

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 6, 2023 (Nisan 15, 5783)***

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A golden menorah with seven branches and a bottle of Anointing Oil. The bottle has a label that reads "Anointing Oil" and features an image of a person. The items are set against a white background with a red dashed border.

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***70 Ambassadors Attend Israeli Passover Seder at the UN;*** On Tuesday, March 28, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan, in collaboration with Aish Global, hosted a mock Passover Seder in the United Nations with the participation of 70 Ambassadors from around the world. Traditional holiday foods were served; excerpts from the Haggadah were read, and the Ambassadors learned about the traditions and customs associated with the holiday. The event was initiated by Ambassador Erdan with the aim of strengthening the familiarity of Judaism and Jewish traditions and values among the Ambassadors. In his remarks, Ambassador Erdan said, "At the Seder, we are commanded to retell the Exodus as if we ourselves were slaves in Egypt and we ourselves were brought out by the hand of God. This is how the Exodus becomes a collective memory for every Jew around the globe. But even more than that, the Exodus – going from slavery to freedom – has become the universal theme of liberation for all people, Jews, and non-Jews alike." "It is not only the story of Jewish emancipation and nationhood; it is also the story of Jewish Statehood – the legitimate right of the Jewish

people coming home to the land that God promised us. Today, the Modern State of Israel is the continuation of that very same Exodus. And it is a story of great success."

***International Court of Justice Rejects Iran's Bid to Claim \$2 Billion Frozen by US;*** The International Court of Justice on Thursday, March 30, rejected the Iranian government's bid to free \$2 billion in Iranian bank assets which have been frozen by the US. US authorities have frozen the assets to be used as compensation for the victims of terrorist attacks which have been linked to Iran, including the 1983 Beirut Barracks Bombing, in which 241 American military personnel were killed. In a 10-5 ruling, the court justices determined that the International Criminal Court of Justice does not have jurisdiction over the case, and therefore cannot accept the Iranian government's appeal. In its 67-page decision, the court did find that some of the American government's moves to seize Iranian assets violate a 1955 treaty between the US and Iran, and the countries should negotiate between themselves for compensation for those seizures. Should they not reach an agreement on those issues, they could return to the Hague for another ruling. However, the court found that the terms of the same treaty prevent the court from having jurisdiction over the majority of the funds Iran sought to unfreeze, \$1.75 billion plus interest in bonds held in a Citibank account in New York, as the treaty does not extend to central banks and state holdings. The US welcomed the court's ruling. State Department acting legal adviser Rich Visek called the ruling "a major victory for the United States and victims of Iran's state-sponsored terrorism." "The court's decision today rejected the vast majority of Iran's case, including notably Iran's claims on behalf of Bank Markazi," Visek said.

***Iran Discusses Nuclear Talks, Defense with Russia;*** Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian arrived in Moscow last week for important meetings with Russian officials. Among the topics of discussion was the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Iran deal of 2015. Iran continues to say that it wants support for a return to the Iran deal, even as it enriches uranium above 80 percent and stockpiles the enriched uranium. Iran said that "Russia played an efficient role in the new round of the 4+1 talks in Vienna, which continued for a few months. Our Russian colleagues keep fulfilling their obligations related to returning the sides [to the negotiating table]."Iran is also seeking more work with Russia on the International North-South Transport Corridor, which means increased trade via the Caucasus. In general, this is about creating new networks to avoid the US and the West as sanctions grow on Iran. Iran also hopes that "Russia and Iran would agree on visa-free travel for individual tourists later this year. Currently, visa-free travel from Russia to Iran is possible only in groups."

***Israeli, Greek, Cypriot Foreign Ministers Meet to Discuss Iranian Terror in Europe;*** Foreign Minister Eli Cohen met with his Greek and Cypriot counterparts on Friday, March 31, in the Cypriot capital of Nicosia for trilateral discussions on international and regional developments including Russia's war on Ukraine and the growing threat of Iran's terror activity on European soil. The meeting came just three days after Greece, with help from the Mossad, foiled a suspected Iranian plot to attack Jewish and Israeli targets in Athens. The ministers also discussed boosting trilateral cooperation in areas like energy, environmental disaster management, security, and tourism. In their meeting, Cohen urged his colleagues to work towards designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a terrorist organization in the European Union, "especially in light of the Iranian attack that was thwarted this week in Greece against Israeli and Jewish targets," according to Foreign Ministry readout of the meeting. In his talks with Cyprus' Foreign Minister Dr. Konstantinos Kombos and Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, Cohen also pointed to the presence of Iranian drones in and around Ukraine, where Russia has been waging a war since February 2022 and making use of advanced, kamikaze drones manufactured in Iran that crash into civilian and military targets since last fall.

***Gallant Vows to Block Iran, Hezbollah in Syria after Alleged Israeli airstrikes;*** Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Sunday, April 2, warned Iran and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist group that Israel would not tolerate any efforts to harm the country or its citizens. The comments came after a series of airstrikes in Syria on Friday, March 31 that the Syrian government attributed to Israel and a warning from Iran over the attacks “The Zionist regime will undoubtedly receive a response to this crime.” Syria said five soldiers were injured and Iran claims that two IRGC soldiers died during the airstrikes. “We have tensions on all fronts,” Gallant said in a pre-Passover toast with soldiers in the Etzion Brigade in the West Bank, saying Iran was attempting to make inroads into the territory. “The Iranians are extending their outreach to Judea and Samaria and Gaza, and are attempting to entrench themselves in Syria and Lebanon,” Gallant said. “We will not allow the Iranians and Hezbollah to harm us. We have not allowed it in the past, we won’t allow it now, or anytime in the future.”

***Rashida Tlaib Blasted for False Claim of IDF Soldiers Attacking Arab Teen;*** Progressive Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), a member of the far-left Squad, faced a barrage of criticism on Twitter after falsely claiming in a tweet that a fight between Palestinian Arab youth in Jerusalem was really the "violent apartheid government of Israel" using the IDF to target Arabs. After being corrected by dozens of Twitter users, the anti-Israel Congress member partially deleted the tweet, with Twitter adding a message stating: “Readers added context they thought people might want to know. The context of this video is that the Israeli police were separating a fight among Palestinian teenagers at the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem.” Tlaib posted the tweet on Sunday after the pro-Palestinian NGO Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU) published a video showing a fight happening at the Damascus Gate during Ramadan observances, American media reported. Tlaib replied to IMEU’s tweet by charging that Israel was guilty of “apartheid” and alleging that Israeli soldiers were targeting "Palestinians celebrating the first day of the holy month of Ramadan in occupied Jerusalem." Dozens of Twitter users, including Jewish organizations and journalists, responded to Tlaib’s baseless claim by pointing out that she was not telling the truth.

***Spotify Removes Hateful Content that Incites Violence Against Jews;*** Music streaming platform Spotify has removed content that incites “hatred and violence against Jews and Israel” after pressure from a pro-Israel advocacy group. Songs taken off the service include “Arabic Katyusha,” “The Death of Israel” and “Udrub Udrub Tel Abib,” which incite violence against Jews using anti-Semitic lyrics, Jewish media reported. The song’s hateful language includes the lyrics: “Strike a blow at Tel Aviv and frighten the Zionists. The more you build it the more we will destroy it”, “All we want is to strike Tel Aviv”, “Oh you settler, with your sidelocks, in your shelter you cower with fear”, “Strike, oh Qassam missile, do not let the Zionists sleep. Even if they beg for mercy – be sure not to show Tel Aviv any mercy”, and “Oh Fajr missile, explode in the Knesset and the army base.” The successful campaign to convince the streaming platform to remove the content was organized by the We Believe In Israel (WBII) Jewish advocacy organization. WBII’s campaign called for Spotify to take down “dozens of instances of problematic material,” including Lowkey’s “Long Live Palestine – Part 2 rap,” which includes references to having “globalized the intifada” and claims to have “studied the Torah and learnt by their own admission Israel’s actions are not kosher in their own religion.”

***New Israeli Tech: “Super Seaweed” Produces Natural Health Compounds, Medicine from the Sea;*** Researchers from Tel Aviv University and the Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research Institute (IOLR) have succeeded in significantly increasing the ability of seaweed to produce healthy natural materials. The current study focused on enhancing the production of bio-active compounds that offer medical benefits to humans, such as antioxidants, the concentration of which in the seaweed was doubled; natural sunscreens concentrations tripled; and unique protective pigments of great medical value that were stimulated substantially by ten-fold. The study was carried out with the innovative and sustainable approach of integrated aquaculture, which combines seaweed with fish cultivation. This

method benefits the seaweed while at the same time helping to purify the seawater and minimize negative environmental impacts. Using their cultivation approach, the researchers believe that in the future it will be possible to elevate additional natural materials in seaweed with important medical properties, such as anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, and antibiotic substances. Furthermore, the current methodology has the potential to be applied in the seaweed global aquaculture industry and can help promote the State of Israel as a leading power in seaweed biotechnology.

***Netanyahu Announced Freeze of Judicial Reforms: ‘We Must Not Have a Civil War’;*** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered an address to the nation Monday evening, March 27, on the government's planned judicial reforms. "There is an extreme minority that is ready to tear our country into parts. It tends towards violence. It ignites fire. It threatens to harm elected officials. It talks about civil war. And it calls for insubordination, which is a terrible crime," Netanyahu said. "The State of Israel cannot exist without the IDF, and the IDF cannot exist with insubordination. Insubordination by one side will bring about insubordination on the other side. Insubordination is the end of our state. Therefore I demand that our security forces and the IDF's commanders oppose the phenomenon of insubordination. Not to contain it, not to understand it. To stop it," he said. "For three months, I have called for dialogue. I also said that I would leave no stone unturned in order to reach a solution. Because I remember, we remember, that we are not facing enemies: we are facing our brothers. I say here and now: we must not have a civil war. "We are now on a path towards a very dangerous collision in Israeli society, which jeopardizes the basic unity between us, and such a crisis obligates all of us to act responsibly.”

***PM, Ben-Gvir Agree: Judicial Reform Legislation to Be Frozen Until Summer Session;*** Ben-Gvir has said in regard to the judicial reform legislation: "I agreed to remove my veto on the postponement of the legislation, in exchange for a commitment from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the legislation will be brought to the Knesset for approval in the next session, if no agreements are reached during the recess." At the same time, Netanyahu and Ben-Gvir have agreed that as a step to keep the peace in Israeli cities, the establishment of a National Guard under the auspices of the National Security Ministry will be approved at the next cabinet meeting. The announcements come as tens of thousands of right-wing Israelis are converging on the Knesset from across the country to demonstrate in favor of the judicial reforms, and to demand that the government not freeze the legislation. Prime Minister Netanyahu had reportedly planned to give a public address Monday morning, March 27, announcing the freezing of the judicial reform legislation, however, he decided to hold off on making a public statement after the Religious Zionist party issued a statement demanding the immediate passage of legislation altering the Judicial Selection Committee.

***Biden: Israel Can't Continue This Way, Netanyahu Won't Be Invited to White House;*** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won't be invited to the White House in the "near term," US President Joe Biden told reporters on Tuesday, March 28, as he urged Israel to drop its judicial reform plan. "I hope he [Netanyahu] walks away from it," Biden said as he issued his most clear objections to date over Israel's judicial overhaul process. "Like many strong supporters of Israel, I am very concerned. I am concerned that they get this straight. They cannot continue down this road. I have sort of made that clear," Biden said. "Hopefully the prime minister will act in a way that he will try to work out some genuine compromise, but that remains to be seen." When asked if he would invite Netanyahu to the White House, Biden quickly replied, "no, not in the near term." In a very public dispute that followed, Netanyahu said in response, "I have known President Biden for over 40 years and I appreciate his longstanding commitment to Israel. The alliance between Israel and the United States is unbreakable and always overcomes the occasional differences between us.”

***Two Arrested in Alleged Iranian Plot to Attack Israelis, Jews in Athens;*** Greek police arrested two Pakistani nationals Tuesday, March 28, who were allegedly planning mass-casualty terrorist attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in the country. Israel's Mossad spy agency, which aided the Greek investigation, said in a statement that the two were part of an Iranian terror network. The two suspects, aged 27 and 29, both entered Greece illegally from neighboring Turkey and had been in the country for at least four months. A third man, who is not in Greece, was wanted for questioning and charged in absentia. A government official told American media that one of the targets was a Jewish restaurant in central Athens. Reports indicated that the target was a Chabad House, which includes a kosher restaurant and also hosts other religious services. In a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, Mossad said it had helped Athens in the "grave affair," including uncovering links to Iran. "After the investigation of the suspects began in Greece, Mossad assisted in unraveling intelligence of the infrastructure, the methods of operation, and the connection to Iran," the spy agency said.

***Where Is the Next Iranian Threat Coming from for Israel? – Interview;*** Israel is facing multiple emerging threats, as well as the potential for Iran to shift support from Yemen to other fronts, as it positions itself for its latest challenge to Israel in the region. These are among the issues that Jonathan Schanzer, senior vice president for research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, focused on during a discussion this week with Israeli media about the region and threats to Israel. Schanzer has been meeting with officials and experts and is looking at some of the broader trends that are impacting the region. This is important because Israel is engaged in a continuous struggle against Iran's threats, and changes in the region could be pushing those issues to the foreground in different areas. One area of interest is the "war between the wars" campaign, also called after its Hebrew acronym "mabam." This is a conflict that is hard to define, but it basically boils down to Israel's operations against Iran in Syria and other places during the last decade. This is an undeclared war with unclear frontlines. "There are two main schools of thought; one is that it is focused on Syria and the other is that it includes Syria and cyber and assassinations, Iran and maritime incidents." This is what former Prime Minister Naftali Bennett called the "Octopus doctrine," which means Israel is engaged in fighting many tentacles of the Iranian threat. For instance, Palestinian Islamic Jihad could be seen as one part of the octopus, and Hezbollah as another part.

***Patriots Owner Robert Kraft Launches Campaign to Raise Awareness of Anti-Semitism;*** New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft faced the camera during a video call, pointing to a small, sky-blue lapel pin on his blazer. The pin is the symbol of a \$25 million "Stand Up to Jewish Hate" campaign launched Monday, March 27, by the 81-year-old billionaire through his Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, aiming to raise awareness nationwide about soaring incidents of antisemitism online and in person. "This little blue square represents the Jewish population in the United States – 2.4 percent," said Kraft, who was raised in Brookline, Massachusetts, in an observant Orthodox Jewish family. "But we're the victims of 55% of the hate crimes in this country." The campaign will feature emotive ads to be introduced by stars of top television shows. The ads are intended to tug at the heartstrings of non-Jewish Americans, said Matthew Berger, the foundation's executive director. One of the ads shows a non-Jewish neighbor painting over a garage door vandalized with the Nazi swastika and the words "No Jews," concluding with the message: "Hate only wins if you let it." Another ad focuses on online hate: A Jewish teen is shown crestfallen as he is trolled after posting a video of his bar mitzvah. Soon after, he sees a Harlem choir tag him with their version of his worship song. He sings along with the choir as these words pop up on the screen: "Voices of support are louder than words of hate."

***UK's BP Teams up with Abu Dhabi State Oil Group to Buy 50% of Israel's NewMed Energy;*** British multinational oil and gas firm BP plc and Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (Adnoc) on Tuesday, March 28, announced a joint bid to buy 50% of Israel's NewMed Energy in a deal valued at about \$2 billion. As part of the non-binding offer, the two energy firms will buy 45% of the free-floating shares the public

holds in NewMed Energy, formerly Delek Drilling (part of Yitzhak Tshuva's Delek Group), and about 5% of Delek Group's stake to take the Israeli offshore natural gas producer private. Shares in NewMed jumped almost 30% in early afternoon trading in Tel Aviv. The deal would give BP and Adnoc, the United Arab Emirates state-owned oil company, a foothold in Israel's offshore natural gas fields and its growing energy export markets to pursue projects in the eastern Mediterranean. Israel's natural gas discoveries and operations in recent years have put the country on a path to energy independence and turned it into a gas exporter, while largely shielding it from the worst of the energy crisis sparked by the Russian war on Ukraine this year, in a region with few natural resources. Currently, a maximum capacity of 12 billion cubic meters per year is piped up from the Leviathan reservoir for the supply and sale of gas to Israel, Egypt, and Jordan.

***Hebrew University Researchers Discover How Pancreatic Cancer Spreads Through Body;*** Researchers have known for some time about the DNA mutations that lead healthy pancreatic cells to turn cancerous. What was not understood is how pancreatic cancer cells metastasize and invade other organs. On March 22, a peer-reviewed journal published a new study led by Israeli researchers at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem that explains the mechanism for metastasis. The study was led by doctoral candidate Amina Jbara of the department of biochemistry and molecular biology and a member of Prof. Rotem Karni's lab. Colleagues from Sheba Medical Center and Bar-Ilan University, Cornell University, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in the United States, and the University of Toronto in Canada were also involved. The research concluded that the spread of pancreatic cancer throughout the body is due to changes to the composition of the initial tumors' RNA molecules, which translate instructions from DNA for protein synthesis in cells. The good news is that at least one drug already exists that could potentially address the problems with the RNA and eventually help pancreatic cancer patients. The drug is called azathioprine (brand name Imuran), and it is approved for use as an immunosuppressant for organ transplant patients.



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