

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 30, 2020 ***(6th Lyyar, 5780)***



For the Yachad Report Newsletter For April 2020

Jewish Population Stands Far Below Pre-Holocaust Numbers; A new report released this week by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that the global Jewish population was recorded at 14.7 million people by the end of 2018. According to the information, presented on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, the total Jewish population worldwide remains well below its pre-Holocaust peak. Jews living around the world by the eve of World War II in 1939, had grown to a population of over 16.6 million. In 1948, on the eve of the establishment of the State, the number of Jews worldwide was 11.5 million, of whom 650,000 were in Israel (6%). By the end of 2018, the worldwide Jewish population had risen to 14.7 million, with 6.7 million, or 45.6%, living in the State of Israel. The second-largest Jewish population in the world is in the USA, with 5.7 million Jews, followed by France, with about 450,000 Jews.

Sirens Sound for Holocaust Victims; A two-minute siren was heard across Israel at 10:00 a.m. Tue. 21 April 2020. Israelis stood in silence in remembrance of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. All pedestrians, traffic and public transport stood in place to pay homage to the victims of the Nazi genocide, in which a third of world Jewry was annihilated.

Rivlin Likens Spread of Anti-Semitism to Coronavirus; Israel's President Reuven Rivlin spoke on Monday evening 20 April 2020, addressing the opening ceremony of Holocaust Memorial Day. The message was recorded in advance without invited guests because of the Ministry of Health's instructions regarding coronavirus. Rivlin said in his address: "Brothers and sisters, Holocaust survivors, second and third generations, families, my fellow Israeli citizens, over the past few weeks, it seems as if the world has stopped dead. The fight against the coronavirus pandemic is setting the agenda of our lives right now, from one news broadcast to the next, from one set of instructions to the next. So, unfortunately, we are not gathering together tonight, as we do every year, in Warsaw Ghetto Square at Yad Vashem. But we must not allow the threats of the present to cast a shadow over the memory of the past. We must remember! We remember! We will continue to remember! For our own sakes, and for future generations. The threats of the present do not blur the meaning of this hallowed day. Exactly 75 years have passed since the gates of hell were opened. In the spring of 1945, a few months after the furnaces of Auschwitz were extinguished, the sun shone over Bergen-Belsen and the other camps. For six million of our brothers and sisters, it was too late. When the liberators

entered the camps, they stood before hell on earth. Bodies scattered, and the corpses walking among them. They were the 'Muselmanner', the living dead, starved, parched with thirst, exhausted and sick. Their families had been murdered and incinerated, massacred or missing. They had lost everything, even the ability to weep.

"My fellow Israelis, it was the human spirit, that triumphed over the Holocaust. The Nazi beast conquered bodies, but not spirits. In the paths of tears, in the valleys of hell, in a world cast asunder and devoid of solidarity, when death was among them every day, our brothers and sisters put their lives at risk to save the weakest among them. Not a single Jew who was rescued from that hell did so without the help of another Jew, another human being. Persecuted Jews, who themselves had nothing, showed bravery, resourcefulness, and humanity and saved lives. They proved that, even in the depths, one can and must choose to be human, to hold the most fundamental Jewish value of life, of mutual responsibility. The current pandemic, which makes no distinction between peoples only sharpens our shared commitment to human solidarity, mutual responsibility and an uncompromising fight against anti-Semitism and hatred which are also spreading, like a virus, among people. Brothers and sisters, Holocaust survivors, heroes of our independence. Memories live longer than those who hold them. We promise to pass on the torch of memory, with you and on your behalf".

Trump Proclaims a Week of Holocaust Remembrance; President Donald Trump declared a week of "Remembrance of Victims of the Holocaust" in an official proclamation on Friday 17 April 2020, while speaking of his administration's ongoing "efforts to combat racist and anti-Semitic discrimination." The week of remembrance began on Sunday 19 April 2020. Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, began on Monday evening 20 April 2020. Trump noted that "among those murdered in the Holocaust were 6 million Jewish men, women, and children who became victims of the Third Reich's unthinkable evil 'Final Solution.'" Trump acknowledged that American Jews still face persecution and pointed to his executive order on anti-Semitism issued in December 2019. The order directs "robust" enforcement of existing civil rights protections for Jews on college campuses under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - which says attackers target Jews because they perceive them to be a race or having a shared national identity.

Coronavirus Brings Sharp Spike in Anti-Semitism; There has been a spike in anti-Semitism during the coronavirus pandemic, Moshe Kantor – who established the Kantor Center in 2010 and currently serves as president of the European Jewish Congress – said Mon. 20 April 2020. "Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant rise in accusations that Jews, as individuals and as a collective, are behind the spread of the virus or are directly profiting from it," Kantor said. "Extremists on the Right and Left have used the Internet and social media platforms to blame Jews and Israel for the spread of COVID-19 or for benefiting from it. The language and imagery used clearly identifies a revival of the medieval 'blood libels,' when Jews were accused of spreading disease, poisoning wells, or controlling economies," he continued. Kantor said he was concerned about the rise of extremism that could result from the coronavirus pandemic. "Alongside trying to control the spread of the virus and taking care to lessen the effects of the financial downturn, the international community should not ignore the social and political crisis that is already starting to emerge".

Israel has a new Government; PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White leader Benny Gantz announced on Mon. 20 April 2020 they had reached an agreement that will enable a new government to be formed. Three Israeli elections over the past months have each ended in a stalemate causing months of political paralysis and the threat of a fourth election in less than a year. In talks that have dragged on since March 2020 and been stalled several times, there was mounting concern that the collapse of their efforts to form a deal would force the country into still another election. According to the agreement, the three-year period has Netanyahu serving as prime minister for the first half, and Gantz taking the job for the second half. The deal required major compromise by both men. During three bitter campaigns over the past year, Gantz and his Blue and White party vowed never to serve in a government under Netanyahu so long as he faces a

slew of corruption charges. But with the coronavirus crisis worsening, Gantz made an about-face late last month and accepted an offer from Netanyahu to pursue a joint government to deal with the pandemic.

Israel's Name Erased In New Bible Translation; A new Danish translation of the Christian Bible has purged the New Testament of references to Israel, removing more than 60 instances of the word “Israel” from the new edition. With one exception, every instance of the word “Israel”, whether in reference to the Land of Israel or the people of Israel, was replaced with either the word “Jews” – in instances where the people of Israel were referenced – or “the land of the Jews”. In some cases the word “Israel” was removed with no alternative term substituted, the report noted. The translators involved in preparing the new edition said the references to Israel were removed to distinguish the historic Land of Israel with the modern-day State of Israel. However, references to other ancient nations or geographic areas that share the same name with modern states – such as Egypt – were not purged from this latest edition of the Bible.



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