

Newsbytes

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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

UK: The Push to End Free Speech

by Judith Bergman September 17, 2019

<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/>

--"We are concerned that the definition... could be used to challenge legitimate free speech on the historical or theological actions of Islamic states. There is also a risk it could also undermine counter-terrorism powers, which seek to tackle extremism or prevent terrorism." — Martin Hewitt, Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council.

– Islam represents an idea, not a nationality or an ethnicity. The conventional purpose of most hate-speech laws is to protect people from hatred, not ideas.

--The new proposed definition would criminalize criticism of Islam. Considering the origins of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, that is probably the whole point.

--"[A]n alternative definition of Anti-Muslim Hatred should be specific and narrow. It should focus on addressing bigotry directed at individuals, and avoid censoring debate or freedom of expression on religion. Finally, a comprehensive definition of Anti-Muslim Hatred must take intra-Muslim hatred into account to protect those who want to speak freely or express themselves differently." — Nikita Malik, Forbes, May 20, 2019.

– Martin Hewitt, Chair of Britain's National Police Chiefs' Council, recently said: "We are concerned that the definition... could be used to challenge legitimate free speech on the historical or theological actions... There is also a risk it could also undermine counter-terrorism powers, which seek to tackle extremism or prevent terrorism." (Photo by Anthony Devlin - WPA Pool / Getty Images)

In April 2018, Britain's All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims began work on establishing a "working definition of Islamophobia that can be widely accepted by Muslims, political parties and the government".

In December 2018, the group concluded its work with a "Report on the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred." The report defines "Islamophobia" as a form of racism, conflating religion with ethnic origin or nationality: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." [1]

The report, furthermore, claims that a definition of Islamophobia is "instrumental" to "the political will and institutional determination to tackle it."

Most political parties, including Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Conservatives, have adopted the broadened definition of Islamophobia, but it has not been adopted by the government. According to a government spokesperson:

"We are conscious that the [all-party parliamentary group's] proposed definition has not been broadly accepted – unlike the IHRA definition of antisemitism before it was adopted by the UK government and other international organisations and governments. This is a matter that needs further careful consideration."

The National Police Chiefs' Council, which represents the leaders of law enforcement in England and Wales, have also expressed concern with the broadened definition. Its chair, Martin Hewitt, said:

"We take all reports of hate crime very seriously and will investigate them thoroughly. However, we have some concerns about the proposed definition of Islamophobia made by the all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims. We are concerned that the definition is too broad as currently drafted, could cause confusion for officers enforcing it and could be used to challenge legitimate free speech on the historical or theological actions of Islamic states. There is also a risk it could also undermine counter-terrorism powers, which seek to tackle extremism or prevent terrorism".

Richard Walton, a former head of Counter-Terrorism Command of the Metropolitan Police, wrote:

"Adopting the definition would hand the initiative to those who have been trying to dismantle the Government's Countering Violent Extremism programme for years; it is no surprise to see many of those same campaigners and radical groups have been closely involved in the APPG's work in developing the definition (as authors or sources)... how could the police or anyone else disprove that they had targeted an expression of 'perceived Muslimness'?..."

"If the Government accepts the APPG definition of Islamophobia, all of these [anti-terrorism] powers are more likely to be challenged by anti-Prevent campaigners and their supporters who would seek to label police officers 'Islamophobic' (and, therefore, racist)..."

"... Whole government departments, the entire police service, intelligence agencies, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), judiciary and HM Prison and Probation Service could be branded and labelled 'institutionally Islamophobic' by anti-Prevent campaign groups. It would be an allegation that would be impossible to refute, owing to the indistinct and imprecise nature of the APPG definition..."

Similarly, the UK government, according to a BuzzFeed report, is concerned that defining Islamophobia as a form of racism "could mean people who criticise aspects of Islam might be prosecuted under discrimination laws."

The UK government is right, of course. Islam represents an idea, not a nationality or an ethnicity. The conventional purpose of most hate-speech laws is to protect people from hatred, not ideas. The new proposed definition would criminalize criticism of Islam.

Considering the origins of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims, that is probably the whole point. The APPG on British Muslims, according to its website, was established in July 2017. The organization is chaired by MPs Anna Soubry and Wes Streeting and is meant to build on the work of a former APPG: the APPG on Islamophobia. That came into existence as the result of a meeting at the House of Commons in March 2010, hosted by, among others, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) -- the largest Muslim organization in the UK, and that claims to be representative of British Muslims. It is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood[2]. By November 2010, after the APPG on Islamophobia had been formed, it quickly ran into trouble. The Muslim organization that was appointed as its secretariat turned out to be the

Muslim extremist organization iENGAGE, which has since changed its name to MEND[3]. Both MEND and the Muslim Council of Britain are among the many organizations and individuals that contributed written evidence[4] to the report on a definition of Islamophobia.

Wes Streeting, co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, recently criticized the government's refusal to adopt the new definition:

"What we're up against goes wider than anti-Muslim hatred. It is structural, often unconscious, bias...It is particularly disappointing to see a noisy chorus of vocal opposition making arguments in bad faith that accuse us of trying to use the term Islamophobia to shut down criticism of Islam and introduce blasphemy laws by the back door. In fact, our report makes it crystal clear that our definition does not preclude criticism of Islam or Islamic theology. God, if you believe in such a thing, doesn't need protection from criticism."

Streeting appears to pretend that Islam allows either criticism of Allah and Mohammed, or free choice of religion.

That is not the case: Sharia law prohibits questioning, seeming to regard it as a form of blasphemy:

"O you who have believed, do not ask about things which, if they are shown to you, will distress you. But if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be shown to you. Allah has pardoned that which is past; and Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing." [Qur'an 5:101, Sahih International translation]

"A people asked such [questions] before you; then they became thereby disbelievers." [Qur'an 5:102, Sahih International translation]

The prohibition against questioning also seems why several Muslim organizations, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), fight for the introduction of blasphemy laws in the West, to prevent questioning Islam.

The proposed definition also does not take into account the threats ex-Muslims receive from Muslims (here, here, here and here), and how the definition would only make life more difficult for those Muslims who dare to leave or speak out. According to Nikita Malik, writing in Forbes:

"The term Islamophobia has a broad meaning that can easily be used to restrict free and fair discussion about the Islamic religion and Islamist extremism. Instead, an alternative definition of Anti-Muslim Hatred should be specific and narrow. It should focus on addressing bigotry directed at individuals, and avoid censoring debate or freedom of expression on religion. Finally, a comprehensive definition of Anti-Muslim Hatred must take intra-Muslim hatred into account to protect those who want to speak freely or express themselves differently."

Whether that will happen remains to be seen.

[1] Report on the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred, p 11 and p 50.

[2] A 2015 UK government report found that the Muslim Brotherhood "played an important role in establishing and then running the Muslim Council of Britain".

[3] MEND is also known as an extremist Muslim organization.

[4] Report on the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia / anti-Muslim hatred, p 61.

Will Trump enable Third Temple construction?

September 16

WND

Today is the day of the momentous Israeli elections and the countdown to the even more momentous Trump "peace plan" for the Middle East, which reportedly will soon be unveiled. Along with President Trump, I'm rooting for Bibi Netanyahu and believe he will squeak through – but whatever happens in this election, God's prophetic timetable will unfold, and the events of the last days will occur in the order and in the manner in which He has prescribed them. We can only perceive these landmarks of prophetic fulfillment "as through a glass darkly," but we remain highly attentive as they emerge into view because we who are "sons of the light" have been promised in 1 Thessalonians 5:4 that the day of the Lord's return will not take us by surprise.

In my theology, Jerusalem is the center of the universe, and all prophecy should be viewed with that in mind, meaning that prophecy is best studied from the Hebrew cultural and geographic perspective of the prophets. That perspective is much easier to orient one's mind to since the (fairly recent) rise of Messianic Judaism, which I believe is a last-days manifestation of the spirit of Elijah: turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers, per Malachi 4:1-5. Letting the Bible interpret the Bible, the "fathers" are almost certainly the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Romans 9:5), and the children are believers in God through faith (Romans 9:7-8).

I also believe that Messianic Judaism is the religion of the Millennial Kingdom, and the front edge of the cusp of the reunification of the two Hebrew houses that will define that literal thousand year reign of Christ on Earth – which is prophesied in many forms throughout the Bible, but perhaps best summarized in the three sequential and interconnected parables of Ezekiel 37.

However, while I recognize Messianic Judaism as a clear and very welcome sign of the Lord's soon return and am excited to see the wall of separation falling between Christians and Jews (and am honored to frequently teach and preach in Messianic congregations), I do not believe that Messianic Judaism is the religion of the Bride of Christ. The Bride is of the "age of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25) that is fast coming to a close, and we who are betrothed to Christ should not be primarily focused on the reconstruction of authentic Torah-based, Yeshua-embracing Judaism, but instead on preparing for His Appearance, the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and co-regency with Him in the Millennial Kingdom. (Importantly, in my view that emphasis is not a matter of either/or, but simply a priority of focus.)

In parallel to the rise of Messianic Judaism is the maturation of the Third Temple Movement in Orthodox Judaism. I have been an observer of the Temple Institute in Jerusalem for years and have visited its facility in the Old City several times – and even shared a stage in Riga, Latvia, last year with one of its founders, Rabbi Yehuda Glink (now a Knesset member), at a pro-Israel conference where Messianic and Orthodox Jews intermingled harmoniously. I have seen firsthand the implements that have been fashioned per biblical specifications for Temple worship and tracked the step by step progress of identifying and training the priests, building the altar of sacrifice and maneuvering the government toward capitulating to their demands to reclaim the Temple Mount.

In short, the Orthodox Jews of the Third Temple Movement have been diligently preparing for the time when the Israeli government will declare its intention to build the Temple – all the prerequisites apparently have now been met – and I believe Israel is very close to announcing its intention to reclaim direct control of at least a portion of the Temple Mount and to begin construction. I think it is possible that this could even be a component of the peace plan.

Of course, if this occurs, the powder keg called Islam will very likely explode in unprecedented fury. And no one knows this better than the Jews of Israel. Yet, they also know there is absolutely NO scenario in

which the Muslims (collectively) will react well to the announcement of the (biblically inevitable) Third Temple, so the question for them is not if but "When is the best time to pull that trigger?"

Enter President Donald Trump, rightly heralded as the best friend to Israel in its entire history, and commander in chief of the most formidable military in world history, who is both poised to unveil what his surrogates have characterized as an entirely new approach to Middle East peace and the Palestinian problem, and at the same time politically embattled at home as no other U.S. president has ever been – with the fate of his presidency hanging in limbo.

Will the Israeli Jews ever have a better window of time in which to act on the Third Temple than right now when they know with certainty that the U.S. military will fully back their play?

Would they risk the possibility, however slim, that Trump could be replaced by any of the Democratic challengers whose party is increasingly openly anti-Semitic?

Will there ever be another time when a "Master of the Deal," holding all the power cards, can bring all the global players to the table at one time to push through a plan palatable enough to some Muslims to prevent (or at least postpone) World War III?

I think those questions lead to just one conclusion: The Third Temple will be part of the deal, either initially or soon after.

I'm not claiming special knowledge or "Thus sayeth the Lord" about any of this. It's just my deductive reasoning from a biblical worldview and my own particular interpretation of end-times prophecy. I could very well be wrong, and if so I'll have to look a little harder at alternative scenarios I am pondering – but if I'm right we're about to cross an important threshold with very serious prophetic implications. I will refrain from commenting further about those implications pending the release of the peace plan and the advent of the fall feast days in Israel, especially Yom Kippur, which is most closely associated with the theme of liberation.

One major variable that could impact my analysis is the political fate of Benjamin Netanyahu. I have always believed that Trump, Netanyahu and the Brexit orchestrators in the U.K. are ideologically, spiritually and prophetically linked. If Bibi goes down, the Third Temple schedule could be postponed for lack of a pro-Temple political coalition in the Knesset.

In closing I want to clarify that I am in favor of the Third Temple because I know it is a necessary prerequisite to the second coming of Christ. However, I know it will feature prominently in the short-lived Antichrist Kingdom when Jerusalem will be corrupted to a very extreme degree, and so it is both dreaded and welcomed – like birth pains for a woman in labor – a necessary process that must be endured to experience the incomparable joy that follows (Matthew 24:8). To quote Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, "Let no one in any way deceive you, for [the Lord's return] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

This is a very sobering truth, but Our Messiah tells us to embrace it with confidence: "When these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28).

A First: Chief Rabbinate Looking into Biblical Justification for Jews to Pray on Temple Mount

By David Sidman September 5

“And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them” Exodus 25:8 (The Israel Bible™)

During their annual meeting the The Temple Headquarters organization noted that the police said that they are able to enforce and protect Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount reports Rotter. More and more senior officials, including the prime minister, are willing to consider Jewish prayer on the holy site as well as extended Jewish visiting hours and also opening it on Shabbat.

This has compelled Israel’s Chief Rabbinate to begin expediting Halachik (Jewish law) studies on the matter of Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount.

The Chief rabbinate is the state’s religious authority. It has both legal and administrative authority over religious matters in Israel.

This phenomenon lies in stark contrast with the fact that when entering the Temple Mount, there is a prominent sign posted by the same Chief Rabbinate of Israel that warns: “According to Torah Law, entering the Temple Mount area is strictly forbidden due to the holiness of the site.”

But due to the massive amount of Jewish Pilgrims who have ignored their warnings, the Rabbinate appears to now be reconsidering their position.

In an interview with Breaking Israel News, Joshua Wander, an independent public relations consultant in and around the Old City of Jerusalem explained that the sign is out of date. That’s because following 1967 when Israel reunited Jerusalem and received access to the Temple Mount, Jews began flocking there, unaware of the conditions upon which one is allowed to go up according to Jewish law.

Today, because of vast archaeological and historical research, there is more understanding about where one may go or must avoid according Jewish purity laws.

Breaking Israel News also reported that Prime Minister Netanyahu made assurances that Jewish prayer would be allowed on the Temple Mount before the Messiah arrives.