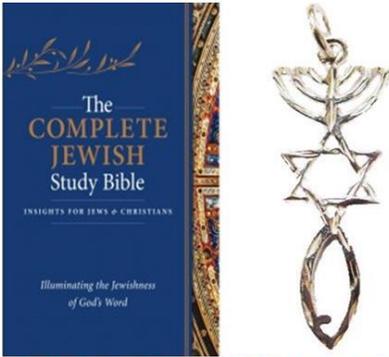


# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update May 7, 2020*** ***(13<sup>th</sup> Lyyar, 5780)***

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## **[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For May 2020](#)**

***Light at the End of Israel's Coronavirus Tunnel;*** Israelis have a sense as we move into May 2020 that life is and will be returning to normal, the coronavirus has weakened its attacks on victims in the country and people are recovering more quickly. The Israeli cabinet voted this week to ease a number of emergency restrictions on public activity, following a decline in the spread of the virus. Effective immediately, public libraries will reopen, non-medical treatments on the body will be permitted, and hotels and guest houses will be allowed to operate once again. In addition, zoos, safaris, national parks, and nature reserves will be reopened to the public. The government continues to lift coronavirus restrictions, allowing greater freedom for prayer, business activity, and celebrations. Activity at swimming pools will be permitted for competitive athletes and therapy. Mall, open-air markets, and gyms were allowed to open again on Thur.7 May 2020. Beaches will remain largely closed to the general public, though some sport activity in the sea will be permitted. Outdoor public prayer groups will still be limited to no more than 19 people, but the restriction barring praying more than 500 meters from one's home or workplace has now been lifted. Along with the new directives, officials in the Health Ministry announced Tues. 5 April that synagogues will likely be allowed to reopen by this weekend

***Corona on its Way Out of Israel;*** Some 80 percent of Israeli towns and villages have reported no new COVID-19 cases for several days, with Tel Aviv among them, and only four cities nationwide have had more than five new cases in the past few days: Jerusalem, Hura, Bnei Brak, and Beit Shemesh. (Jerusalem and Hura have been under a partial lockdown, as have two neighborhoods in Beit Shemesh.) Several hospitals have not had a single new coronavirus patient in recent days, the Channel 12 TV report also said and were repurposing virus wards back into general treatment centers, though they were ready to return them to COVID-19 centers if the need arose. Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center has closed four out of its six coronavirus wards.

***Israel Makes Breakthrough in Coronavirus Immunizer;*** Israel's Defense Minister Naftali Bennett has been presented with news of a significant breakthrough in finding an antibody to the coronavirus. It was while visiting the Israel Institute for Biological Research in Ness Ziona that he was gifted with news of the discovery. Defense Minister Bennett said, "I am proud of the staff members at Israel's Institute for Biological Research who have made a huge breakthrough. The creativity and Jewish mind have brought this amazing

achievement. The entire defense establishment will continue to operate at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus. The antibody in question attacks the virus uniquely and can neutralize it in the body of the person who contracted the virus. According to researchers at the institute, led by Prof. Shmuel Shapira, the development phase of the antibody is over. The institute will now continue the patent registration process and in the next phase, the researchers will contact international companies in order to be able to produce the antibody in commercial quantities. The antibody has not been named.

***Israel Prepares To Build Its First Vaccine Factory;*** In a small southern town called Yeruham, the city is preparing to open Israel's first vaccine production facility, in partnership with the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) the announcement came after a meeting Sunday 3 May 2020 between the heads of the IIBR, Yeruham local council, and the CEO of an international pharmaceutical company. A model was presented that would allow for the quick establishment of such a facility if approved by the Israeli government. The announcement came on the heels of what Defense Minister Naftali Bennett called a major breakthrough by IIBR in the development of a COVID-19 antibody that attacks the virus, neutralizes it, marking the end of the development phase for the passive vaccine of the virus. The facility can reportedly be built in the very near future, even before IIBR completes full development and approvals for its vaccine, which it predicts will be in early 2021. According to the model, tens of millions of vaccine units, of various types, will be manufactured in Yeruham, which will ensure Israeli self-sufficiency during both regular routine and in cases of pandemics.

***Jews Hear the Invitation to Enter the Ark;*** Throughout April 2020, 455 new Aliyah applications were submitted to Nefesh B’Nefesh (in comparison to 302 in April 2019) and 642 individuals downloaded and began working on their Aliyah applications (in comparison to 417 downloaded applications in April 2019). Eighteen new Olim arrived at Ben Gurion airport on Monday evening 4 May as part of a Nefesh B’Nefesh group Aliyah flight, in cooperation with the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, These Olim arrived amidst a wave of increased interest in Aliyah among North American Jews. Monday's new Olim moved directly into a designated quarantine hotel for fourteen days as mandated by the Israeli government for all new arrivals into the country. The Olim hail from New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Florida and Illinois, and will be living in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beit Shemesh, Ramat Gan, and Yafo.

***90% of USA House Calls for UN to Renew Iran Arms Embargoes;*** At least 384 members of the USA House of Representatives - nearly 90% - have signed a letter urging the administration to increase its diplomatic action at the UN to renew an arms embargo on Iran, congressional sources said days ago. "The UN arms embargo is set to expire in Oct. 2020, and we are concerned that the ban's expiration will lead to more states buying and selling weapons to and from Iran," said the letter, led by Reps. Eliot Engel (D-NY), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs.

***Egypt Working Around the Clock to Combat Terrorism;*** Egypt has destroyed more than 3,000 tunnels along its border with the Gaza Strip in the past five years. Egyptian Army spokesperson Tamer al-Refai revealed that many of the destroyed tunnels were three kilometers long and 30 meters wide. In an interview with the private Egyptian news channel Extra News this week, Refai said: "In 2015, the Egyptian government made a decision to establish a buffer zone along the border with the Gaza Strip. These tunnels were used to threaten Egypt's national security, including the infiltration of terrorists, smuggling of weapons, ammunition, goods, narcotic drugs, and vehicles. We established the buffer zone in stages because residents had to be relocated. They have received compensation." Refai said that the Egyptian security forces were continuing their "heroic actions to defeat terrorists" in the Sinai Peninsula. He said that 126 terrorists were killed during the recent military operation there. During the operation, Egyptian security forces seized different types of weapons and explosive belts, he added. "We destroyed 630 explosive devices," he disclosed. Refai said that the Egyptian Air Force targeted and destroyed 228 hideouts and shelters used by terrorists. In addition, 116 four-wheel-drive vehicles were destroyed and 266 suspects were arrested. "The Egyptian armed forces are

working round the clock to combat terrorism and secure our borders,” Al-Refai emphasized. “We have scored many achievements on the ground, including the destruction of the terror infrastructure.”

***Israel Buys Moovit-Urban Mobility;*** Israel announced this week it is buying Moovit, the Israeli startup with an urban mobility app used by hundreds of millions of commuters worldwide, Moovit provides trip-planning data from public transit agencies worldwide and bicycle, scooter, ride-hailing, and car-share services. From its origins in 2012 as a provider of real-time arrival and departure data for bus and rail riders in Tel Aviv, Moovit has grown into a powerhouse providing commute-planning services for 800 million users in more than 3,000 cities in over 100 countries.

***Intel Set to Purchase Israel's Moovit for \$1 Billion;*** American chipmaker Intel will reportedly agree to a \$1 billion acquisition of Israeli transportation app developer Moovit in the coming days. Negotiations between Silicon Valley and Ness Ziona firms commenced about six months ago, with approximately 10% of the purchase price expected to be paid to retain workers for the next two years. Launched in 2011, the Moovit app and website assists individuals in planning and navigating their way around urban areas, using all modes of available transportation. The company says it has served more than 720 million users in some 3,100 cities, spanning six continents. Moovit uses up to six billion anonymous data points daily “to add to the world’s largest repository of transit and urban mobility data,” the company said. In addition to its popular app, the company also provides analytics platforms to cities, transit authorities, and businesses, enabling optimized planning and operations for residents and employees.

***Hasidic Rebbe Calls on Followers to Immigrate to Israel - Before it's too Late;*** “Leave while it's possible,” he was quoted as saying. “Things will get worse and it will be difficult to move from one country to another.” He added that prior to World War II, some Hasidic rebbes asked their followers to move to Israel, but “part of the decree was that the Jews didn't listen.” “Whoever can afford to rise and ascend to the Holy Land should do it as soon as possible. The US will also become a dangerous place, mired in war—and it is still too early to tell which US state will survive...the Land of Israel will be the safest place to survive the war, even though there will be terrible difficulties there as well.” He himself, however, could not immigrate, he said: “I don't have permission to do so—in Heaven they are holding me back for the time being, to stay here in the US.”

***Danon Calls Unrwa Gaza Schools 'Terror Storage Facilities';*** Israel’s ambassador to the UN Danny Danon has charged that UNRWA schools in Gaza are “terror storage facilities” and has called on the UN to condemn the organization, which is the main provider of services to Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. He sent a letter to UN senior officials on the matter, after the United Nations Relief and Works Agency reported a few weeks ago that a grenade and a military vest had been found in one of its Gaza facilities. UNRWA has consistently condemned the placement of such weapons in its schools and did so as well last month when it reported the incident to Israel, the Gaza authorities, and the media. “UNRWA strongly and unequivocally condemns the individual or group responsible for this flagrant violation of the inviolability of its premises under international law,” it said last month.

***Anti-Semitic Al-Quds Rally Cancelled In Berlin Following Ban of Hezbollah;*** The organizer of the annual anti-Israel al-Quds Day rally pulled the plug on its mid-May event in the heart of Berlin after the German government banned all Hezbollah activities within the territory of the federal republic. The office of the Berlin Senator of the Interior, Andreas Geisel, tweeted on Thursday: “[today] the organizer of the al-Quds march canceled the demonstration for this year. We are all spared one of the most disgusting anti-Semitic events. Good news for Berlin.” The current Berlin government and its social democratic party mayor Michael Müller have faced criticism over the years for not seeking to legally ban the al-Quds march, which has been permitted to proceed each year since 1996. Müller's administration said it would lose a legal battle to outlaw

al-Quds. In 2019, roughly 1,000 demonstrators participated in the al-Quds march along Berlin's main shopping district. They screamed "child murder" to describe Israel.

***Hezbollah Finally Banned in Germany;*** After years of pressure from the US (both the Obama and Trump administrations) and the Israeli government, Germany's interior minister on Thursday banned all activities of the Lebanese terrorist movement Hezbollah within the federal republic's territory. "That was overdue," wrote Frank Jansen about the ban in his Tagesspiegel newspaper commentary. Jansen is one of Germany's leading national security reporters. German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer declared that Hezbollah's activities "violate criminal law and the organization opposes the concept of international understanding." Chancellor Angela Merkel's administration has declined to comment further. Last year, after the UK outlawed Hezbollah, Germany's deputy foreign minister, Niels Annen, said when asked about a ban: "Hezbollah is however also a relevant factor in Lebanese society and an integral part of the country's complex domestic-policy make-up. It has seats in Parliament and is part of the Government."

***German Jews and Pro-Israel NGO Praise Hezbollah Ban, Urge EU Action;*** The president of the Munich Jewish community and the head of the German-Israel Friendship Society on Thursday lauded the German interior ministry for outlawing the Lebanese terrorist movement Hezbollah within the federal republic. "The complete ban on Hezbollah is the only right step and a serious blow to anti-Israeli terror in Germany," said Charlotte Knobloch, the president of the Munich Jewish community and survivor of the Holocaust. Currently, the EU merely bans Hezbollah's so-called "military wing" which, in 2012, blew up an Israeli tour bus in Bulgaria. The terrorist attack murdered five Israelis and their Bulgarian Muslim bus driver. Hezbollah's "political wing" is still permitted to function within the EU. The Lebanese terrorist organization declares itself to be a unitary movement and raises funds, recruits new members, and spreads its jihadi ideology across Europe.

***Two Alleged Israeli Airstrikes Target Syria within a Day;*** Two alleged Israeli airstrikes targeted both western and southern Syria within a matter of hours on Thursday night and Friday. According to the reports, IDF helicopters were seen firing rockets at numerous targets, with some reports from Syrian media claiming that the targets belonged to Hezbollah. Explosions were heard in the southern area of Homs after an attack on Friday morning, said the governor of the Homs Governorate to the Syrian state news agency SANA. The governor told SANA that an assault on a military site east of Homs caused explosions, leading to shells falling in the area, and injuring civilian bystanders. Ten injured people were treated at area hospitals, according to the Health Director of Homs, Dr. Hassan Al-Jundi. On Thursday, unidentified aircraft targeted Iran-backed militias in the area near the city of Al-Bukamal in the Deir Ezzor region of eastern Syria, according to the opposition-affiliated TV station Halab Today. Militants were killed and wounded in the strikes. The last attack by the IDF in Syria targeted the Damascus area on Monday night, killing at least seven people, including four operatives and three civilians.

***Opinion: Iran's Most Dangerous Virus is its Regime;*** While the coronavirus tore through Iran, including its elderly leadership, the regime focused on burying the truth. While leaders told people there was nothing to worry about, refusing to shut down public space, police were posted at hospitals to keep the medical staff from disclosing the true extent of the pandemic, and the Iranian health system's inability to cope. The result is that the official number of confirmed infections is likely highly inaccurate. Some estimates suggest it is perhaps as high as 2 million. Amid its domestic troubles, Iran's leaders have found time to launch propaganda and missile attacks against the United States. Iran's proxies have thrice attacked U.S. bases in Iraq, killing two Americans and a Brit. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, meanwhile, used his national address marking the Persian new year to acknowledge the suffering caused by the pandemic, blame the United States, and refuse any international medical assistance. If the United States truly wants to help the Iranian people, it cannot strengthen the Iranian regime. If anything it should help delegitimize it, while demonstrating its friendship toward the Iranian people. American officials can work around, not through, the regime. The United States

can coordinate with its European partners on a humanitarian relief and medical assistance package, conditioned on Iran allowing international organizations and aid groups — like the World Health Organization, Red Crescent and Doctors Without Borders — to deliver and administer the aid directly. This would circumvent the corruption and incompetence of the Iranian regime and ensure that the Iranian people receive the help they need and that they know who is providing it. Presented with such an offer, Iran's regime will have to choose between opening its borders or publicly refusing to save its people. Iran's most dangerous contagion is its regime. Lifting sanctions is not the cure.



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