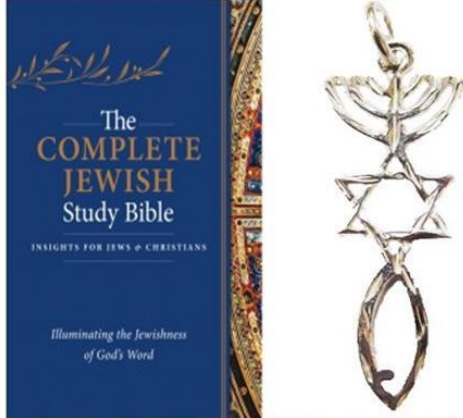


Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update May 18, 2023 (Iyar 27, 5783)

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The image shows two items: on the left, the cover of 'The Complete Jewish Study Bible' with the subtitle 'INSIGHTS FOR JEWS & CHRISTIANS' and the tagline 'Illuminating the Jewishness of God's Word'; on the right, a silver menorah pendant.

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Over 1,200 Rockets Fired at Israel; The IDF released updated statistics Thursday, May 11, stating that 803 rockets had been fired at Israel as of 8 pm by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization since the beginning of Operation Shield and Arrow. Later, it was reported that as of Saturday, May 13, at 4 p.m., 1,234 rockets were fired at Israel in total, 976 of which made it into Israeli territory. Thursday evening one person was killed and five people were injured when a rocket struck a residential building in the city of Rehovot. Also, red alert sirens were activated in the cities of Rishon Lezion, Holon, and Bat Yam in central Israel, however, the Iron Dome system intercepted the rockets fired at these cities, and there was no damage. The IDF further stated that 620 rockets crossed into Israeli airspace on Thursday, while 152 rockets fell short in Gaza. 179 rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems. Since the beginning of Operation Shield and Arrow, 108 rocket launches by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization from the Gaza Strip toward Israel failed and fell short, exploding inside the Gaza Strip itself. Four uninvolved Gazan civilians, including a 10-year-old girl - Lynn Balal Ubed Elsalam Loch, Yazen Juda Alian, aged 16, Varami Shadi Hamdan, also aged 16, and Muhammad al-Shabaki, aged 51 from Beit Hanoun, have been killed inside the Gaza Strip as a result of failed rocket launches by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization, sources said. (INN / VFI News)

Israeli Airstrike in Gaza Kills Commander of Islamic Jihad's Rocket Forces; An Israeli airstrike in Gaza killed a Palestinian Islamic Jihad military commander early Thursday morning, May 11, dealing another blow to the terror group in the latest round of hostilities. The predawn airstrike in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis killed Ali Ghali, the commander of Islamic Jihad's rocket forces, the Israel Defense Forces said in a statement. Ghali was hiding in a safe house at the time of the strike along with

two other Islamic Jihad operatives who were also killed, the IDF said. “Ghali was responsible for directing and carrying out rocket fire at Israeli territory, including the recent barrages during Operation Shield and Arrow,” the IDF said. “The strike was carried out thanks to successful intelligence, the identification of the hideout apartment, one floor where the operatives were struck — this was a very precise attack by the Air Force,” IDF spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told reporters on Thursday morning. Islamic Jihad confirmed Ghali’s death after the IDF’s early morning announcement. “Ali Ghali... commander of the rocket launch unit... was assassinated in the south of the Gaza Strip along with other martyrs,” read a statement from the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed branch of the group. The IDF said that it had struck 191 sites belonging to the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization in Gaza in response to the continued rocket fire. (TOI/VFI News)

Israel, PIJ Terror Group Reach Fragile Truce after Five Days of War; Israel and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist group reached a ceasefire deal on Saturday night, May 13, after five days of violence. National Security Council (NSC) director Tzachi Hanegbi, on instruction from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, thanked Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and expressed the appreciation of the State of Israel for Egypt’s intensive efforts to secure a ceasefire,” said a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office in Jerusalem. “The NSC director made it clear that Israel’s acceptance of the Egyptian initiative means that ‘quiet will be met with quiet’, and that if Israel is attacked or threatened, it will continue to do everything that it needs to in order to defend itself,” added the statement. Tensions erupted on Tuesday morning, with the IDF’s targeted killing of three top PIJ members in the Gaza Strip. The IDF identified the targets as Khalil Bahitini, PIJ’s commander in northern Gaza; Jahed Ahnam, a senior member of the terror group’s “military” council; and Tarek Azaldin, who directed its activities in Judea and Samaria. On Thursday afternoon the Israel Air Force killed Ahmed Abu-Deka, a senior member of the PIJ rocket launching force. On Friday, an Israeli airstrike killed Iyad al-Hassani, the “most senior” Palestinian Islamic Jihad figure in the Strip. Israeli Inga Avramyan, 80, was killed when a rocket fired from Gaza struck a four-story building in Rehovot, 12 miles south of Tel Aviv on Thursday evening. It was the only Israeli fatality during “Operation Shield and Arrow.” (I365N / VFI News)

Netanyahu: Our Operation against Islamic Jihad Was 'Perfect'; Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu touted the recently completed Operation Shield and Arrow against Islamic Jihad terrorists in the Gaza Strip as being “perfect” in its execution, claiming the operation surprised the terrorist organization. Speaking at the weekly cabinet meeting Sunday, May 14, Netanyahu lauded Israeli security forces for the operation, which led to the elimination of six top Islamic Jihad terrorists and dozens of other members of the organization. “Last night, we successfully concluded five days of fighting against the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization. Before starting the operation, the directive I gave, together with the Defense Minister, to the IDF and ISA amounted to two words: 'Initiative' and 'Surprise.'” “I congratulated the IDF Chief-of-Staff and the Director of the ISA yesterday also with two words: 'Well done.' Indeed, the operation was perfect. With complete surprise and continuous initiative, we targeted the entire Islamic Jihad leadership in Gaza. We destroyed 17 Jihad command centers. We eliminated dozens of terrorists. We hit rocket and missile arsenals, took out anti-tank units, etc.” “For two months, since the establishment of the government, I have reiterated: Whoever harms us or even tries to harm us – will pay the price. Today, the enemies of Israel in Gaza and far beyond Gaza, know that even if they try to hide, we can, and we will, always reach them. This awareness was significantly strengthened during Operation Shield and Arrow. We changed the equation.”

Report: Islamic Jihad Using Facebook Bots to Hack Israelis' Phones; Over the weekend, the Digital Research Division of the Im Tirtzu Zionist activist group monitored several profiles suspected of being operated by the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization and other suspicious profiles working to hack into the phones and computers of Israeli citizens by distributing malicious links. The activity was first

identified in social media groups of residents of southern Israel and was later reported in groups affiliated with the national camp, current affairs groups, and more. Some profiles have been running for years and boast thousands of followers. Dov Trachtman, Head of Digital Research, said: "This is a particularly disturbing phenomenon. Trying to lure citizens into malicious links posing as lottery sites, vacation booking sites, sites for watching free sports, and especially dating sites." "This has several purposes: First, access to personal information and access to bank accounts, social networks, or classified and sensitive information if soldiers or officials are involved. It is also possible that by operating cameras and microphones remotely, they will try to degrade people or even blackmail them into performing various actions." "The recommendation is to always be suspicious of links from strangers, no matter if they have 100 friends or 15,000 followers. Keep antivirus software intact and, of course, report and warn others about any suspicious activity." (INN /VFI News)

US National Security Advisor: Israel Has the Right to Defend Itself from Rocket Attacks; US President Joe Biden's National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, spoke on Wednesday, May 10, with National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi to discuss the conflict in Gaza. A statement from the White House following the call said that "Sullivan reaffirmed the Administration's ironclad support for Israel's security, as well as its right to defend its people from indiscriminate rocket attacks." "Sullivan also noted continued regional efforts to broker a ceasefire, and emphasized the need to deescalate tensions and prevent further loss of life," the statement added. Later in the day, US Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a statement voicing support for Israeli strikes in Gaza, in which top Islamic Jihad terrorists were eliminated. Former US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, who is seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, also expressed support for Israel as it came under attack. "Israel is defending itself the same way America would defend ourselves if someone was shooting missiles at us," tweeted Haley. "We will always have the backs of our friends," she stressed. (INN / VFI News)

Europe-funded NGO Supports 'Armed Struggle' against Israel; An NGO funded by the European Union and others has affirmed its support for an "armed struggle" against Israel. In a statement released Saturday night, May 13, the Gaza-based Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) said it "affirms the right of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation by all available means, including armed struggle, all the way to achieve their legitimate rights, end the occupation and establish their independent state." The Swiss government approved a \$380,000 grant to PCHR for the years 2021-2024, requiring the NGO to sign a contract committing to "refrain from incitement to violence or hatred." The EU granted €475,000 to PCHR in 2022 for "promoting and protecting human rights." The NGO, however, said, "Starting in 2020, PCHR will employ all its resources and energy in this trajectory," referring to the International Criminal Court's investigation of Israel for alleged war crimes. In addition, the government of Ireland approved an €81,000 grant to PCHR in 2021, while the government of Norway gave \$680,000 to PCHR in 2019-2021. NGO Monitor vice president Olga Deutsch said: "PCHR is known for its biased positions on Israel. They have long maintained close ties to the terror group PFLP, and have been one of the leading voices working to criminalize Israel at the International Criminal Court in The Hague." "This latest statement takes their activities outside the realm of political discourse, and openly incites to violence against Jews, and justifies terror," she added. "The EU itself rules out any support for organizations [that] incite to violence, and we hope Brussels and other EU member states will act swiftly to cut their financial support to PCHR." (JPost / VFI News)

Israeli Study Reveals Molecular Basis for Female Alzheimer's Patients' Rapid Decline; More than 55 million people worldwide are living with dementia, and 60-80% have Alzheimer's disease. Twice as many women as men have the disease, with one reason being that women live longer. Women with Alzheimer's often experience negative side effects from drugs currently used to treat the disease, because

they were developed using male animals and tested primarily on men. Israeli research combining molecular and computational neuroscience has uncovered a molecular basis for why women living with Alzheimer's disease experience more rapid cognitive deterioration than men. A study, led by Prof. Hermona Soreq and Prof. Yonatan Loewenstein of the Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, points to a correlation between this accelerated cognitive decline and depletion of mitochondrial RNA fragments in the nucleus accumbens part of the brain. Soreq looked at brain functions regulated by acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that plays a role in memory, learning, attention, arousal, and involuntary muscle movement. Alzheimer's is one of several medical conditions associated with low levels of acetylcholine, or the malfunctioning of the cholinergic pathway. "We bumped into the difference between men and women four years ago when we explored the differences in the pathway for acetylcholine in patients with mental disease and found massive differences between men and women," Soreq said. Soreq also told Israeli media that the study's findings, together with other advances in RNA research and therapeutics, could lead to better treatments for women living with Alzheimer's. With no known cure for the disease, the aim would be to significantly slow down its progression. (TOI /VFI News)

Gaza Factions: We Fired Hundreds of Rockets at Israel; A group consisting of various Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), claimed responsibility for Wednesday's rocket attacks against Israel. At least 270 rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip toward Israel on Wednesday, May 10. The group, called the Joint Room of the Palestinian Resistance Factions, said the rockets fired at Israel came in response to the assassination of three senior PIJ officials in Israeli airstrikes on Tuesday. Another 10 Palestinians, including women and children, were killed in the airstrikes. "With the help and power of God Almighty, the Joint Room of the Palestinian Resistance Factions announces the implementation of Operation Revenge of the Free, which consisted of directing a large missile strike with hundreds of missiles on the enemy's sites, settlements and targets," the group said in a statement hours after the first rockets were fired into Israel. The group warned that "targeting civilian homes, assaulting our people, and assassinating our men and heroes is a red line that will be confronted with all force." Sources in the Gaza Strip said the rocket attacks were carried out in coordination between Hamas and PIJ. According to the sources, Hamas did not want to claim responsibility alone for the attacks but preferred to do so through the group representing several factions. "Hamas wants to make it appear as if the decision to fire the rockets was taken by a number of factions, and not one group," the sources said. The Israeli Air Force's David's Sling missile system successfully shot down a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip toward Israel's Gush Dan region for the first time since its introduction to the IDF's arsenal, according to Israeli reports. (JPost / VFI News)

Gaza Ceasefire Between Islamic Jihad, Israel Likely Reached; Islamic Jihad has reached out through neutral third parties to seek a possible ceasefire on Wednesday evening, Israeli media confirmed from defense sources late Wednesday, May 10. The ceasefire is expected to go into effect at 9:00 p.m. local time on Wednesday night. Foreign Minister Eli Cohen confirmed that a ceasefire proposal was sent by Egypt and is under consideration by the defense establishment. Previously, there were unconfirmed reports in Arab media that Egypt, Qatar, and the UN were making progress with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh, as well as with Islamic Jihad's remaining senior officials. Palestinian sources told various Egyptian media that a ceasefire is likely to come into effect by Wednesday evening after an agreement was reached between PIJ and Israel following mediation by Cairo. An Israeli source further told media that Islamic Jihad pushed on the Egyptians to conclude ceasefire negotiations after failing to record an achievement from the recent round of rocket barrages aimed at southern and central Israel. (JPost/VFI News)

Operation "Shield and Arrow": IDF Eliminates Three Senior Islamic Jihad Terrorists; The IDF overnight Monday, May 8, announced the beginning of Operation Shield and Arrow, as part of which the IDF and Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) targeted the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization's Northern Gaza Division Commanding Officer; a senior operative and coordinator of terrorism in Judea and Samaria from Gaza; and the Secretary of the Military Council. One of the terrorists who were eliminated is Khalil Bahitini, responsible for the rocket fire toward Israel in the past month. Bahitini was the senior operational officer of Islamic Jihad, the commander of the Northern Gaza Division, and had direct and active contact with senior members of the Islamic Jihad's Political Bureau. The second senior Islamic Jihad terrorist to be eliminated was Tarek Az Aldin, who directed Islamic Jihad operations in Judea and Samaria from Gaza. Recently, he was planning and directing multiple attacks against Israeli civilians. Also eliminated was Jahed Ahnam, Secretary of Cooperation for the terrorist organization in Gaza. Ahnam, 62, resided in Rafiah, was one of the most senior members of the organization. In his last position, he was entrusted with coordinating weapons and money transfers between the Hamas terrorist organization and the Islamic Jihad. Furthermore, the IDF targeted additional terrorist targets belonging to the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization. Meanwhile, the Home Front Command instructed residents of the communities near the border with the Gaza Strip to remain in the vicinity of shelters until further notice. (INN / VFI News)

Minister Israel Katz Warns: If Hamas Joins the Firing, We Will Target Their Leaders; Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Israel Katz on Tuesday, May 9, issued a warning to the Hamas terrorist organization against joining in the firing on Israel following the elimination of senior members of the Islamic Jihad. "There is a clear message here to Hamas - if you join in the violence and the firing, [Yahya] Sinwar and [Mohammed] Deif, they will be the first targets we will work to eliminate," Katz told Israeli media. "[Monday night's elimination of Islamic Jihad leaders] was an exceptional action carried out by the defense establishment and the IDF with the backing of the Shin Bet." "The decision was made a week ago immediately after the rocket fire on Sderot. The target was completely clear and the defense establishment gathered the intelligence material and prepared for an operation," he continued. Katz added that "Our policy is very clear: we will not put up with harming Israeli citizens and we will not allow threats against them. If they try to harm us, they will be harmed much more severely." Likud MK Boaz Bismuth also told Israeli media that the elimination of the three terrorists is not a new policy but something the IDF has done in the past. "For terrorist organizations there, they don't need any excuse in order to try and kill us and to erase us from the Middle East and of course from our country, from our beloved Israel, so the timing, it's not we who choose it. It's their ideology that chooses the timing." (INN / VFI News)

Netanyahu: Any Escalation Will Be Met With a Crushing Response; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a press conference Tuesday evening, May 9, together with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, and Shin Bet chief Ronan Bar at the end of the cabinet meeting that dealt with Operation Shield and Arrow. "This morning, the State of Israel carried out a decisive and justified action. In Operation Shield and Arrow, the IDF eliminated the senior leaders of the Islamic Jihad in Gaza. They are responsible for launching the rockets last week and directing many terrorist operations in Judea and Samaria," Netanyahu began. He added, "In addition to this, we attacked the central terrorist infrastructure of Islamic Jihad in Gaza. I am speaking first and foremost about the destruction of weapons factories, ammunition, and rockets. Already a week ago, against the background of the missile attack on the Gaza periphery communities, I, together with the Minister of Defense, ordered our forces to strike the leaders of the terrorists who were responsible for the shooting." "I understand very well the desire to immediately harm those who harm us, it is understandable and natural. But it has already been said that 'For by wise counsel shall you make war.' And this is how we act, we will always act against those who seek to take our lives, and we do it on our own terms - at a time and place of our choosing." "Countermeasures became possible after a brilliant intelligence effort. We reached them at the same time in their hiding places. We make every effort to avoid harming the uninvolved. This is precisely the

difference between us and our enemy, they seek to harm the innocent first on purpose, while we do everything to prevent this." "While we deplore any harm to civilians, they celebrate any harm to small children, women, and men who have no part in the war effort. Our principle is clear, whoever harms us, we harm him." Netanyahu said. (INN / VFI News)

Leaked US Intel Files: Iran Smuggling Weapons Hidden in Earthquake Relief to Syria; Iran and allied proxy groups have been smuggling weapons into Syria concealed within aid shipments sent in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake earlier this year, American media reported Sunday, May 7. The media outlet cited a classified US intelligence assessment that was shared on the online messaging platform Discord, where other sensitive American government documents have recently circulated. A suspect accused of leaking the files was charged last month. According to the report, many of the weapons — among them small arms, ammunition, and drones — were brought in convoys from Iraq organized by Iran-backed militias there along with the Quds Force, the unit in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps tasked with overseas operations. The intelligence file indicated that Iran moved to swiftly exploit the February 7 earthquake, which killed tens of thousands in Syria and neighboring Turkey, as a day later an unspecified Iraqi militia group “allegedly orchestrated the transfer of rifles, ammunition and 30 [drones] hidden in aid convoys to support future attacks on US forces in Syria.” It added that days later, a Quds Force officer told another Iraqi paramilitary to hide weapons “within legitimate earthquake aid.” Another Iranian officer was quoted saying that he had a list of “hundreds” of transport vehicles that crossed into Syria from Iraq since the earthquake. (TOI / VFI News)

Israel Hands over Jordanian MP Who Allegedly Smuggled 200 Guns into West Bank; A Jordanian parliamentarian arrested by Israeli authorities last month for attempting to smuggle over 200 firearms into the West Bank was released on Sunday, May 7, to face trial back home. The Shin Bet security agency said MP Imad al-Adwan, detained at the Allenby Bridge border crossing on April 22, was handed over to Jordanian authorities for “further investigation and prosecution.” Al-Adwan was caught with 194 handguns and 12 assault rifles at the Allenby crossing as he was heading into the West Bank by car. According to the Shin Bet investigation, al-Adwan had smuggled various types of contraband into the West Bank 12 times starting in February 2022. The illegal goods included birds, electronic cigarettes, and gold. This year, al-Adwan smuggled firearms into Israel several times before being caught in April. Al-Adwan was released to Jordanian authorities on Sunday despite Israel and Jordan not having an extradition agreement. His parliamentary immunity was lifted, according to Jordanian media, enabling him to stand trial. Jordanian authorities also detained several suspects in Jordan who were involved in the smuggling, the Shin Bet said. Israel tried to avoid placing responsibility for the alleged smuggling attempt directly on Amman. “I don’t think that the episode is connected to Jordan in general, but to an irresponsible criminal act. I don’t want to assign guilt to the entire government or the entire parliament” said Foreign Minister Eli Cohen last month in an interview (TOI / VFI News)

Texas Mall Shooter Had Swastika, SS tattoos, Online Posts Show; The man accused of killing eight people and wounding several others in a mass shooting at a suburban Dallas shopping mall researched when it was busiest and posted photos on social media in mid-April of a store near where he ultimately started his attack. The posts by Mauricio Garcia on a Russian social networking site suggest the 33-year-old had been planning the attack for weeks before he stepped out of a silver sedan and opened fire Saturday, May 6. Among the dead were two elementary school-age sisters, a couple and their 3-year-old son, and a security guard. Garcia’s online activity also betrayed a fascination with white supremacy and mass shootings, which he described as a sport. Photos he posted showed large Nazi tattoos on his arm and torso, including a swastika and the SS lightning bolt logo of Hitler’s paramilitary forces. Other posts indicated Garcia had researched when the Allen Premium Outlets in Allen, one of the Dallas area’s most diverse suburbs, would be the busiest — Saturday afternoons, the time he carried out the massacre, which

ended when police shot and killed him. The online activity contributed to an emerging picture of the gunman Monday. He was discharged from the Army in 2008 because of mental health issues and apparently had been working as a security guard, according to neighbors and an Army official. (TOI / VFI News)



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