank all of you that prayed for our Grandfather. I thought you might have questions on the state of the dead:

x[There's] A time to be born, and a time to die. (Ecclesiastes 3:2)x

xA good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. (Ecclesiastes 7:1)x

xxit is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Messiah was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9:27)x

You've got a day, you've got a time and you've got a place and your name is on it. People keep that appointment every day, three every second, 180 people every minute keep that appointment, 11,000 people very hour keep that appointment, 260,000 today kept that appointment. This year 95 million people will keep this appointment. You cannot delay it and you cannot deny it. Remember, life's journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn out, shouting.. "Wow!! What a Ride!!"

Now don't get me wrong, death is no friend. Death is an ugly intruder that tears the soul and body asunder but it can't touch my spirit. The reality is, we don't have to be afraid of death. King Messiah YahShua came to "release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15).

These words might sound arrogant to those who do not understand our intimate walk with the Heavenly Father. For us, death is but a last enemy we must deal with before our expiration causes us to go through the door through which we pass from the Olam Hezeh (Present World) into the Tabernacle not made with hands (Hebrews 9:11) into the presence of our Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:1) Who currently is ministering as High Priest (Hebrews 5:5, 9:11) before the Golden Altar (Hebrews 9:4) along with the angels (Revelation 8:3, 9:13).

xThen shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto Yahweh who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)x

xI looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Sheol was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the spirits of those who had been slain because of the word of Yahweh and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign King, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" (Revelation 6:8-10)x

That gives us a unique look into where the dead are. You see, since a disembodied righteous spirit is not allowed to roam around we must go to our next phase of ministry –

interceding, albeit in a personal mode, for the manifestation of the Kingdom of Yahweh. We uniquely become part of the concentrated ministry of our High Priest MelechiTzaddik (High Priest of the Zaddokite Priesthood) Messiah YahShua.

As you know I believe a righteous man may know the end of his days.

xYahweh, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am. (Psalm 39:4)x

So I can tell you, He does nothing without first revealing it to His prophet (Amos 3:7). I'll know when it is my time to die. "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly awayxSo teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:10, 12). xForxthe body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26).x

Ixve got to tell you this story, you see a minister, a priest and a rabbi were all discussing death. The minister asked 'When you are in your casket, and friends, family, and congregants are mourning over you, what would you like to hear them say?' I would like to hear them say that I was a wonderful husband, a fine spiritual leader, and a great family man.

The priest said, 'I would like to hear that I was a wonderful teacher and mentor who made a huge difference in people's lives.'

The rabbi replied, 'I would like to hear them say, 'Look, he's moving!'

I know death is a harsh reality, but it is better to endure reality and act through knowledge than to be bop through life by an illusion.

Hear from someone who received a revelation of Who Messiah YahShua is for every Believer: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.xThen shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Sheol, where is your victory?'" (1 Corinthians 15:53-55).

All my ministry Ixve been preaching about Zion. I am interested in that land because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for many years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the donor purchased it for me at a tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is non-transferable. It is not a vacant lot.

All my life Ixve believed in the great architect and builder of the universe that has been building a home for the righteous, which will never need to be repaired because it will suit us perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

Termites can never undermine its foundation for it rests upon the solid Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no adversary can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and ready for me to enter it and abide in peace eternally without fear of being ejected. There just a few more things we must do first.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where we live and that to which we all must journey in a very short time. None of us can reach our home in the City of Yahweh, New Jerusalem coming down without passing through the dark valley of shadows. But we shall not be afraid, because the best friend that we have ever had went through the same valley alone, a long, long, time ago and drove away all the terror. He has stuck by us through thick and thin since we first met and became acquainted with Him years ago, and we hold His promise today in printed form, never to forsake nor to leave us alone. He will be with us as I walk through the valley of shadows, and we shall not lose our way for He is with us.

He is calling us to a great prayer meeting in the Heavens. There we will intercede for our next mission. Then we will meet all again as the dead come galloping to Petra receiving their glorified bodies joining the righteous in the Valley of Jehosaphat.

I understand what Rabbi Shaxul was trying to say when he said he was caught between two worlds. xYes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Messiah YahShua, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Messiah will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Messiah and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Messiah, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Messiah YahShua will overflow on account of me. (Philippians 1:18-26)x

That dynamic changed when Yahweh said, itxs time. We cannot argue nor complain, it was time. So the dead are in that Great Tabernacle in the Heavens enjoying the direct presence of Messiah YahShua – the express image of Yahweh.

xFor this Elohim is our Elohim for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death. (Psalms 48:14)x

xPrecious in the sight of Yahweh is the death of his saints. (Psalms 116:15)x

Let Yahweh be glorified and sanctified throughout the world; let the world become a perfect place soon in YOUR lifetime and let us say: Amien.

x[Yahweh] will swallow up death in victory; and the Sovereign Yahweh will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Yahweh hath spoken it. (Isaiah 25:8)x

Please Pray for Uncle Milton. We've told him that his father died. Many of you will recall that a week ago he had a heart attack. Friday he had 4 bypass heart surgery and a lung reduction surgery. He's still in ICU. Tomorrow, Thursday at 4:00 PM we will have our Grandfather's graveside service. Uncle Milton will not be able to go. I know it will weigh heavy on him. He is convalescing well.

Here's what else we know the week of May 30th 2006:  
Hard Line Muslims Told - Get Out of Australia!

Recently I received an email from xYour Arms To Israel International Ministriesx that reported, xAustralian Leaders In crackdown on Islam. Gov't surveillance on all mosques and a mandate to leave Australia from top leaders!x So I decided to investigate.

Here's the truth, this is not a new piece of information. Rather, this was announced back in 2005. Here's how the email attributed to Correspondent Eid ben Tzefanyah went: xMuslims who want to live under Islamic Sharia law were told on Wednesday to get out of Australia, as the government targeted radicals in a bid to head off potential terror attacks. A day after a group of mainstream Muslim leaders pledged loyalty to Australia at a special meeting with Prime Minister John Howard, he and his ministers made it clear that extremists would face a crackdown.

Treasurer Peter Costello, seen as heir apparent to Howard, hinted that some radical clerics could be asked to leave the country if they did not accept that Australia was a secular state and its laws were made by parliament. "If those are not your values, if you want a country which has Sharia law or a theocratic state, then Australia is not for you," he said on national television. "I'd be saying to clerics who are teaching that there are two laws governing people in Australia, one the Australian law and another the Islamic law, that is false.

If you can't agree with parliamentary law, independent courts, democracy, and would prefer Sharia law and have the opportunity to go to other country which practices it, perhaps, then, that's a better option," Costello said. Asked whether he meant radical clerics would be forced to leave, he said those with dual citizenship could possibly be asked to move to the other country.

Education Minister Brendan Nelson later told reporters that Muslims who did not want to accept local values should "clear off". "Basically, people who don't want to be Australians, and they don't want to live by Australian values and understand them, well then they can basically clear off," he said. Separately, Howard angered some Australian Muslims on Wednesday by saying he supported spy agencies monitoring the nation's mosques.x

The origins of this report goes all the way back to the July 2005 London Tube Bombings. August 2005, Australian prime minister John Howard held a two-hour summit with moderate Muslim leaders in Canberra to work on a national strategy for addressing intolerance and the promotion of violence, during which issues such as the curriculum of Islamic schools and suggested measures for vetting imams were discussed. The Christian Science Monitor noted of the event: xAs other governments have found, however, deciding who represents the Muslim community can be a delicate matter. Large sections of the youth, as well as conservative and more critical clerics, have been left out of Howard's summit — meaning some of the government's more aggressive proposals may meet resistance.

But the groups who attended the meeting hailed it as a successful first step in an ongoing dialogue.

xWe determined along with the prime minister that there must be more communication between the government and Islamic schools where it comes to teaching common values like democracy, fairness, tolerance and so on, and radicals will be reacted to, whenever they make inflammatory remarks,x says Ali Roude, the acting president of the New South Wales Islamic Council.

xIt's much worse for us now, because 7/7 showed the world that the enemy is to be found withinx instead of 9/11 when the terrorists were all foreigners [said the spokesperson for Lebanese Muslims in Australia]. xNow they are suspicious of all of us, and it's very serious, but the prime minister is only playing politics.x

But some Muslims here have a growing sense that they are being defined within the media by the voices of the extremists, and that an intervention by the government and moderate Muslims to counter such elements would be useful.

xSo far it was OK to do your own thing. But if the media is focusing on the extreme elements, we need to do something about it,x says Chabaan Omran, a senior member of the Federation of Australian Students and Youth, an organization that gives religious advice and teaching to young people. xMuslims need to interact more with mainstream Australia.x

This might sit well with recent calls from ordinary Australians asking Muslims to assimilate. But Mr. Omran is worried about the connotations of the word xassimilate,x and talks more of xpositive integration without undermining our religion.xx

Prime Minister Howard also publicly announced his intent to have Australian intelligence agencies target mosques and Islamic schools in an effort to xstamp out homegrown terrorism and extremistsx: Prime Minister John Howard said on top of trying to promote Australian values in Islamic schools, the Government would monitor what was said in certain schools and mosques to ensure they did not foster terrorism.

Asked whether he was prepared to "get inside" mosques and schools to ensure there was no support for terrorism, Mr Howard was blunt.

xYes, to the extent necessary,x Mr Howard told Southern Cross radio.

xI have no desire and nor is it the Government's intention to interfere in any way with the freedom or practice of religion.

We have a right to know whether there is, within any section of the Islamic community, a preaching of the virtues of terrorism, whether any comfort or harbour is given to terrorism within that community.x

The issue of the integration of Muslims into Australian society prompted controversial remarks by some Australian cabinet ministers, such as this exchange between Treasurer Peter Costello and host Tony Jones on the Lateline television news program on 23 August 2005:

TONY JONES: Now, over the past 24 hours you've been repeating the notion that migrants, evidently Islamic migrants, who don't like Australia, or Australian values, should think of packing up and moving to another country. Is that a fair assessment?

PETER COSTELLO: What I've said is that this is a country, which is founded on a democracy. According to our Constitution, we have a secular state. Our laws are made by the Australian Parliament. If those are not your values, if you want a country which has Sharia law or a theocratic state, then Australia is not for you. This is not the kind of country where you would feel comfortable if you were opposed to democracy, parliamentary law, independent courts and so I would say to people who don't feel comfortable with those values there might be other countries where they'd feel more comfortable with their own values or beliefs.

TONY JONES: It sounds like you're inviting Muslims who don't want to integrate to go to another country. Is it as simple as that?

PETER COSTELLO: No. I'm saying if you are thinking of coming to Australia, you ought to know what Australian values are.

TONY JONES: But what about if you're already here and you don't want to integrate?

PETER COSTELLO: Well, I'll come to that in a moment. But there are some clerics who have been quoted as saying they recognise two laws. They recognise Australian law and Sharia law. There's only one law in Australia, it's the Australian law. For those coming to Australia, I think we ought to be very clear about that. We expect them to recognise only one law and to observe it.

Now, for those who are born in Australia, I'd make the same point. This is a country which has a Constitution. Under its Constitution, the state is secular. Under its

constitution, the law is made by the parliament. Under its Constitution, it's enforced by the judiciary. These are Australian values and they're not going to change and we would expect people, when they come to Australia or if they are born in Australia, to respect those values.

TONY JONES: I take it that if you're a dual citizen and you have the opportunity to leave and you don't like Australian values, you're encouraging them to go away; is that right?

PETER COSTELLO: Well, if you can't agree with parliamentary law, independent courts, democracy and would prefer Sharia law and have the opportunity to go to another country which practises it, perhaps then that's a better option.

TONY JONES: But isn't this the sort of thing you hear in pubs, the meaningless populism you hear on talkback radio? Essentially, the argument is if you don't like it here, you should go back home.

PETER COSTELLO: No. Essentially, the argument is Australia expects its citizens to abide by core beliefs — democracy, the rule of law, the independent judiciary, independent liberty. You see, Tony, when you come to Australia and you go to take out Australian citizenship you either swear on oath or make an affirmation that you respect Australia's democracy and its values. That's what we ask of people that come to Australia and if they don't, then it's very clear that this is not the country — if they can't live with them — whose values they can't share. Well, there might be another country where their values can be shared.

TONY JONES: Who exactly are you aiming this at? Are you aiming it at young Muslims who don't want to integrate or are you aiming it at clerics like Sheikh Omran or Abu Bakr both from Melbourne?

PETER COSTELLO: I'd be saying to clerics who are teaching that there are two laws governing people in Australia, one the Australian law and another the Islamic law, that is false. It's not the situation in Australia. It's not the situation under our Constitution. There's only one law in Australia. It's the law that's made by the Parliament of Australia and enforced by our courts. There's no second law. There's only one law that applies in Australia and Australia expects its citizens to observe it.

Likewise, Education minister Dr. Brendan Nelson offered his opinion that those who do not accept and teach Australian values should leave the country: Dr Nelson says those who do not accept and teach Australian values should "clear off".

One of the recommendations at Prime Minister John Howard's terrorism summit was for Islamic schools to be encouraged to denounce extremism and teach about Australian traditions and culture.

The Minister says it is important for all groups to be integrated into the Australian community, whatever their religion.

"If you want to be an Australian, if you want to raise your children in Australia, we fully expect those children to be taught and to accept Australian values and beliefs," he said.

"We want them to understand our history and our culture, the extent to which we believe in mateship and giving another person a fair go, and basically if people don't want to support and accept and adopt and teach Australian values then, they should clear off."

So, the individual statements attributed to Australian government officials included in the e-mail reproduced at the head of this page are thus essentially accurate, but the selectively-quoted excerpts of controversial material from different news stories create the misleading overall impression that Australia enacted a formal policy to force some Muslim groups out of the country. The statements quoted were part of the public debate over an issue that flared briefly in the immediate aftermath of the London Tube bombings. (Urban Legends Reference Pages © 1995-2006 by Barbara and David P. Mikkelson - Last updated: 4 April 2006)

#### Australian Media Faces the Truth About Terrorism

Thursday May 25, 2006, The Hon. Michael Ronaldson, Senator for Victoria, and the Hon. Connie Fierravanti-Wells, Senator for New South Wales Liberal Party of Australia grilled the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's News Director John Cameron into admitting that Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah are indeed all terror organizations.

Sen. Fierravanti-Wells criticized Australian Broadcasting Corporation and SBS – World News Australia coverage of Israel, xABC and SBS reports often tell only one side of the story [and] fail to bring truth and perspective to the Australian public on a complex issue.x She said a visit to Israel last year gave her a chance to judge the Mideast conflict for herself.

In fact Israeli Reporter Tzvi Fleischer examined Australian media coverage of Israel and he notes the 'narrative frames' issue that distorts coverage (ie. 'cycle of violence'), and some recurring myths repeated by the Australian media, including: (1) Jewish power, especially financial power, closes off debate about the Middle East in Australia; (2) Israel is a demonically evil or Nazi state and the source of most of the world's problems; (3) U.S. policy is the result of Jewish neoconservatives; (4) Anti-Semitism results from Jewish activities and behavior, especially support for Israel.

It is men like Sen. Ronaldson and ladies like Sen. Fierravanti-Wells that stand up for conviction and we greatly appreciate the results as yet another publicly funded media organization reassesses its treatment of terror. We also encourage Australians to take note of this development and to hold Australian Broadcasting Corporation to its word -- that terrorists should be called terrorists.

Here is an excerpt of the exchange:

Senator Ronaldson —Do you view Islamic Jihad as a terrorist organisation?

Mr Cameron—There are answers provided in the piece of paper that has just been handed to me where we have done so on a number of occasions, and I presume it has been sent to you.

Senator Ronaldson —Are you confirming that the ABC views Islamic Jihad as a terrorist organisation?

Mr Cameron—We have described in these examples here—

Senator Ronaldson —Is the answer yes or no? The answer clearly is yes, is it not?

Mr Cameron—The answer is yes.

Senator Ronaldson —It is now on the public record that the ABC acknowledges Islamic Jihad as a terrorist organisation. Have you given any directions, either de facto or otherwise, to your journalists that they are not allowed to describe this organisation as a terrorist organisation?

Mr Cameron—I do not think that I have, no. I think, again, it is case by case, but we would not as a matter of course describe every group involved in terrorism, every time we mention them, as a terrorist group.

Senator Ronaldson —Are they a terrorist group one day and they are not the next, and they might be a terrorist group the day after?

Senator Fierravanti-Wells—It depends who is describing them as a terrorist group. That is the answer. It depends who it is and what suits the occasion.

Senator Ronaldson —There seems to be an element of that. Again, your views are on the public record. What about Hamas? Do you view it as a terrorist organisation?

Mr Cameron—Again, in a case-by-case situation, I am sure—

Senator Ronaldson —You cannot have a case-by-case terrorist group. Please do not treat this committee with such contempt. It is either a terrorist organisation or it is not. You have acknowledged that Islamic Jihad is a terrorist organisation. What about Hamas?

Mr Cameron—If Hamas has been involved in acts of terrorism, we would have called it that at the time. I am sure we have and I am sure we have examples of same.

Senator Ronaldson —Is it a terrorist organisation as well?

Mr Cameron—In the situations that you are describing and that I am describing, yes, they are.

Senator Ronaldson —Is Hezbollah a terrorist organisation as well?

Mr Cameron—It is exactly the same answer to the previous question. The situation changes with the story. We would not always, as I say, per se call every group involved in terrorism a terrorist group every time we mentioned them.

Senator Ronaldson —You would not call a terrorist group a terrorist group unless it had been involved in acts of terrorism. Once it has been involved in acts of terrorism, as you said to the committee before, it then shows demonstrably that it is a terrorist group, and that is the way it is described.

A press release from Senator Ronaldson's office sums up the background info:

Australian Broadcasting Corporation Finally Concedes that Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah are Terrorist Organisations.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) has finally conceded that Palestinian groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah are terrorist organisations.

Four years after the ABC's international chief John Tulloh banned journalists from calling the groups terrorist organisations, the ABC has now admitted they are terror groups.

The change of heart has followed three years of forensic questioning of ABC executives by Liberal Senators Santo Santoro, Michael Ronaldson and Concetta Fierravanti-Wells.

The admission from ABC news director John Cameron, that the Palestinian groups are terrorist organisations, came at Senate Estimates this week (May 24, 2006).

xThis is a long overdue but nevertheless very welcome concession from the ABC, said Senator Ronaldson.

xThe ABC has finally been forced to drop its immoral double standard, where terrorists were terrorists in any part of the world except Israel and the Palestinian territories, he said.

xI now call upon the other national broadcaster, SBS, to do the same.x

Reuven and the New Sanhedrin

Agudat Bris thoroughly supports the efforts of Reuven Prager and Begeed Ivri to restore many Scriptural mitvot to the life of Covenantkeeping Israel. Probably, the greatest effort has been the restoration of the Holy Half-shekel. Twice a year I have Reuven come to our Congregation to stir us up concerning the reality of the Third Temple. When I buy a Holy Half-shekel I give my prayers wings because I am tangibly doing something to restore Temple Worship which must be restored before Moshiach (Messiah) comes.

Another milestone has been accomplished in both Reuven's life and the life of the whole Commonwealth of Israel. I'll let Reuven tell you about it in his own words:

On 26 Iyyar 5766 (May 24, 2006) I received a phone call summoning me to the upcoming weekly meeting of the Sanhedrin (the highest tribunal of the Israelite state and religion, was re-inaugurated by a group of rabbis in Tiberias after 1,600 years of absence on October 13, 2004), followed the next day by a written invitation to appear.

This was followed by two more calls that day preparing me for the meeting. I was told that I should be patient. It was likely that I would be the last called to speak, and the possibility existed that because of the amount of work covered at each meeting, they might not even get to me, and I might need to come to a subsequent meeting to speak, I shouldn't take offense. Asked if this was okay with me I responded with *of course*. I was also told that I would have a maximum of 15 minutes to speak, without exception.

I was informed that there was at least one Chaver Sanhedrin (xxx xxx xxx Friend of the Court) that was already predisposed to rejecting my entire work on behalf of the restoration of the Holy Half Shekel, who had himself created a Half Shekel coin. I asked if it was possible to purchase two of his coins for our archives. I was also told that it would be recommended at the meeting that a committee be appointed to deal with the whole subject of the Half Shekel, on an ongoing basis, to act as liaison between the Sanhedrin and Begeivri.

What prompted the summons was a discussion at the previous session in which ideas were raised as to how to create a means of income to support and expand the activities of the Sanhedrin, and the idea was raised to institute a levy of 1/2 NIS (New Israeli Shekel) as a monthly donation given by Jews resident in the Land. The discussion led to one Chaver Sanhedrin suggesting that since they were talking in terms of a half shekel levy, they should contact Begeivri, as an expert in the field, to come to the next meeting to discuss it.

Wow. After nine years of minting, distributing, collecting, and performing 26 Trumat HaLishka ceremonies (appropriations of sanctified Temple monies), the Holy Half Shekel was to have its *day* in court *sort of*.

It was clear to me that the intention of the Sanhedrin WAS NOT to discuss the restoration of the fulfillment of the commandment of giving the Half Shekel. Nonetheless, I also knew that this was exactly what it would become.

I spent the week preparing for the meeting. I put together 23 packets which each included the following; (1) 1 Year 58 Half Shekel; (2) A list of 29 questions (that have arisen since the reinstatement of the fulfillment of the commandment, that are to be the first in a series of questions and answers that will eventually become a guideline for the public, informing how to fulfill the commandment.); (3) The packaging for the *MASHAL* (Machatzith Shekel *Lxchayal* – Half Shekel for Soldiers) program we instituted three

years ago, which allows the public to sponsor soldiers, providing them with free Holy Half Shekels; (4) Two flyers prepared years ago promoting the reinstatement of the commandment.

What was to be my goal here? After all, I was being summoned, I hadn't asked to appear. I certainly wasn't seeking confrontation or permission. I knew the reason I was invited. So how to make the best of the opportunity? It became clear to me that my goal for this initial meeting was to leave that room having taken the Half Shekel from concept to reality. When I left, I needed to leave those people in attendance with a clear, unambiguous knowledge that the Half Shekel was REAL, not just a concept, not something that was merely to be used as has been the case for the last century, where the concept was used, in remembrance of the Half Shekel, to raise funds for various religious institutions in the month of Adar. How best to affect this? I put together from our archive's collections, a fabulous selection of ancient weights, scale pans, and coins from the First and Second Temple Eras, actual ancient artifacts that were used by our ancestors to fulfill the commandment. In addition, I brought to the meeting the nine coins we have issued to date as well as photos of the Chests for New Shekels and Old Shekels, which have been used to collect the coins.

As the day of the meeting approached my thoughts became more concentrated on the upcoming encounter. This morning, 3 Sivan (May 30th) I awoke with just one thought; how to make the Half Shekel REAL in the minds and hearts of the Chavre Sanhedrin, and rather than start work or run errands, sat wrapped in Tefilin (phylacteries) for hours concentrating and focusing my energy on this momentous meeting. My thoughts flew at an accelerated pace.

Though the meeting was called for 1:30 – 4:00 pm, I was there at 1:00. I waited outside for 10 minutes, watching for the Chaverim to arrive. I saw one elderly gentleman arrive and enter the building. I waited outside trying to figure out who from amongst the people passing the building would turn into it. The thought occurred to me that the Sanhedrin members ought to have a special dress appropriate for the office, just as judges who appear at the bench don robes to distinguish themselves from the public. At 1:10 I entered the building and made my way to the meeting room. There were two members present. When I entered the room one asked me who I was, and not recognizing my name, asked for what purpose I was present and when I replied the Half Shekel he responded; xAh! Begeg Ivri, please, have a seat.x A few minutes later a third Chaver entered and seeing me sitting there began to ask the other two members if it was correct to have a guest present for the opening of the meeting or if the invited guests should wait outside and be called when it came time for them to speak. I immediately arose and offered to wait outside so they could discuss this privately and they asked me to remain, and went into a huddle at the far side of the room to discuss it between themselves. They decided that I should come to them and discuss whatever it was I had to share with them, right then and there, and to be rid of me within minutes before the other members arrived and the meeting began.

Now I had prepared myself for what I thought was any eventuality; not being allowed to speak at all, being shot down, being given short shrift, and even fantasized a standing ovation for the exceptional contribution I had made to Am Yisrael. But this? Being treated with such disdain? Given five minutes to have my say and thrown out before the majority of attendees even arrived?

Of course I complied, came to the head of the conference table where the three Chaverim sat, asked if it wasn't more sensible to wait till the meeting began so what I had to share could be heard by all those expected to attend? I was told – no, begin now and whoever comes while you're talking comes. My head swimming with this unexpected slight, especially since I had invested so much thought into what I brought to share, I said xI would like to begin by giving you the historical background of what the Half Shekel was, so that we can better understand what we are talking about.x They agreed. I opened my briefcase and began to fill a tray with weights and coins, silently, and during the five minutes it took me to prepare the tray, several other members arrived. I began to explain the items on the tray and how they were used to fulfill the commandment in each of the centuries, each of the millennia. The first question asked, and repeated over and over again, was, xare these realx? Again and again I repeated that by me, everything is real. Forty five minutes later, after I had covered the historical background as well as the work of the last nine years I tied it to the reason I was invited. By this time the room was full, I had regained my composure and was speaking at full force, having completely established my credentials and the direction of the discussion.

When it was said that the Sanhedrin can not be involved in sales, I suggested that an affiliate group be established to distribute the coins, both regarding the soldier's program and the general public, under the auspices of the Sanhedrin, which would earn an income for the Sanhedrin.

Questions were raised. How many coins have been collected by Otzar Hamikdash (Temple Treasury) and what was their value? I answered that Otzar Hamikdash has not counted the coins collected in the last nine years, but that their value had increased threefold in the last year due to the rise in the price of silver, and that we were talking about thousands of coins. I was asked if I was willing to oversee the programs I was suggesting and I replied that by myself I would not be able to achieve these goals, but that working together with the Sanhedrin I could. This prompted one member to remark that nothing plus nothing is nothing (meaning that the Sanhedrin, as yet unrecognized by most, together with Begeed Ivri's efforts, also universally ignored by the Jewish People, would amount to nothing.) I replied; xour Aperiion (Royal Wedding Litter) weighs about 350 pounds, and together with the bride, is a heavy load to lift. Individually our Litter bearers would not be able to lift it, but together they lift it easily. Likewise, two groups that come together can accomplish more than the individuals can working alone.x I emphasized that just as the public ignores Begeed Ivri's efforts, likewise they ignore the Sanhedrin, and that working together we can bring legitimacy to both endeavors.

I then went on with a vision track, how rather than the Sanhedrin meeting in such an incongruous venue, a first class, though temporary, venue should be established in the

Jewish Quarter of the Old City, big enough to house the Sanhedrin, Otzar Hamikdash and the Lishka (Treasury Chamber) with enough room to create the other 11 Chests for the collection of Temple related funds and how the Half Shekel could provide the means to accomplish this. I shared how the universal reinstatement of the Half Shekel would provide enough funds to replace the ridiculous security fence/wall surrounding Jerusalem with proper Walls of Jerusalem.

A latecomer, who also happened to be the Chaver who I was forewarned, was in opposition to my work, arrived during the last five minutes of my speaking. He asked if the Sanhedrin was considering the recognition of the restoration of the fulfillment of the commandment or was merely speaking about selling coins to raise funds. The chairman of the meeting replied the latter and another Chaver repeated several times as a *zecher* (as a remembrance), thereby allowing everyone present to accept the proposal. A committee was duly established to continue discussions with Begeg Ivri, and I was dismissed.

It was mentioned in passing that this Chaver had also created half shekels, and that he had made copies of the ancient Tyrian Half Shekel as his suggested restored half shekel. (In the Talmud, bringing down teachings from the Second Temple Era, it is stated that anywhere where the Torah commands payment of Shekalim, only Tyrian coinage can be used. This was because of the 95% silver purity of the coins, as well as the fact that we were under Roman Imperial rule forbidding us from minting our own coins. Of course with the outbreak of the First revolt, our first act of rebellion was to mint our own 95% silver coinage, without the face of a foreign god on the obverse, which obviously ignored the halachah quoted above.) The ridiculousness of reviving a coin depicting the face of a foreign god was so overwhelming at this point that this Chaver did not even offer his revived coin for consideration.

When I left the meeting I sat down to consider what had transpired. It became clear to me that I had succeeded in leaving the meeting with the Half Shekel as an absolute physical reality in the minds of everyone present, which I thought beforehand was my goal, and at the same time completely failed to make the half Shekel a spiritual reality in those same minds. They just weren't ready for it. A complete disassociation between physical reality and spiritual reality, the same disassociation that haredi elements make regarding the State of Israel. The Half Shekel coins – yes, as a fund raising means, as a *zecher* (a remembrance). The restoration of the fulfillment of the commandment – no way. And this from our revived Sanhedrin, which is exactly on the same plane as the Half Shekel. How amazing. And it doesn't matter an iota. The fact is that whatever one wishes to call it, what has begun will eventually become the universally acknowledged fulfillment of the commandment of giving the Half Shekel, just as Hebrew has returned as the universal language of Am Yisrael (People of Israel) in Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel), over the objections of all the nay Sayers, just as the restoration of the State of Israel has become reality despite all those holy warriors who still bury their heads in the sand with their muffled screaming Galut (exile) is our salvation!

G-d Bless,

Reuven Prager  
Begeg Ivri  
www.begedivri.com

#### Break Point By George Friedman

A government has been formed in Iraq. It is a defective government, in the sense that it does not yet have a defense or interior minister. It is an ineffective government, insofar as the ability to govern directly is at this point limited institutionally, politically and functionally. Ultimately, what exists now is less a government than a political arrangement between major elements of Iraq's three main ethnic groups. And that is what makes this agreement of potentially decisive importance: If it holds, it represents the political foundation of a regime.

If it holds, the rest is almost easy. If it doesn't hold, the rest is impossible. Therefore, the fate of this political arrangement will define the future of Iraq and, with that, the future of the region -- and in some ways, the future of the American position in the region. It is not hyperbole to say that everything depends on this deal.

The deal that has been shaped is about two things: power and money. First, it addresses the composition of power in Iraq -- defining the Shia as the dominant group, based on demographics, the Kurds next and the Sunnis as the smallest group. At the same time, it provides institutional and political guarantees to the Sunnis that their interests will not simply be ignored and that they will not be crushed by the Shia and Kurds. In terms of money, we are talking about oil. Iraq's oil fields are in the south, unquestionably in Shiite country, and in the north, in the borderland between Kurd and Sunni territory. One of the points of this arrangement is to assure that oil revenues will not be controlled on a simply regional basis, but will be at least partially controlled by the central government. Therefore, at least some of that money will go to the Sunnis, regardless of what arrangements are made on the ground with the Kurds.

The Sunnis got this deal for a simple reason: Their insurgency made them impossible to ignore. First, the insurgency forced the Americans to recognize that their initial inclination, de-Baathification, also meant de-Sunnification of Iraq, and that the price for that would be painful. Second, the insurgency threatened Iraq with partition and civil war. Any such partition would have made Iran the dominant power in the region, something that would be unacceptable to Saudi Arabia and the other governments in the Persian Gulf. The Saudis were no friends of the Baathists in Iraq, but the thought of partition -- and of only the United States to provide security against Iranian influence -- forced them to mobilize Arab support for the Sunnis. The insurgency was the Sunni leaders' prime bargaining chip, and they played it well.

Now there is a twofold question that must be faced. First, in response to the deal that has been made, can the Sunni political leadership move decisively to end the insurgency, or at least reduce its tempo? And second, is it willing to do so? The implications are significant: If the insurgency continues, the entire political agreement will cease to be meaningful to the Americans, who are sponsoring and, in effect, guaranteeing the deal.

Moreover, if Sunni insurgents continue to target Iraqi Shia, the quietly vicious counterattacks that the Shia have carried out will surge. The Sunnis blow things up; the Shia come quietly and kill their enemies. If the sectarian violence continues, it will mean there is no political foundation, no government and no change in the situation in Iraq. In that case, the United States will have to choose between remaining and mitigating a chaotic situation, or leaving and letting events run their course -- which also means leaving an open field for Iranian ambitions. From the American point of view, this agreement has to work. And everything depends on the Sunnis.

Insurgencies don't simply float in the air. It isn't a question of just loading a car with explosives or setting up an improvised explosive device. Someone has to obtain, store and distribute explosives. Someone has to train people to build the device. Someone has to communicate with others without getting caught. Someone has to recruit new insurgents without being detected, and without allowing enemy agents to slip in. Someone has to provide security. And all of this has to happen somewhere, in a geographic space.

That space has been, for the most part, the villages and urban neighborhoods of the Sunni Triangle. The insurgency has been rooted there, the insurgents are known and their presence is protected in those neighborhoods. They are provided with food and shelter, and the village and neighborhood network warns them of enemy approaches. Mao Zedong said once that revolutionaries must be to the people as the tongue is to the teeth: If the support of the population is withdrawn, the revolution collapses.

At the heart of this political settlement, then, is the expectation that -- in return for political and financial concessions -- the Sunni leadership will order the insurgents they do control to cease attacks, and will order the population to withdraw support from the insurgents they don't control. In other words, the Baathist and nationalist insurgents who are linked to the Sunni leadership would halt operations, while the jihadists led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi -- who have their own set of needs and goals in the region -- would either halt operations themselves or have the shield of the Sunni community withdrawn. The insurgency would not just end suddenly, but would decline fairly rapidly as recalcitrant troops were squeezed out of the Sunni region.

Given this dynamic, we would expect a surge of violence from elements who oppose the political agreement in Baghdad and see themselves being squeezed out. Their hope will be that the violence, particularly against the Shia, will trigger a Shiite response and cause the settlement to collapse. But the success or failure of that gamble will hinge on the answer to the core question: To what extent does the Sunni leadership control the insurgents? We assume that it is not total control, and we assume that there are elements among the Sunni leadership who oppose the political deal.

But the central assumption is that the bulk of the leadership has bought into the deal and, therefore, that the bulk of the insurgents will follow their lead. There also is an assumption that the bulk of the Sunni population will follow these leaders and withdraw support for remaining insurgents. Now, these insurgents could enjoy some lingering

support among the public, and they could coerce others into protecting them. This would lead to a short but intense struggle within the Sunni community that, given the correlation of forces, ultimately would result in the defeat of the diehards. They would hang on -- waging a campaign that would be painful but not decisive, increasingly marginalized and ineffective.

This is the likely path, but it assumes two things. The first is that the political wing that has negotiated this agreement is able to assert control over the bulk of the Sunni population. In other words, one assumes that the Americans and Shia have been negotiating with the right people. If not, then the political settlement will not end the insurgency, and the violence will continue. We do not see this as the likely problem, however: The leadership ought to be able to deliver the bulk of the Sunni community and therefore reduce the fighting, if they want to.

The real question is whether they want to. As we said before, the insurgency is the only bargaining chip the Sunnis have. It was because of the insurgency that the Sunnis were not completely bypassed by the Americans and Shia. If they stand down but retain the ability to resume their offensive, the political deal can hold. But if, by standing down, the Sunnis demoralize their forces or permit intelligence on the location of weapons caches and personnel to diffuse to the Americans or Shia over time, the Sunnis could find themselves in a position from which they no longer can enforce the agreement.

So the key calculation for the Sunnis is this: If they stand down, can they maintain a credible force that is ready to serve their political purposes?

The demand that Iraq's various militias disarm has been focused on the Shiite militias. But at the end of the day, the Shia are the dominant force in the Iraqi government: If their militias were integrated into the military and security structures, they still would be available to serve Shiite political purposes. If, on the other hand, the Sunni militias were disarmed or integrated into the Iraqi military and security structures, they would lose their force and their leverage.

Obviously, this is why the defense and interior ministers have not yet been designated. It is not really about the individuals to be named, as their power will be circumscribed by the Cabinet. The issue is not the ministers themselves, but how the ministries will be run. More accurately, since it is these ministries that will control Iraq's military and internal security forces, the question that must be answered is how these forces will be configured. The Shia do not need guarantees. The Sunnis do. So the architecture of these ministries -- and the constitution of military and police units -- has everything to do with Sunni security.

There is a chicken-or-egg problem. The Sunnis do not want to begin standing down their forces until structural guarantees are in place. The Shia -- and in this case, the Americans -- are not going to give those guarantees until they see that the Sunnis can and will control the insurgents. They will not both confirm the Sunni position in the ministries and continue to endure the insurgency. They want to see steps toward the insurgency being

controlled. The naming of the ministers is more symbolic than real, but the ministries themselves are very real. The Sunnis cannot be both in the army and making policy and still be waging an insurgency.

There also is a real question as to whether the Shia want the agreement to work. Certainly the Iranians would like another go-around in order to increase not only the power of the Shia in general, but of those Iraqi Shia who are close to the Iranians. A civil war would increase Shiite dependence on the Iranians, since they would need weapons and political support. The Iraqi Shia do not seem to have much appetite for Iranian ambitions at the moment. They will dominate the government; they do not need to obliterate the Sunnis at the cost of a long civil war. They have most of what they want. Still, there are those in the Shiite community who are ambitious to displace the current power structure, and who see civil war as the way to achieve this. They are the ones who will continue with operations against the Sunni community, hoping to prevent a stand-down by the insurgents. The Shiite leaders, therefore, have a similar (though smaller) problem to the Sunnis'. They can contain the more aggressive and ambitious Shia. But Iran's ability to destabilize their community is the wild card.

This points up another dynamic as well. The United States and Iran have been engaged in a seemingly incomprehensible round of meetings, non-meetings, threats, offers of accommodation and so on over Iraq and nuclear weapons. Each side has made strange noises, given contemptuous shrugs and pulled fierce faces at the other. One would think that war was imminent. In fact, the opposite is true: Each is trying to avoid war by appearing fearsome and slightly nuts. The Americans want to scare the Iranians away from destabilizing Iraq's Shiite community. The Iranians want to make one last run at the Americans to maximize the power of the Shia -- and particularly that of their allies -- in the Iraqi government.

The Americans obviously want a settlement. And the Iraqi Shia want one. They are less dependent on Tehran than it might appear, and it seems they are prepared to follow through. The Sunnis, all doubts and worries aside, have every reason to want a settlement, and it is unlikely that they will get a better one. Certainly there are Sunnis who don't want a settlement, but it seems to us that they can be dealt with if the Sunni leaders want to deal with them. At this point, the only alternative to this settlement is civil war -- and it is hard to see a major player who benefits from a civil war, even if plenty of minor ones might.

For the Americans, the deal at hand is the exit strategy from the war. As violence declines, the United States can draw down its forces and begin concentrating on the question of what it plans to do in Afghanistan, the next item on the agenda. On the other hand, if the agreement in Baghdad blows apart, there is little point in American forces remaining in Iraq. With 130,000 troops, the United States could not contain a civil war; the forces could only take casualties, while achieving nothing. The ideal outcome would be a drawdown culminating in a residual force of, say, 40,000 troops based outside of heavily populated regions.

This goal is not unreachable at this point. It is possible to recoup the poorly played American hand, to some extent. But the fate of the political deal is not within U.S. control. The outcome depends, first, on the Sunni leadership and its desire and ability to suppress the insurgency. It depends, second, on the Iraqi Shiite leaders' ability to dominate their community and resist destabilization by Iran. And it depends, finally, on the Iranians accepting the current situation without surging forces covertly into Iraq.

In other words, the United States has become, to a great extent, a bystander. Washington can make whatever guarantees it wants, but the calculus by all sides now is whether they can secure their interests with their own resources. At this point, the United States is growing less and less relevant to the outcome in Iraq, though it remains urgently interested in what that outcome will be.

If we had to guess, we would say that the political arrangement should work, more or less. But we don't have to guess. It is now nearly Memorial Day. The violence in Iraq will surge, but by July 4 there either will be clear signs that the Sunnis are controlling the insurgency -- or there won't. If they are controlling the insurgency, the United States will begin withdrawing troops in earnest. If they are not controlling the insurgency, the United States will begin withdrawing troops in earnest. Regardless of whether the deal holds, the U.S. war in Iraq is going to end: U.S. troops either will not be needed, or will not be useful.

Thus, we are at a break point -- at least for the Americans.

Hear O' Israel,x

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Rabbi Rob Miller is the founding Rabbi of Agudat Bris (Covenant Fellowship) in Temple, TX. and Covenant Ministries International. He has taught truth seekers around the world how to live in harmony with Rev. 14:12, to keep the Commandments of our Father Yahweh and the Testimony of our Messiah, YahShua. With his unforgettable style and dynamic teaching of the Scriptures, you will see the Word come alive as never before. His purpose is to proclaim the saving Gospel of YahShua the Messiah as revealed in the Scriptures, so man can know the true Elohim and be grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel.

Todd D. Bennett is an international lecturer and founder of the Shema Yisrael Foundation which was established to advance and restore the truth contained within the Scriptures. This is done primarily by educating Believers around the world through articles, books and lectures concerning the Hebraic origins of their faith. Todd is the author of the Walk in the Light Series which currently consists of three books: *The Sabbath*, *Kosher* and *Names*.

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Allen Dodge & Ben Ehrhardt hosted the weekly radio program, *Hear O' Israel*, for over two years in Portland & Canton, OH and founded a teaching ministry and web site by the same name. Allen also heads the benevolence ministry *Ezekiel's Sticks* and is a Teaching Elder at Beit Emet Congregation. Ben has taught Scripture in the Portland area for over 5 years and is the Congregational Leader

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