

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update October 8, 2020 (20th Tishrei, 5781)

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The image shows two items: on the left, the cover of a book titled 'THE POWER OF HIS GARMENT' with the subtitle 'TOUCHING THE POWER IN GOD'S WORD'. The cover features a close-up of hands holding a white prayer shawl with blue and gold stripes. On the right is a full view of a white prayer shawl with blue and gold stripes and a gold tassel.

[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For October 2020](#)

Sukkah Built in Dubai; A sukkah was built in front of the Burj Khalifa in Dubai on Thursday, ahead of the Sukkot holiday which began at sundown on Friday. The Jewish community in the UAE has re-established its religious lifestyle following the country's normalization agreement with Israel. Last week, the slaughter of about 2,500 poultry was carried out for the country's Jews as well as hotels in Dubai seeking strictly kosher food for the large number of Jewish businessmen visiting the country. Israeli citizens expected to arrive in the Gulf kingdom in the near future are also expected to benefit from the operation. Several weeks ago, Armani/Kaf, the first kosher certified dining destination in the United Arab Emirates, located within Burj Khalifa and Armani Hotel Dubai, officially opened its doors. When the UAE hosted 50-plus Jewish delegates as part of a US-Israeli delegation, they were served kosher food as they stayed at the St Regis Hotel.

'Historic' Israel-Lebanon Agreement to Seek Mediation; US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised the agreement by Israel and Lebanon to seek American mediation in their maritime border dispute. "The United States welcomes the decision by the Governments of Israel and Lebanon to begin discussions on the maritime boundary. This historic agreement between the two parties is the result of nearly three years of intense diplomatic engagement by Ambassador David Satterfield and Assistant Secretary David Schenker," Pompeo said. "Recognizing the positive experience of the Tripartite mechanism, the United States also looks forward to separate expert-level talks to define unresolved issues related to the Blue Line, which offer the promise of another positive step for regional stability," the Secretary of State concluded.

First Israeli-Lebanese Talks in 30 Years to be Held; For the first time in 30 years, Israel and Lebanon will hold direct negotiations to try to resolve their maritime border dispute, officials for both sides and the United States said Thursday. The talks between the two neighboring states, which are at war and have no diplomatic ties, will be mediated by the US and hosted by the United Nations. Those negotiations, over an 860-square-kilometer area in the Eastern Mediterranean near Israel's natural-gas fields, are scheduled to begin the week of October 12 at the UN base in Naqoura, near the country's border with Israel at Rosh Hanikra. "The United States looks forward to commencement of the maritime boundary discussions soon, to be held in Naqoura, Lebanon, under the UN flag and hosted by the staff from the Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL)," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

Israel Delivers First Iron Dome Battery for US Army; A year after the Defense Ministry and the US Army signed a deal for two Iron Dome missile defense batteries, the first battery has been delivered. A symbolic event was held with the Iron Dome production line of defense contractor Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, in the presence of Defense Minister Benny Gantz, Economy Minister Amir Peretz, head of the directorate of defense research and development Dr. Dani Gold, head of the Israel Missile Defense Organization Moshe Patel, Rafael chairman Uzi Landau, and Rafael CEO Yoav Har-Even. In August 2019, the US Army purchased two batteries off the shelf from Rafael, which included 12 launchers, two sensors, two battlement management centers, and 240 interceptors. The ministry said that the second battery is expected to be delivered in the “near future” within the framework of the agreement. The purchase was made to fill the army’s short-term needs for an indirect fire protection capability until a permanent solution to the problem is put in place to best protect ground maneuvering troops against an increasingly wide range of aerial threats, including short-range projectiles.

Haredis Represent 40% of Coronavirus Cases in Israel; Haredim (ultra-Orthodox) make up around 40% of people diagnosed with coronavirus each day in Israel, Prof. Ronni Gamzu, the coronavirus commissioner, said on Thursday. Gamzu shared this statistic while speaking at a press briefing the same day that Israel hit 1,600 fatalities from the virus, and senior officials said that the population is not abiding by directives. Among the sick are more than 5,000 yeshiva students aged between 17 and 24, according to Roni Numa, the coronavirus coordinator for the ultra-Orthodox community. He added that 95% of them were isolated either at their yeshivas or in coronavirus hotels. However, he noted that the infection rate among those aged over 65, a high-risk group for COVID-19 complications, has doubled in the ultra-Orthodox sector and this could lead to a spike in the mortality rate among the community.

5 Patients in Hadassah Coronavirus-Free in Clinical Trial; Five patients recently discharged from Hadassah-University Medical Center in Jerusalem were healthy and coronavirus-free after taking part in the first clinical trial of an innovative treatment developed by the hospital. Allocetra, the drug used in the clinical trial, was developed with the Enlivex Company based on research conducted by Prof. Dror Mevorach, director of Hadassah’s Internal Medicine and Coronavirus departments. It had already been successfully tested on 10 sepsis patients. All five patients had been hospitalized in serious or critical condition. The clinical test was carried out with the permission of the Health Ministry’s Helsinki Committee by a team led by Prof. Vernon Van Heerden, director of Hadassah’s General Intensive Care Unit. “We are happy that the patients in severe and critical condition recovered after the Allocetra treatment,” Enlivex said in the press release.

Monaco Has Highest Ratio of Jews in the World Outside Israel; Outside of Israel, Monaco also has the highest ratio of Jewish inhabitants of any country in the world, at over 5%, according to statistics provided by its two rabbis. To be fair, the city-state’s total population is only about 38,600, making it one of the world’s smallest nations. But its some 2,000 Jews are cultivating a growing community thanks in part to a luxurious synagogue opened in 2017. Synagogue Edmond Safra, which was buoyed by a donation of more than \$10 million by the Safra banking family, is housed inside a building that is shaped like a Torah scroll, its cylinder featuring Jerusalem stone tiling. The structure is oriented to see the Mediterranean and the famed Monaco marina — but has no windows to view them. The Safra congregation isn’t new, but Daniel Torgmant, its rabbi since 2010, says the new building “has quite simply been an engine for communal growth.” Because of its attractiveness and prime location, “it allows us to attract a lot of people passing through Monaco, or Jewish people whose connection to Judaism is still in its infancy.”

Tel Aviv in Top-5 Most Artistic Global Cities to Visit; Tel Aviv has been named the fifth-most creative city in the world, only behind Paris, Barcelona, Dublin, and London, according to research conducted by Inkifi, a print-photography company that specializes in turning personal photos into wall art. “In a planet filled with so much beauty and diversity, it’s not hard to find creativity and inspiration in some of the world’s most

notable cities,” Inkifi wrote in a report. “In fact, some cities have made a name for themselves in the world of art, music, architecture, and other creative ventures... So if you’re looking for a touch of creative inspiration, which cities should you add to your travel wish list?” Through the data, Inkifi put together its list of cities that art lovers need to add to their “bucket list” accounts for a number of different art scenes, including galleries, music and comedy clubs, theaters, street art, Instagrams, building architecture and statues.

Bahrain’s Lost Jews Anticipate Return After Peace with Israel; Bahrain’s dwindling community of less than 50 Jews has been offered a new lease on life in the wake of the signing of this month’s historic Abraham Accords, with many in Israel anxious to reconnect to their homeland. Most former Bahrainis forfeited their passports when making aliyah, so current numbers are unclear. The Jewish Agency has only two formal registrations but numbers are certainly far higher than that. Munir Akirav, 35, born in Givatayim, is one of a small number of Jews of Bahraini origin living in Israel. His mother and her family left Bahrain in 1970. “My personal connection to Bahrain is based on stories, pictures, videos, from my mother’s family,” he says. “The connection is one of nostalgia and longing for a time of which you were never a part. So, for me it’s a very, very strong feeling,” explains the accountant and credit analyst. When he heard the news of the Abraham Accords, overcoming decades of political annexation of Israel, he said he “jumped for joy.”

Netanyahu: “Two Pieces of Good News” for UN; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu addressed the 75th annual United Nations General Assembly Tuesday. The address was delivered via video due to the coronavirus pandemic. Netanyahu began by referencing the Abraham Accords, the peace agreement signed between Israel and the Gulf states of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. “The Middle East is not exactly renowned for producing good news, and few expected this year to be any different. The pandemic virus is ravaging our part of the world like everywhere else. But I am pleased to report to you that this year, I can tell you about good news from the Middle East. In fact, I can report two pieces of good news,” Netanyahu said. “Earlier this month, Israel signed historic agreements with the United Arab Emirates and the kingdom of Bahrain. This was the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab country in over a quarter of a century, and it was the first time peace agreements between Israel and two Arab countries were signed on the same day. These new agreements will bring our peoples the blessings of peace,” he added.

Hezbollah Defies Macron, Will Continue to Fight Israel; Lebanon’s Hezbollah terror group on Monday rejected criticism from French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday after he panned its political machinations. And it vowed to remain committed to fighting Israel, as the country is paralyzed by its worst economic and financial crisis in decades. Macron on Sunday accused Lebanon’s political leaders of “collective betrayal” and choosing “to favor their partisan and individual interests to the general detriment of the country,” after the resignation of Lebanon’s prime minister-designate Mustapha Adib over the weekend. Adib’s resignation was a blow to Macron’s efforts to break a dangerous stalemate in the crisis-hit country. Macron assailed the Hezbollah group and the entire Lebanese political class Sunday and warned of a new civil war if they can’t set aside personal and religious interests to unlock international aid and save Lebanon from economic collapse.

Israeli Amb Erdan Sharply Criticizes UN; Israel’s new ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan on Tuesday claimed the international body was at risk of “losing its right to exist” over its treatment of the Jewish state, and predicted it could be defunct by the end of the century. “The UN is risking the loss of whatever relevance and legitimacy it has left. If the organization can’t take action against the worst regimes and continues to cling to the Palestinian obsession, in 75 years there will be no UN to mark its birthday, because it will simply lose its right to exist,” Erdan wrote in a column for the Israel Hayom daily. He was referring to the UN’s 75th anniversary, which was marked earlier this month. Israeli leaders have taken a hard line against the UN in recent years, accusing it of disproportionately criticizing Israel while ignoring abuses by other countries.

Israel's COVID Infection Rate Almost 3x Any Other in World; Israel has the world's worst daily coronavirus infection numbers per capita for the last week — a rate almost three times higher than the next badly-hit country, global data indicated Tuesday. In terms of the national case count, over the last seven days, Israel has seen an average of 703 new daily diagnoses per million citizens, according to figures from Our World In Data, citing information from the European CDC. Spain had 234 confirmed cases per million citizens, with France at 185 and the US at 133. Numbers from John Hopkins University, computed by the National Bank of Canada, showed similar results. And while leaders in Jerusalem have taken solace in the country's low mortality rates even in the face of rising case numbers, Israel has now overtaken the United States and is also leading the global table for daily deaths per capita over the last week, with some 3.5 deaths per million citizens. "I'm very worried," said Dror Mevorach of Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center. "I see the people, I see the deaths, I see the prolonged disease."

1/3 of Israel's COVID Infections Among Ultra-Orthodox; Health Ministry Director-General Chezy Levy told reporters on Wednesday that 34 percent of those diagnosed with the virus in Israel were ultra-Orthodox, though the community constitutes only approximately 12% of the population. "The ultra-Orthodox sector, due to overcrowding and prayers which sometimes violate the rules of conduct, has reached a high level of morbidity. It must be treated and a solution must be found, because it affects ultra-Orthodox society, the infection rate in general and hospitals," Levy said, without giving specifics on the timeframe for the infection statistics. It was also not clarified how patients were categorized as ultra-Orthodox. According to a 2019 report by the Israel Democracy Institute, around 12% of the general population is categorized as belonging to that community. Levy said that although the death rate in the ultra-Orthodox community remained relatively low in comparison with the general population and Arab community — presumably due to the relatively young age of those infected — it was undergoing a "steep increase."

Pompeo: The Chinese Government is Re-Writing the Bible; China continues to persecute religious minorities, rewriting the Bible to make it conform to Chinese Marxist doctrine, and sending Uighurs Muslims to re-education camps, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said. Speaking during a session at the Values Voter Summit 2020, held virtually, Pompeo said: "We watch today the challenge that Christians and Catholics have to practice their faith inside of China." "The Chinese Communist Party is trying to rewrite the Bible itself to 'Sinicize' the Christian doctrine," he added. "That's unacceptable. That will diminish the Chinese people. We want good things for them." China officially recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. However, the US Department of State's 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: China notes that although "the constitution, which cites the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, states that citizens have freedom of religious belief," it "limits protections for religious practice to "normal religious activities" and does not define "normal."

From Mideast to AL East: MLB's First Israeli Blooms; Dean Kremer is a budding celebrity in Israel and a developing star in the big leagues. Kremer this month became the first Israeli citizen to pitch in the majors. Not only that, the Baltimore Orioles prospect tossed six innings of one-hit ball in a starting role against the storied New York Yankees, striking out seven in a 5-1 victory. Several reporters and friends from Israel participated in the postgame Zoom call, offering congratulations and even getting Kremer to speak a little Hebrew in a message to followers far from Baltimore. Now, four games into his big league career and done pitching in a season that ends Sunday for the Orioles, Kremer took delight in reflecting upon a whirlwind three weeks of fame and success. "It's been a dream come true, to say the least," he said. "It's been really fun. The guys have welcomed me into a warm clubhouse. Anything and everything you could imagine it would be, it is — except for no fans."

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