

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 13 2020 ***(18th Shvat, 5780)***

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The image shows two items within a dashed red border. On the left is a CD case for 'The Hood of His Garment' by Mike D. Co. The cover features a blue and white striped shawl and the text 'TOUCHING THE POWER IN GOD'S WORD'. On the right is a white prayer shawl with blue and gold stripes and a gold tassel.

For the Yachad Report Newsletter For February 2020

Kinneret Nearing Maximum Level; In the wake of last month's torrential outpouring of rain in Israel, the Sea of Galilee is now at its highest level since 2013. The lake is 1.4 meters below its maximum level after having received 1.27 meters of rain in Jan. 2020. Following last month's deluge most parts of the country have had most of their annual rainfall for the year and in some areas double the monthly average for January. After a brief dry spell at the beginning of Feb. 2020, heavy rain is again forecast for much of the country this weekend.

Sudan Moves Toward Closer Relations With Israel; Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Mon. 3 Feb. 2020 had two hours of talks with Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of Sudan's sovereign council. The military leader has agreed to work toward normalizing relations, in what would be a historic step for the Arab League member that's never officially recognized the Jewish state. USA Secretary of State Michael Pompeo welcomed the talks and thanked General al-Burhan for his leadership in normalizing ties with Israel. Normalizing relations with Sudan, where Arab states gathered in 1967 to issue what became known as the "Three No's" - no recognition of Israel, no peace with Israel and no negotiations with Israel - would strengthen Netanyahu's diplomatic credentials a month before Israel's March 2020 elections.

The Importance of Sudan's Shift in Regional Allies; People are sometimes unaware that Sudan is an Arab state and a member of the Arab League. While the Palestinian Authority has been trying to incite Arab states against the USA peace plan, one of the largest Arab countries has been thawing its relationship with Israel. In the past, the Sudanese had brought together many of the main Islamist terror organizations and supplied them with training camps, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, and the PLO. It was one of the earliest locations that hosted the Saudi jihadist, Osama bin Laden. Tehran gained access to Port Sudan on the Red Sea for its naval forces. Frequently they carried shipments of Iranian weapons that were transported northward into Egypt, destined for Sinai and Gaza. This was one of the key supply routes for Hamas as it built up its capacity to wage war against Israel. Then Sudan changed its pro-Iranian orientation and aligned its foreign policy with Saudi Arabia, severing Hamas' Sudanese supply line. Sudan was part of the joint front against Israel in many significant ways. With Sudan exploring new ties with the Jewish state, that front has

been split. And the forces that waged war against the West over the last two decades have lost one of their most important bases of operations.

6 Nations Say No To EU Attempt To Condemn USA Peace Plan; EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, on Tues. 4 Feb 2020 tried to convince the 27 European foreign ministers who are members of the union's Foreign Affairs Council to issue a shared resolution criticizing the new peace plan proposed by the Trump administration. He harshly warned against Israel's intention to annex parts of Judea & Samaria within weeks. Israel's Foreign Ministry lobbied hard with European governments against the resolution, arguing it was one-sided and encouraged Palestinians to avoid direct negotiations. At least six European member states agreed and chose to block the resolution. They included Italy, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, and two other unnamed nations. That opposition killed the joint statement, as EU foreign policy declarations must have the agreement of all 27 member nations. Israel's leaders responded sharply to the remarks by Borrell, a Spaniard in office since the start of Dec. 2019. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Lior Haiat tweeted: "The fact that the High Rep of the EU, Josep Borrell, chose to use threatening language towards Israel, so shortly after he assumed office & only hours after his meetings in Iran, is regrettable &, to say the least, odd. Pursuing such policies & conduct is the best way to ensure that the EU's role in any process will be minimized."

New Peace Plan, Same Old Palestinian Response; USA President Donald Trump's peace plan would see the eventual creation of a Palestinian state over some 70% of Judea & Samaria. It was, of course, rejected by Palestinian leaders who said it fell far short of their minimal demands and left sizable chunks of the territory in Israeli hands. The Palestinians seek all of Judea & Samaria and East Jerusalem - areas captured by Israel in the 1967 war - for an independent state and the removal of more than 700,000 Israelis from these areas. But that's not all: Responding to the USA peace plan, the Fatah movement made clear in the official Palestinian Authority paper al-Hayat al-Jadida that any future Palestinian state must include the whole of what are currently Israel, as well as Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Mahmoud Abbas, as chairman of both the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, may assert that the Palestinians are only interested in a state on the 1967 lines, but that is not what he has said in times past and the messages from Fatah negate this. PA and Fatah leaders often use the expression "from the river to the sea" to describe "Palestine" and deny Israel's right to exist. The Palestinians memorialize the "Nakba" or "catastrophe" to mourn the 1948 War of Independence and the creation of Israel. That is the so-called "occupation" they seek to end.

Palestinians in Deep Denial; The Palestinians are deep in denial about their part in the creation of the USA peace plan. Their grand expectation, built up over the decades, was that there would be an international plan that would force upon Israel a sovereign Palestinian state on all of the West Bank (Judea & Samaria) with a mass return of refugees that would shatter the foundations of the Zionist state. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a thorn in the side of most Arab states, which are dealing with extremely difficult issues of their own. Many of the leaders of the Sunni bloc believe that now that Israel has accepted the principle of two states, President Mahmoud Abbas must end his boycott and reenter into discussions with the Americans. The USA put considerable effort into preparing the ground with the moderate Arab states ahead of the release of the plan. The Saudi Crown Prince tried to convince Abbas that it "would not be a disaster" if the Palestinian capital is in the Abu Dis neighborhood of Jerusalem.

Israel Develops Face Masks to Protect Against Coronavirus; In one of several swift measures Israel is taking to protect its society against the deadly coronavirus, an Israeli company called Sonovia has created a washable antiviral fabric that kills bacteria and viruses upon contact. Sonovia uses soundwaves to impregnate the surface of the fabric with metallic nanoparticles like zinc oxide and copper oxide. These particles have antiviral and antibacterial properties that destroy viruses and potentially save lives. Israel is tackling the global coronavirus outbreak head-on to keep it from becoming a health crisis in the country. PM Netanyahu has said, it's not a question of if the coronavirus will spread to Israel, but when. "Our foremost goal is to postpone the

arrival of the virus to Israel. I say ‘postpone’ because its arrival is unavoidable. We will then identify, treat, isolate and deal with those infected,” Netanyahu explained after a meeting with government leaders this week. “We have closed land crossings, seaports, and airports to arrivals from China; this is temporary. We are also updating the Palestinian Authority on all public health measures that they must put into place here as well,” said Netanyahu. As of Wed. 6 Feb. 2020, China reported that at least 490 people have died and 24,324 were confirmed to be infected with the coronavirus.

Israel Faces Three Attacks in One Day; In a pre-dawn assault on Thur. 6 Feb. 2020, a Palestinian attacker rammed his car into a group of soldiers from Israel's Golani Brigade. Twelve soldiers were injured, one seriously. The troops were visiting Jerusalem ahead of their planned swearing-in ceremony in the morning, which was delayed because of the attack but eventually went ahead that same evening. Several of the wounded soldiers, some of them on crutches, left the hospital to attend the event. Following emergency surgery, the severely wounded serviceman was said to be in stable but serious condition at Shaare Zedek Medical Center. In a second assault, just before noon on Thursday, a man walked up to police officers on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and opened fire, lightly wounding one of them. The attacker fled on foot but was soon shot and killed by pursuing officers. By the afternoon, a third assault targeted Israeli security forces, this time a drive-by shooting on a highway near the settlement of Dolev. The gunman fled the scene to a nearby village, with Israeli troops in pursuit. One of the bullets fired by the gunman struck the helmet of an IDF soldier, but the helmet absorbed the hit and the soldier was only lightly hurt. Two members of the Palestinian security services were also killed on Thur. 6 Feb. 2020, at least one who was mistaken for a terrorist by an Israeli sniper, as violence soared amid Palestinian anger at the recently released Trump peace plan. Palestinian leaders said the violence was an inevitable result of the plan's pro-Israel bias, while Israeli officials accused the Palestinian Authority of encouraging the attacks. The Israel Defense Forces have been on a heightened state of alert since the publication of the peace plan and have sent waves of reinforcements to Judea & Samaria.

Two-State Solution Could Pass Due To Rising Anti-Semitism; USA national security adviser Robert O'Brien speculated last week that the Trump administration's peace plan “could be the last opportunity for a two-state solution” because growing anti-Semitism around the world will bring more Jews to Israel and to Judea and Samaria. O'Brien made the remarks during a speech on Wed. 5 Feb. 2020 with foreign diplomats to the USA. “The Israeli birthrate is strong and is growing because sadly anti-Semitism in Europe and other places around the world is encouraging more Jews to return to Israel. The settlements are going to continue to expand. If this freeze on settlements doesn't hold, if this peace process doesn't work, it may be physically impossible to have a two-state solution”, said O'Brien.

Palestinian Authority leaders have angrily rejected the long-awaited "Deal of the Century" plan. The proposal would create a demilitarized Palestinian state on less land than the Palestinians claim and allow Israel to annex all Jewish communities and the Jordan Valley, which Israel considers a security necessity. The fact that the proposal has been rejected by Palestinians is no surprise. Trump's vision fell short of the Palestinian Authority's demands for a sovereign state controlling all the territory in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, with a capital in East Jerusalem, and recognition of the “right of return” for millions of Palestinian refugees to Israel. But those demands were always unrealistic and posed unacceptable risks to Israeli security. The Palestinians' “all or nothing” negotiating stance has left them with nothing that gives hope for a better future. Now they are turning their backs on Trump's vision, despite the potential economic benefits it offers. Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates sent their ambassadors to the White House rollout event and joined Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia in appealing to the Palestinians to consider the initiative as a framework for negotiations.

Report: Strong Majority of USA Jews Remain Pro-Israel; American Jews are still standing strong with Israel. According to a new poll conducted for the Ruderman Family Foundation, 80% of American Jews describe themselves as pro-Israel and more than 70% say their personal attachment to Israel is as strong as or

stronger than it was five years ago. The survey was conducted recently on a sample of 2,500 USA Jews. 67% said they were "attached" or "very attached" to Israel on an emotional level. At the same time, 57% identified as pro-Israel but also critical of Israeli policy. "It appears doomsday talks about an irreversible chasm between Israel and the American Jewish community was mistaken," said Jay Ruderman, president of the Ruderman Family Foundation.

Israel: New Date Plants From Ancient Seeds; Israeli researchers revealed last week that they successfully grew extinct date plants from ancient seeds found at archaeological sites in the Judean Desert. Six saplings grew from 32 seeds sown and the plants have been dubbed Adam, Jonah, Uriel, Boaz, Judith, and Hannah. Dozens of seeds were gleaned from archaeology collections gathered at locations in the Dead Sea area, including the Masada hilltop fortress built by King Herod the Great and the ancient site of Qumran, famous for the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1940s. "Germination of 2000-year-old seeds of *Phoenix dactylifera* from Judean desert archaeological sites provides a unique opportunity to study the Judean date palm, described in antiquity for the quality, size, and medicinal properties of its fruit, but lost for centuries," said researchers. "The Kingdom of Judah (Judea) that arose in the southern part of the historic Land of Israel in the 11th century B.C. was particularly renowned for the quality and quantity of its dates," the researchers noted. "These so-called 'Judean dates' grown in plantations around Jericho and the Dead Sea were recognized by classical writers for their large size, sweet taste, extended storage, and medicinal properties."

Winter and Rough Weather Continues in Israel; Mount Hermon was closed to visitors on Saturday 8 Feb. 2020 in the face of snowstorms, which blanketed the area in 35-40 centimeters (13.5-16 inches) of snow at the base of the mountain. The water level at the Sea of Galilee, Israel's largest water reservoir, rose five centimeters since late last week, the Water Authority said, and currently stands at 210.10 meters below sea level. As of now, the Kinneret is 1.30 meters below its full capacity. On Sunday 9 Feb. 2020 light snowfall continued at the Hermon and the mountains in the north, as well as the mountains in the center near Jerusalem. Very cold temperatures were expected throughout Israel on Monday night 10 Feb. 2020.



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