

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update October 17, 2019 ***(18th Tishrei, 5780)***

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The image shows two items: on the left, the cover of a book titled 'THE HOOD OF HIS GARMENT' with the subtitle 'TOUCHING THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD'. The cover features a blue and white striped pattern. On the right, a white prayer shawl (kittel) with blue and gold stripes and fringes is displayed.

[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For October 2019](#)

RAIN WELCOME – LIGHTENING AND HIGH WINDS NOT THE BEST CONDITIONS FOR SUCCA DWELLERS: Unseasonably hot temperatures, high winds, rain, and lightning have caused many Israelis to abandon their sukkahs (palm-covered huts) this week to celebrate their remaining holiday meals in kitchens and dining rooms. In some cases, sukkahs themselves have been scattered by high winds leaving brightly colored decorations strewn across gardens or in nearby olive trees. Meteorologists say an atmospheric phenomenon has occurred in which warm wind in lower layers of the atmosphere clashed with cold wind of the higher layers, leading to unseasonably hot temperatures coupled with intermittent rain showers. Hopes that the rain at the beginning of the week might signal the end of another long hot summer in Israel have dwindled as the weather has continued hot and muggy across the country. Israel Nature and Parks Authority warned local folks and guests from abroad, celebrating the weekdays of the festival of Sukkot, to refrain from going on hiking trails near the rivers in the area of the Judean Desert. The popular Ein Gedi Nature Reserve along the Dead Sea was closed to visitors due to the extreme heat that reigns in the area, with the temperatures reaching some 40 degrees Celsius. The heat is expected to subside as the week comes to an end, while intermittent rain continues.

BERNIE SANDERS GAINS BACKING OF “SQUAD” MEMBERS FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTY’S 2020 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION: Far-left Democratic freshmen known as members of “The Squad,” are gearing-up to endorse the Jewish senator from Vermont, Bernie Sanders, for USA president. At a major rally in Queen’s New York last weekend, Sanders sought to assure American voters that he was fit to run in next year’s elections in the wake of a recent heart attack. Media outlets announced close to the time of the meeting that “Special Guests” at the event would include the prominent member of the so-called “Squad”, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York who said she was prepared to endorse Bernie Sanders for the Democratic Party’s 2020 presidential nomination. Within minutes, following Cortez’s announcement another Squad member, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, added her endorsement and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan was

reportedly soon to announce her backing. Both Omar and Tlaib support the boycott Israel movement; Sanders does not but upholds the right of Americans to boycott Israel. In her announcement, Omar hinted that Sanders' tough criticism of Israel drew her to him. Omar and Tlaib also have been accused by fellow Democrats and by Republicans of crossing the line into anti-Semitism. President Donald Trump has said the party is anti-Semitic because of their influence.

SYRIAN TROOPS AID KURDS AGAINST TURKISH FORCES: Syrian troops this week began moving into Kurdish-held territory to confront Turkish forces and their allies. The military operation began a day after the Kurds agreed to relinquish key cities to Damascus in exchange for protection after four days of bombardment by Turkish artillery and jets. Syrian state media said on Mon. 14 Oct. 2019 that its army was moving north to "confront Turkish aggression on Syrian territory." Meanwhile, at least 750 people with links to ISIS escaped from detention camps in northeastern Syria earlier this week. USA Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Vice President Mike Pence announced on Monday that Washington had imposed new sanctions against Turkish officials and institutions over the country's incursion of northern Syria. "The president of the United States called on the president of Turkey to stop the invasion," Pence said. Russia on Tues. 15 Oct. 2019 called Turkey's invasion of northeast Syria "unacceptable" and demanded that the operation be limited.

IRAN'S ECONOMY TO DIP BY 9.5% THIS YEAR DUE TO INCREASED USA SANCTIONS: An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report, published on Tues. 15 Oct. 2019, predicted that Iran's economy will shrink by 9.5% this year, down from a previous estimate of a six percent reduction, as the country feels the impact of tighter USA sanctions. The IMF forecasts are close to estimates given last week by the World Bank, which said the Iranian economy by the end of the 2019/20 financial year would be 90% smaller than it was two years ago. Sanctions brought in after USA President Donald Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal in 2018 painfully target nearly all sectors of Iran's economy. A drop in the Iranian currency following the re-imposition of sanctions has disrupted Iran's foreign trade and boosted annual inflation, which the IMF forecasts at 35.7% this year. The Iranian rial official rate is set at 42,000 rials to the dollar, but its market rate stood at around 115,000 against the dollar on Tuesday.

ANTI-SEMITISM SHARPLY INCREASES IN EU NATIONS: For years, Europe maintained the notion that it was earnestly confronting anti-Semitism after the horrors of the Holocaust. It now faces the alarming reality that anti-Semitism is sharply on the rise, often from the sadly familiar direction of the far-right, but also from Islamists and the far-left. Anti-Semitism has steadily gained a foothold throughout many European Union member states, according to a recent study performed by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Most of the anti-Semitic incidents that occurred this year took place in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, according to FRA. The FRA survey found that 65% of French citizens and 43% of Germans consider anti-Semitic occurrences a "very serious problem." According to one FRA source, "the problem affects all member states", though countries like Germany and France are impacted more because they have a larger number of Jewish communities which makes Jewish life more visible there. A strong link was seen between growing right-wing populism in Europe and anti-Semitism. FRA sources said, "the group mentality behind these views has led to rises in racism and anti-Semitism within these countries and all across Europe." What is clear is that these strains of anti-Semitism - from the right, from the left, and from radical Muslims - have morphed into a resurgence of a blight that should have been eradicated long ago, and that is causing serious anxiety among Europe's Jews.

ISRAEL TAKES GLOBAL LEAD IN FIRST WASTE-TO-POWER ENERGY PARK: Israel is a leader in science, medicine, technology and dozens of other areas that assist our planet and its inhabitants to heal and to prosper. Israel's Finance Ministry and Ministry of Environmental Protection days ago announced plans to construct Israel's first waste-to-energy power plant. Incinerating waste to produce electricity, the facility will be built at the "Good Samaritan" recycling park outside of Jerusalem. The plant is expected to serve as the primary waste treatment facility for the Jerusalem metropolitan area and surrounding areas and will be

constructed to convert an estimated five million tons of waste annually. The new site is scheduled to begin operations in another six years. It is expected to be the most advanced energy recovery facility worldwide, producing electricity from waste under stringent environmentally-friendly conditions.

ISRAELI GYMNAST ON HIS WAY TO 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES: Last Weekend, Israeli gymnast Artem Dolgopyat won a silver medal in the floor exercise competition of the World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany. Dolgopyat achieved a notable score of 15.200 points for his exercise. Last year he won gold at the Paris World Challenge Cup and silver in the European Championships. Dolgopyat also won the silver medal in the 2017 World Championships. He is seen as one of Israel's greatest hopes for an Olympic medal.

UNITED STATES JEWISH POPULATION 7.5 MILLION PEOPLE: In the past seven years, the American Jewish population has grown 10 percent. It remains a population that is mostly liberal, college-educated and not getting any younger. In the United States, 20.6% of the population is 65 or older. Among Jews, the number is 26%. And while 45.8% of all Americans are aged 18 to 44, among Jews the figure is 41%. Within that group, 10.5% of Jews are 18 to 24. This is all according to a new American Jewish population estimate of the 48 contiguous USA states put out by Brandeis University's Steinhardt Social Research Institute. The study found that as of 2018, there are approximately 7.5 million Jews in the contiguous United States. That's only about 2% of the USA population, but it's enough to make the United States home to the largest Jewish community in the world. According to recent government statistics, Israel has 6.7 million Jews. People who say their religion is Jewish account for some 1.8% of all USA adults, or 4.4 million people, according to the study. There are an additional 1.5 million adults who "consider themselves Jewish by background." 1.6 million Children are being raised Jewish in the USA.

TURKEY PREPARES TO INVADE NORTHERN SYRIA: World leaders are "preparing for the worst" as Turkey announced early this week that it is moving toward a sweeping military offensive against USA-backed Kurdish fighters in northern Syria. The announcement came following President Trump's surprise declaration that he would pull American forces out of a crucial buffer zone along the border between the two nations. Turkey said on Tues. 8 Oct. 2019 that it had completed plans to move into northern Syria to create what it is calling a safe zone for refugees from the Syrian civil war. At the same time, USA President Donald Trump, who is withdrawing American troops in a move that would enable the Turkish incursion, warned he would "obliterate" Turkey's economy if Ankara took actions he described as "off-limits." However, Kurdish militias in northern Syria that previously had backing from the United States now fear that Turkish forces will come after them, resulting in a bloodbath. Ankara sees the safe zone as a haven for Syrians displaced by civil war, including many of the 3.6 million who have crowded into Turkey since the war began in 2011. The Kurdish militias, who have been among the most relentless fighters against embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, are looked upon by the Turks as terrorists. The Turks and their Sunni Islamist allies cleansed 200,000 Kurds from their homes in the Afrin Kurdish enclave, which Turkey destroyed in January 2018.

NIKKI HALEY: TURKEY IS NOT OUR FRIEND: In a post on Twitter, former USA ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley criticized the announced USA pullout from northeastern Syria, writing: "We must always have the backs of our allies if we expect them to have our back. The Kurds were instrumental in our successful fight against ISIS in Syria. Leaving them to die is a big mistake. Turkey is not our friend."

LESSONS TO HEED FROM THE USA WITHDRAWAL IN SYRIA: The White House's decision to remove American troops from northern Syria must be seen within the context of the Iranian-backed attacks last month on the Saudi oil facilities, and the deafening lack of an American response. This is driving home to Israel's strategic planners that while the USA under a very friendly administration will support Israel at the UN; while it will offer assistance with aid for weapons; and while it will give it moral backing and defend it against international pressure - when it comes to the use of force, Israel must be willing and ready to defend

itself by itself. There was a long-held idea that in the Middle East; that there were things that the Americans would simply take care of. That may have been true once, but not lately. The Saudi and now Kurdish experience shouts: "Maybe yes, maybe no, but Israel cannot rely on this."

FATAL SHOOTING IN FRONT OF SYNAGOGUE IN GERMANY: At least two people were killed Wed. 9 Oct. 2019 in a shooting in front of a synagogue in the eastern German city of Halle - an attack that took place on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism. Several people also were injured. One suspect was arrested, police said, though it was not immediately clear how many assailants were involved. A hand grenade also was tossed into a Jewish cemetery. The attack took place near a Turkish eatery about 2,000 feet from the synagogue. Eyewitness Konra Roesler, who was inside the kebab shop, told reporters that "a man wearing a helmet and military uniform" flung a grenade at the store. "The grenade hit the door and exploded," he said. "The attacker shot at least once, in the shop, the man behind me must be dead. I hid in the toilet and locked the door." A separate shooting was reported in the town of Landsberg, about a 20-minute drive from Halle. Police have not confirmed whether the two incidents were related. The railroad station in Halle, a city of 240,000, was closed down as a precaution amid the police operation.



*Robert I. Solomon: Messianic Rabbi, rabbisolomon@yachad.com
Jeffery Blalock: Ministries Coordinator, jeffery@yachad.com
Yachad Ministries, 950 Pine Grove Road, Roswell, Georgia 30075
E-mail: info@yachad.com, Web Page: www.yachad.com
Phone: 770-641-3000 (ext. 6)
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