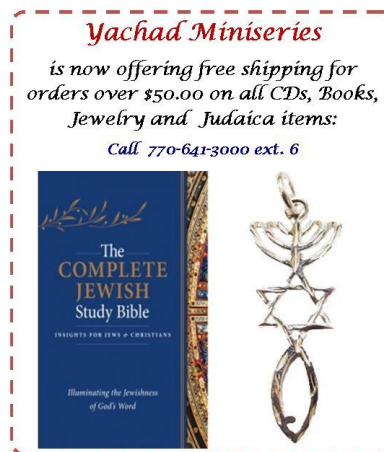


Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 05, 2023 ***(12th Tevet, 5783)***



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Israel's New Government: Everything You Need to Know; The new Israeli government was expected to be sworn in by the end of Thursday, December 29. On Wednesday, Prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu and the head of the Likud party, presented to the Knesset the coalition agreements needed to form a right-wing government composed of 64 seats out of a total of 120 in the Knesset. The new government will be composed of United Torah Judaism (UTJ), Religious Zionism, Noam, Shas, and Otzma Yehudit (Jewish power). Foremost in the coalition agreement was the issue of Israel's territory. "The Jewish people have an exclusive and inalienable right to all areas of the Land of Israel," the government said in its overall policy statement, promising to "promote and develop all parts of the Land of Israel." The agreement went on to specify that this development policy would include Judea and Samaria. "The nation of Israel has a natural right to the Land of Israel," section 118 of the coalition agreement stated. "In light of the belief in that aforementioned right, the prime minister will formulate and promote policies within whose framework sovereignty will be applied to Judea and Samaria," the document stated. It was specified that this included the Galilee, the Negev and the Golan Heights which have all been officially annexed by the Israeli government. The Golan in particular, was described as a "strategic region" with a large potential for development.

Egypt's Sisi Congratulates Netanyahu As He Pushes for Israeli-Palestinian Talks; Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi pushed for renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks when he called Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, January 1, to congratulate him on the formation of his government. Sisi "stressed the importance of achieving just and comprehensive peace" between Israelis and Palestinians, the office of the Egyptian presidency stated. This would "contribute to realizing security and prosperity for all the peoples of the region," Sisi said. He also emphasized the importance of avoiding "any measures that would lead to tension and complicate the situation in the region." Netanyahu's office said that the "two leaders stressed the importance of promoting peace, stability and security for the sake of both peoples and for all peoples in the Middle East," but it did not mention the Palestinians. They also spoke of ways to improve bilateral relations between the two countries and discussed regional developments. Under the previous government, Israel had approved a plan to increase trade with Egypt to \$700 million. This

included upgrading the Nitzana Crossing between Israel and Egypt. Sisi is one of a number of regional leaders who have reached out to Netanyahu after an 18-month hiatus from the premiership.

Israel Targeted by “Flood Libel”; After heavy rains fell on the region during the last days of December, some Arab media have falsely accused Israel of causing flooding in Gaza. On Monday, December 26, the official outlet for the Palestinian Authority, published an article titled, “As if the heavy rain was not enough, Israel opens rainwater ducts to flood Gaza towns, destroy lands”. According to the outlet’s report, after two days of rain, the Israeli authorities made the flooding in Gaza worse “by opening the ducts in the dams located on the Israeli side of the border fence. The only dam in Israel is the Degania Dam, located on the Jordan River at the southern end of the Sea of Galilee that regulates water levels in the Sea of Galilee and the flow of water into the Jordan River. The distance between the dam and Gaza is roughly 200 kilometers and since it is over 200 meters lower than Gaza, it would be impossible for any water released from the dam to arrive at Gaza. The article was followed by another article in a pro-Palestinian website that supports Islamist causes. The outlet published a report under the headline, “Israel floods Gaza after opening dam gates.” The article quoted Deputy Minister for Local Governance, Zuhdi al Ghreez, who said, “Large swathes of the city of Deir al Balah, in the middle sector of the Gaza Strip were submerged with water coming from the Israeli dams.” These accusations by the Palestinians arise every winter and have been picked up by foreign media.

IRGC Officials Hint at Division in Iranian Leadership, As Protests Continue; Two Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) officials hinted at division among Iran's leadership as anti-government protests have continued to sweep the country. Hamid Abazari, an IRGC official who formerly served as deputy commander of the Imam Hossein Training and Officer College, reportedly stated that senior commanders and officials had "failed and stood against values, [Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei] and the regime," during the ongoing wave of protests. Abazari also expressed condemnation of officials who had not condemned the protests and added that "first-rate officials of the regime" were among those who had stood against Khamenei. The IRGC's public relations department rejected Abazari's statements on Saturday, December 31, stressing that this was Abazari's personal opinion and "does not correspond to the existing facts." Additionally, Gholamhossein Gheybparvar, an IRGC commander in charge of a unit tasked with confronting protests and riots, criticized "some elites" for staying silent about the protests. "Some elites were afraid of being harmed and damaged in their world and kept silent and were rejected, and you should know that religiosity does not come and go slowly, but religiosity has a cost," said Gheybparvar on Saturday, according to Iranian media. "In these two or three months, many were rejected; We do not deny the economic problems, high prices, unemployment, etc., but was it the right of the regime that anyone who comes can insert a knife into the body of the regime?"

Jordanian King Threatens Conflict If Israel Crosses Jerusalem ‘Red Lines’; Jordanian King Abdullah II on Wednesday, December 28, said he was ready for a conflict should Israel’s government violate “red lines” by changing the status quo governing relations at Jerusalem’s holy sites. “If people want to get into a conflict with us, we’re quite prepared,” Abdullah said in an interview with American media. “I always like to believe that let’s look at the glass half full, but we have certain red lines... And if people want to push those red lines, then we will deal with that,” he added. Jordan has since 1967 been the custodian of holy sites in the Israeli capital’s Old City, including the Al Aqsa Mosque that sits atop the Temple Mount, Judaism’s most sacred place. While Muslims are allowed to freely visit and worship at the mosque, Jews are severely restricted from accessing the site where two biblical temples stood, and are banned from praying there, although the latter stringency has been relaxed in recent years. Abdullah also warned that the Palestinians could launch another terror war. “We have to be concerned about a next intifada,” he said, adding: “If that happens, that’s a complete breakdown of law and order and one that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians will benefit from.”

Hezbollah's Nasrallah Suffers Second Stroke, Hospitalized in Beirut – Report; Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah was rushed to intensive care after suffering a stroke, according to reports from Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. The reports came after Nasrallah canceled a planned speech on Friday, December 30, with the Lebanese terrorist organization announcing through its affiliated media he had fallen ill with influenza and was unable to speak well. Saudi journalist Hussein al-Gawi contradicted Hezbollah's statement, claiming that Nasrallah indeed suffered a second stroke instead of falling ill as was reported. The Hezbollah leader was reportedly hospitalized at the Great Prophet Hospital in Beirut. Nasrallah is also set to speak on Tuesday, January 3, to mark the anniversary of the assassination of IRGC Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani.

Shas Secures Billions for Welfare, Healthcare, Religious Benefits in Coalition Deal; In its coalition agreement with prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud, the ultra-Orthodox Shas party secured billions of shekels in promises to advance its core agendas, including supporting disadvantaged Israelis, benefits to the religious community and its institutions, and improving healthcare services, especially in the so-called periphery. Laser-focus on its socioeconomic and religious priorities has been a longtime winning strategy for Shas. The party did not make any independent security or foreign policy demands, and largely acceded to Likud requests beyond its core interests. In addition to the policy points, Shas secured six ministerial portfolios to be handed out to five of its 12 lawmakers. Party leader Aryeh Deri will take two of the portfolios, returning to lead the Interior Ministry once again, and the Health Ministry. He will also be a deputy prime minister for the entirety of the government's term. The religious services and welfare portfolios will also go to Shas, as well as two additional ministers within — but not leading — the welfare and education ministries. Deri also cleared NIS 5.85 billion (\$1.65 billion) for improvements to the healthcare system, with a special focus on improving services in disadvantaged and far-flung communities outside central Israel.

Israel Begins Pumping Desalinated Water from the Mediterranean to the Kinneret; Mekorot Israel National Water Co. and the Israel Water Authority have launched the billion shekel “Reverse Water Carrier” project in the north, to bring desalinated water from the Mediterranean to the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). The project is meant to ‘top off’ the inland sea, maintaining its level during years of below-average rainfall. This is the first project of its kind in the world. Israel Water Authority director Yehezkel Lifshitz told media, “The project we have launched today proves that Israel is leading in innovative thinking and a creative planning approach to dealing with the effects of climate change, while ensuring a sustainable water supply, safeguarding Israel's natural resources and maintaining the Kinneret as a strategic buffer for the State of Israel.” The project, launched on Tuesday, December 27, was conceived in 2009 following a series of drought years (2013-2018) and work began four years ago. The new pipelines connect five desalination plants along the coast with the Kinneret via 100-kilometer water channels, advanced quality control and command systems, and water reservoirs. The project will allow the maximum streaming of 120 million cubic meters of water back into the Kinneret. The Kinneret is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and prominently featured in the New Testament. The Kinneret first appears in the Bible in the Book of Numbers.

In 1st Christmas Speech, King Charles Recalls 2020 Bethlehem Visit; King Charles III broadcasted his first Christmas message as monarch in a speech on Monday, December 26, that paid tribute to his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II, and recalled his visit to Bethlehem. “Some years ago, I was able to fulfill a lifelong wish to visit Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity,” said Charles of his 2020 visit to Israel and the West Bank. “It meant more to me than I can possibly express, to stand on that spot where as the Bible tells us, the light that has come into the world was born,” he said. The British monarch has long had ties to the region — his grandmother sheltered Jews during the Holocaust and is interred at the Russian

Orthodox Church of St. Mary Magdalene, just outside Jerusalem's Old City. Charles added that "while Christmas is of course a Christian celebration, the power of light overcoming darkness is celebrated across the boundaries of faith and belief. So whatever faith you have, or whether you have none, it is in this life-giving light and with the true humility that lies in our service to others, that I believe we can find hope for the future." The message was delivered alongside a choir that sang the carol "O little town of Bethlehem."

ISIS Terrorist Behind Deadly Jerusalem Bombings Captured; Israeli security forces have identified and captured the Arab terrorist, believed to be responsible for a pair of bombings in Jerusalem last month, that left two people dead, and over a dozen injured. On Tuesday, December 27, Israel's military censor cleared for publication details of the arrest, including the identity of the suspected terrorist. Eslam Froukh, a 26-year-old mechanical engineer living in Israel with no prior known ties to terrorism, was arrested on November 29th, following an investigation by the Shin Bet internal security agency, Jerusalem District police, and the IDF. The additional suspects arrested in the November 29th bust were later found not to have had any connection with the case and were released. Investigators say Froukh identifies with the Salafist movement within Sunni Islam, and is a supporter of the ISIS terror organization. Froukh carried out the twin bombings alone, authorities said Tuesday. Two explosions rocked Jerusalem on the morning of November the 23rd, hitting bus stops in Givat Shaul and Ramot. Aryeh Schupak, a 15-year-old Canadian yeshiva student, and Tadessa Tshuma, a father of six from Pisgat Ze'ev, were both killed in the Givat Shaul bombing. Froukh, investigators say, was an avid consumer of pro-terrorist media content, which also aided him in learning how to assemble the bombs used in the attacks. Froukh also used the pit to conceal explosive material for assembling new bombs, a Carlo-style automatic firearm, and a bomb already prepared for use. Shin Bet officials say Froukh was in the midst of planning an additional attack when he was arrested.

In Video, Iran Threatens to Raze Tel Aviv, Destroy Dimona, If Israel Hits Nuke Sites; Iran's state broadcaster has aired a video describing what it claims would be the response to an Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear sites, warning that Israeli targets would be destroyed within minutes, and that a follow-up wave of rocket attacks would "raze Tel Aviv." The video aired on Iran's state-controlled media on December 17, and was reported upon by the Washington-based Middle East Media Research Institute monitor group on Monday, December 26. In the clip, narrator Younes Shadlou began by noting that Israel had recently held exercises with the US to simulate an attack on Iran. "Let's assume that Israeli jets manage to reach the Natanz nuclear site in one piece" and manage to damage it, Shadlou posited, referring to a major facility buried under a mountain where Iran has installed advanced centrifuges to enrich uranium. "Even if they manage to leave Iran's sky safely," he continued, it would take the jets "at least an hour" to return to their base. "The question is whether there would be any base for them to land at," Shadlou said. The remarks were followed by footage showing multiple launches of surface-to-surface missiles and impacts on the ground, as Shadlou predicted the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps would launch barrages of solid-fuel missiles that "in less than seven minutes will destroy their targets with great accuracy."

Netanyahu Rejects Son Yair's Hint that Prosecutors Deserve Death Sentence; Prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, December 26, rejected remarks by his son that appeared to suggest that prosecutors be put to death for pressing charges against the elder Netanyahu, though he noted that everyone has freedom of speech. His statement came a day after Yair Netanyahu said senior prosecutors and police had committed "treason," the sole crime punishable by death in the Israeli penal code, when they prosecuted his father for alleged corruption. "I love my son Yair, who is an independent person with his own views," the elder Netanyahu tweeted. "Although everyone has the right to express criticism, I did not agree with the things he said that were published yesterday." Yair Netanyahu claimed Sunday on a right-wing radio station that officials had committed "a willful coup d'état." "It's called a coup, it's called treason, and everyone can look at the State of Israel's laws and see what the punishment is

for treason — and it is not prison.” The comments from the younger Netanyahu, who has a history of making incendiary statements, echoed near-constant attacks on law enforcement and the judicial system, as the Likud leader’s backers have sought to delegitimize the cases against him.

Google Fixes Error After Labeling 'Jew' as an Offensive Slur; If you searched the word "Jew" on Google throughout the day on Tuesday, December 27, you might have been surprised to find that the definition given was an ancient anti-Semitic stereotype. The word "Jew," according to this Google result with data derived from Oxford Languages, did not list someone as being a member of the Jewish people. Rather, it was listed as a verb marked offensive, defined as "to bargain with someone in a miserly or petty way." Looking further after clicking "translations and more definitions," the Google result included several conjugations of this verb, such as "jewed" and "jewing." It further revealed that the origin of the verb "Jew" is from the 19th century, in reference to how Jewish people work with money-lending and trading. Only after that, however, was the noun "Jew" shown as an option by Google, which is far less offensive and far more accurate. By Tuesday evening, the Google definition had been reverted back to its original definition, leading with the noun, rather than the verb. Several people and organizations spoke out on social media over the definition of Jew on Google, as several people immediately rushed to the search engine to see this for themselves.

Whoopi Goldberg Under Fire for Repeating Holocaust Remarks; Jewish activists and community members demanded Goldberg face termination from her daytime talk show over the weekend, after she doubled down on past Holocaust remarks, saying that the Holocaust wasn't a matter of race but "white-on-white violence". Goldberg's controversial statement came amid an interview promoting her new movie. “My best friend said, ‘not for nothing is there no box on the census for the Jewish race. So that leads me to believe that we’re probably not a race,’” Goldberg told UK media. “It wasn’t originally” about race, Goldberg continued, saying the Nazis also killed people they believed to be “mentally defective.” Goldberg said it was wrong to use the Nazi definition that they considered Jews a race. “The oppressor is telling you what you are. Why are you believing them? They’re Nazis. Why believe what they’re saying?” she insisted. The comments occurred just 10 months after Goldberg was suspended from the daytime talk show for insisting that the Holocaust was "not about race." She showed little remorse for her past statement, arguing again that the estimated 6 million Jews who were systematically killed in the Holocaust were not targeted based on their race. She also claimed that the Nazis targeted people of African descent in addition to Jews, because they were physically different. Furthermore, she suggested that Jews had an easier time blending in with white people and hiding from the Nazis than black people did at the time of the Holocaust.

First Temple-Era Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem to Be Excavated, Opened to the Public; The Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel National Parks Authority, and the City of David Foundation announced Tuesday, December 27, the commencement of the excavation of the historic Pool of Siloam in Jerusalem. The Pool of Siloam, located in the southern portion of the City of David and within the area of the Jerusalem Walls National Park, is an archaeological and historical site of national and international significance. The Pool was first constructed some 2,700 years ago, as part of Jerusalem's water system in the 8th Century BCE, during the reign of King Hezekiah, as described in the Bible in the Book of Kings II, 20: 20: "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made the Pool, and the conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of Chronicles of the kings of Judah?" Due to its location and importance, the Pool of Siloam was renovated and expanded some 2,000 years ago at the end of the Second Temple period. It is believed that the Pool was used during this time as a ritual bath ('mikveh') by millions of pilgrims who converged at the Pool of Siloam before ascending through the City of David to the Temple. For the first time in modern history, the excavation will enable the complete exposure of the Pool of Siloam, within the context of an official archeological excavation. In

the first stage, visitors will be able to observe the archaeological excavations, and in the coming months the Pool of Siloam will be opened for tourist access, as part of a route that will begin at the southernmost point of the City of David and culminate at the footsteps of the Western Wall.

12th Jerusalem Marathon Set for March 17; The International Jerusalem Winner Marathon will be held on Friday, March 17, 2023 for the 12th time, and will mark its “Bat Mitzvah” year with the participation of tens of thousands of runners from all over Israel and around the world. The Jerusalem Marathon is part of a distinguished list of international marathons and is considered one of the most beautiful and challenging in the world. The uniqueness of the marathon stems from a track that includes important and historical landmarks in Jerusalem, alongside spectacular and breathtaking views, among them: the Supreme Court of Israel, the Israel Museum, the President’s Residence, the walls of Jerusalem surrounding the Old City and the Armenian Quarter, the Tower of David, the Khan Theater and the Sultan’s Pool. The event is a celebration for the city of Jerusalem, when tens of thousands of visitors visit the city and the local businesses during the marathon weekend, with local businesses and hotels offering discounts, special travel packages, and more. Not only a sports event, the Jerusalem Marathon is considered a special social and community happening, in which dozens of associations take part in the community race (0.8 km), such as Chaiyanu, Isha L’Isha (Woman to Woman), Shalva, Runners Without Borders, Bat Melech, Keren Gefen and Home Base. The runners registered for the marathon will receive a package including; an official SAUCONY Dri-FIT race shirt, a personal competition number, a disposable timing chip, as well as other benefits.



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