

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEVI ESHKOL, ON THE EVE OF THE ARRIVAL OF

POPE PAUL VI - Jerusalem, January 4, 1964

Tomorrow, Pope Paul VI, a personage of unique distinction and exalted status will arrive in Israel on a pilgrimage to the Holy Places of his religion. In view of its historic and unprecedented significance, the visit has aroused widespread interest throughout the world. The people of Israel will respect the Pope's wishes regarding the nature of his visit, and the Government is making all the necessary arrangements to facilitate this Pilgrimage, bearing in mind the special procedures which it entails.

The Pope is the Supreme Head of the Catholic Church and the spiritual father of hundreds of millions of its adherents, among whom there are tens of thousands of Israeli citizens. We shall welcome the Supreme Pontiff in a manner befitting his exalted station, and his person.

In welcoming the Pope to the gates of our land, we are conscious of his particular interest in, and incessant effort to, peace in the world.

The message of peace which was proclaimed by the Prophets of Israel in this land, thousands of years ago, is a constant prayer and hope of our people which is now being reunited with its homeland. In this generation, peace, as never before, represents the deepest longing of mankind.

May the Pontiff's visit contribute to the strengthening of the aspiration for peace in our region and in the entire world.

On reaching Israel, Pope Paul VI is welcomed in warmth and respect and with the age old greeting of our people "Baruch Boacha Leshalom" , Blessed is your Coming in Peace.

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