

PRAYER UPDATE FROM ISRAEL (February 10, 2011)



“And I said, ‘I see a branch of an almond tree.’ Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, I am watching over my word to perform it!’ (Jeremiah 1:11-12)



A man in Cairo holds a sketch portraying Hosni Mubarak with a Star of David on his forehead, January 30, 2011. The caption reads: '30 years of devastation and treason,' referring to Israel-Egypt peace AFP

After 17 days of protests in Cairo, it now appears that Hosni Mubarak’s rule may be coming to a close...perhaps as early as this evening (Thursday). Today high-level military leaders met without their Commander in Chief, and issued a communiqué saying that they had stepped in “to safeguard the country” and that “all of the demands” of the anti-government demonstrators (presumably including Mr. Mubarak’s ouster) would be met “today”. Meanwhile, the square was again filled throughout the day with tens of thousands demanding that the President go, and chanting “Allahu Akbar!—Allah is Great!” The demonstrators represent many streams swept together in the winds of protest against a host of perceived repressions and hardships attributed to the present regime. As of this time, there is certainly no orderly, representative council evident behind this “revolution”, intent on bringing into existence a government similar to what many westerners think of when they think of “democracy” or of a “representative republic”. Who will finally come out on top? How many of those demanding change are represented by the

picture shown above—their hatred for Mubarak fueled by his three-decades of honoring and protecting the peace treaty with Israel?

In Israel there is a strong, uneasy hearkening back to the 1979 revolution in Iran. At that time, an indecisive US administration chose to suddenly become lukewarm in its support for another potentate whom it had supported as a firm and trusted ally for years. As the Shah's position crumbled, the Carter administration allowed itself to be influenced that Mehdi Barzagan, the Ayatolla Khomainsi's choice for prime minister, would have more influence with extremist forces than the Shah's appointment for the office; and high-level diplomats suggested that Khomainsi might indeed himself be a not so immoderate influence in the region. Within eighteen months, when he no longer needed him, Khomeini dumped Barzagan, replacing him with a new leader and a radical government which more reflected his ideals for the Islamic revolution. Today there are many in the west who are calling for Mohamed ElBaradei, a former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency—and supported by the Muslim Brotherhood—as a moderate choice to replace Mubarak as an interim president. Others, however have pointed out that ElBaradei, having lived outside of Egypt for many years, has no popular support, and could, like Barzagan, be easily toppled by the Brotherhood after having served their purposes.

This week members of the U.S. Congress warned of the dangers of the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in any new Egyptian government, and took issue with the Obama administration for suggesting that the Islamic group might warrant some such role. Although the Brotherhood has in the last few days avowed itself to have no desire of taking control of the government, nor of advocating a religious regime, its true behind-the-scenes goals may be better expressed in a sermon given last September by the organization's supreme guide Muhammad Badi, “[Muslims] need to understand that the improvement and change that the Muslim nation seeks can only be attained through jihad and sacrifice and by raising a jihadi generation that pursues death, just as the enemies pursue life.” And an article in the 01 Feb 2011 Jerusalem Post by Yaakov Lappin entitled, “Muslim Brotherhood: ‘Prepare Egyptians for war with Israel’”, reported Muhammad Ghannem, a leader of the Brotherhood in Egypt as telling an Iranian news network that he would like to see the Egyptian people prepare for war against Israel, that the Suez Canal should be closed immediately, and the flow of gas from Egypt to Israel stopped “in order to bring about the downfall of the Mubarak regime.” (It is Mubarak who has been behind the export of natural gas from Egypt to Israel. Interestingly, the flow was temporarily stopped this week when one of the pipelines was sabotaged. The recent discovery of huge natural gas reserves off the Israeli coast begins, for Israel, to appear an incredibly timely blessing indeed!).

PLEASE PRAY: As we wrote last week, we believe Isaiah 19, especially verses 2-3 and 19-25 express God's sovereign love and purposes for Egypt “his people”...including her relationship with Israel “His inheritance”. In Ezekiel 29:3 the LORD speaks of a “great monster” which was ruling in pride over Egypt, claiming the very Nile itself as its own creation and property (This monster represented either the literal Pharaoh or, more likely, a great demonic presence which empowered him.). The Hebrew word used here for “great monster” is tanin (translated elsewhere as ‘dragon’). As mentioned a few weeks ago when we were studying Exodus 7 in the Torah Portion of these Updates, the first thing to realize when tanin is used is that it was first mentioned in Genesis 1:21 as “created by God”. And when Moses' rod was cast down by Aaron before Pharaoh (Exodus 7:9-10), it became a tanin instead of a snake (nakhsh) as it had become

before the burning bush in Exodus 4:3; 7:5. And when the magicians were able also to devise their own tanin's, the one manifest from the Rod of God (Ex 4:20) devoured all of those devised by their occult means! (Exodus 7:12). LET US PRAY THAT THE SOVEREIGN ROD OF GOD WOULD BE HELD OVER EGYPT—THAT THE EVIL WORKINGS SET AGAINST GODLY GOVERNANCE IN EGYPT WOULD BE DEVoured BY DEVINE AND HOLY POWER. HOWEVER THINGS MAY SEEM TO FALL IN THE SHORT-TERM, PRAY FOR THE BODY OF MESSIAH IN ISRAEL TO BEGIN MOVING IN SIGNS AND WONDERS AS DID MOSES AND AARON. WE BELIEVE THAT SINCE THESE BELIEVING LEADERS HAVE CHOSEN TO HONOUR ISRAEL IN THE FACE OF HATRED ALL ROUND THEM, THE POWER AND DELIVERANCE GIVEN TO ISRAEL WHILE SHE WAS IN EGYPT SHALL BE THEIRS. PRAY THAT THE BODY IN ISRAEL AND EGYPT STAND STRONG IN LOVE AND COURAGE AND INTERCESSION FOR EACH OTHER ON BEHALF OF THEIR GOD'S PURPOSES IN THEIR NATIONS IN THE SEASON AHEAD!

THIS WEEK'S TORAH PORTION:

From ancient times there has been a weekly portion (Parashah) from the first five books of Moses (The Torah) and an ending (Haftarah) from the Prophets read on the Sabbath in synagogues around the world. This portion is given a Hebrew name drawn from the opening words of the Torah passage. An illustration of this practice appears to have been recorded in Luke 4:16 where Yeshua (Jesus) arrived in the synagogue in Nazareth and was asked to read the portion (Isaiah 61) from the Prophets. We have found that in perusing these weekly readings, not only are we provided opportunity to identify in the context of God's Word with millions of Jewish people around the world, but very often the Holy Spirit will illumine specific passages pertinent that week in our intercession for the Land and people of Israel. All texts are those of English translations of the Scriptures.

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

TORAH: Exodus 27:20—30:10

HAFTARAH: Ezekiel 43:10-27

This week's Torah reading begins and ends (Exodus 27:20-21; 30:7-8) with Light and Illumination (and in the middle are “Lights and Perfections”—See Urim & Thumim below). Moses is told to command the Children of Israel to bring to him “clear oil of beaten olives for the light, to raise up a lamp perpetually.” Near the close, the High Priest's duties will include servicing the wicks and flames each morning and evening, at which time he will also be burning incense before the LORD.

Chapter 28 contains instructions related to the holy garments for Aaron the High Priest and his sons, with special instructions regarding the clothing of the High Priest: the ‘breastplate’, the ‘ephod’, the robe, tunic, turban, and sash.

Chapter 29 addresses the consecration and ordination of priests, the altar at which they would be serving and the sacrifices required.

Ch. 30:1-10 describes the Alter of Incense, which would be placed before the veil. All of this is “Holy Ground” indeed; ask the Lord to “illumine” your reading! We would also recommend reading Zechariah 3 along with this, where the LORD Himself is revealed as standing against the enemy and supplying the purification really necessary in ministering righteously before Him.

NOTES

*Exodus 27:20; 30:7,8: “And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you clear, pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually...And he shall burn it [fragrant incense] every morning when he trims the lamps. When Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense...” Plain olive oil doesn’t burn well if at all. It needs to be zach—refined, pristine, transparent, pure, clear. The Light from the Menorah illuminated the Holy Place; its lamps were also positioned so as to shine onto the table bearing the Bread of His Presence. Pray that we keep the lamps of our spirits trimmed, and fueled with the Holy Spirit, so that the truth of His Word and Presence will be illuminated. “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning . . .” (Luke 12:35 NIV); “You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light” (Psalm 18:28 NIV). “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Yeshua the Messiah” (II Corinthians 4:6).

*Exodus 28:3: “So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans (Heb: “wise-hearts”), whom I have filled with the spirit (wind) of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.” Pray for those whom God has especially gifted as ‘craftsmen’, that they realize their talent and grace in developing their artistic skills have been breathed into them by the Holy Spirit—and that they will devote their creativity to that which is holy. In Israel as in other countries, there is a ‘thief’ waiting to divert the artistic giftings of God’s people away to the adulation of the world.

Urim and Thumim

*Exodus 28: 29-30. “Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. You shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.” The exact nature of the Urim and Thumim and how they were used is no longer known to us. But we may assume this: they were a divine means used by the High Priest in making ‘wise judgment’ for Israel (Num. 27:21; Nehemiah 7:65). Urim is a special superlative for “Light”—as it were, “Light of Lights” – and Thumim a superlative for “Perfection”—as it were, “Perfection of Perfections”. Light (or) is related to “revelation and illumination”, while (tome) the Hebrew root for the word perfection is often translated “integrity” (cf: Psalm 25:21—“Let integrity (tome) and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.”). Righteous judgments for His people is near to God’s Heart,

and He desired it to be near to the heart of His priests. This required supreme Illumination and Integrity.

Lastly, Urim begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet ALEPH, while Thumim begins with the last TAV. Aleph and Tav (Hebrew) / A and Z (English)/ Alpha and Omega (Greek). In the Hebrew translation of Revelation 22:18, Yeshua (Jesus) declares, “I am the Aleph and the Tav, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last”.

PLEASE PRAY that intercessors in Israel would be guided by a longing for righteous judgment, a plea for revelation and integrity to the One who is the “FIRST and the LAST,” the “Righteous Judge” (II Tim. 4:8)—the true Light shining in Darkness, who illumines everyone who comes into the world (John 1:9).

*Exodus 28:43-46. “I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. They shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am YHVH their God” (Emphases ours). We read last week of God’s desire to “dwell with” to “neighbor closely” with His people. PLEASE PRAY: for a longing among the sons and daughters of Israel after the presence of our LORD—for an awakened desire to be “consecrated” by HIS glory. In the Synagogues there is an oft-recited prayer for the Shekinah (manifest presence of His glory) to return to Zion. He longs to “dwell among the children of Israel and to be their God”—but there must be a purification and consecration to prepare the way (Malachi 3:2-3).



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[The Torah and Haftarah portions for next week (Feb 13-19) is called Ki Tisa—when you raise (When you raise the head (i.e. take a census) of the children of Israel...) and will include TORAH: Exodus 30:11—34:35; HAFTARAH: I Kings 18:1-39.]