



☆ BAT KOL NEWS ☆

מאי ססמגור? אמר רבי אבא: בת קול.

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Former Obama Strategist Advising Anti-Netanyahu Campaign in Israel

Source: HAARETZ-1/27/2015



Netanyahu, Obama and Bird

Just days after the Obama White House accused House Speaker John Boehner of “breaking protocol” by inviting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress, a team of up to five Obama campaign operatives has reportedly arrived in Israel to lead a campaign to defeat the Israeli Prime Minister in upcoming national elections scheduled for March 17. The anti-Netanyahu, left wing Israeli newspaper Haaretz reports a group called “One Voice,” reportedly funded by American donors, is paying for the Obama campaign team. That group is reportedly being led by Obama’s 2012 field director Jeremy Bird. He most recently served as the National Field Director for the 2012 re-election campaign of President Barack Obama, where he had primary responsibility for building a nationwide army of staff and volunteer organizers. Dubbed the campaign’s “Field General” by Rolling Stone magazine, Jeremy was listed among “The Obama Campaign’s Real Heroes” and has been cited as “a former Harvard divinity student who took to political organizing as though it were his higher calling.” For all the harsh accusations of foreign interference currently being leveled against GOP Speaker John Boehner, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer, reports of Obama operatives actively working to unseat a democratically elected leader of a strong U.S. ally is hardly the news it might appear to be. The Obama White House has aggressively worked to defeat allied leaders it has not liked and to elect or re-elect foreign leaders it does like. As the Times of Israel recently reported, the list of Obama Administration meddling in foreign elections is a long one. Netanyahu, who is up for re-election on March 17, has a famously bitter relationship with Obama, which most recently came to a boil last week when the White House said it would not host the Israeli leader for a meeting when speaks to a joint session of Congress in early March. The White House said there would be no meeting because it does not want to be seen as influencing the Israeli election. Despite his own activities in Israel, Bird last week took to Twitter to disparage billionaire Republican donor and Netanyahu supporter Sheldon Adelson for trying to sway Israeli voters

What Jewish ethics tell us about Deflategate

Source: JTA-1/27/2015

(JTA) - Deflategate, the controversy surrounding the New England Patriots that has made national news, made its way to a Houston business conference led by a rabbi. Rabbi Yossi Grossman, dean of the Jewish Ethics Institute, on Monday transformed the football prattle into a high-minded look at ethics on the playing field in his bimonthly talk before some city businesspeople. To make his points, he cited the Exodus story, Talmud, the rabbinic authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, the Code of Jewish Law and prohibitions against theft of money and of mind. Theft of mind means presenting one’s credentials misleadingly, to the presenter’s benefit, Grossman said. “The question is, who was actually committing fraud here? Was it the quarterback, the coach, the owner?” Grossman asked. The Talmud’s prohibition on “misrepresenting” oneself is a bit tricky in sports, though. If New England created an unfair advantage to reach the Super Bowl and then proceeds to defeat Seattle, its punishment could be a championship tainted in many sports fans’ eyes, Grossman said. Scott Asarch, a student, told Grossman at their Monday’s Talmud study session that the Patriots – who have a Jewish owner, Robert Kraft – did not violate NFL rules because the balls’ air pressure fell within league guidelines. “As a fan, I don’t have a problem with gaining a competitive advantage without breaking the rules,” Asarch said later.

Beshalach

Exodus 13:17-17:16

Soon after allowing the children of Israel to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh’s armies and the sea. G-d tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the sea splits to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then closes over the pursuing Egyptians. Moses and the children of Israel sing a song of praise and gratitude to G-d. In the desert the people suffer thirst and hunger, and repeatedly complain to Moses and Aaron. G-d miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth water from a rock by striking it with his staff. He causes manna to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and quails to appear in the Israelite camp each evening. The children of Israel are instructed to gather a double portion of manna on Friday, as none will descend on Shabbat, the divinely decreed day of rest. Some disobey and go to gather manna on the seventh day, but find nothing. Aaron preserves a small quantity of manna in a jar, as a testimony for future generations. In Rephidim, the people are attacked by the Amalekites, who are defeated by Moses’ prayers and an army raised by Joshua.



The waters close over the pursuing Egyptians

Beshalach Haftarah

Judges 4:4-5:31.

This week’s haftarah describes the fall of the Canaanite general Sisera and his armies, who were swept away by the Kishon River, and Deborah’s ensuing song of thanks. This parallels this week’s Torah portion which discusses the drowning of the Egyptian forces in the Red Sea and the subsequent songs led by Moses and Miriam. Deborah the Prophetess was the leader and judge of the Israelites at a difficult time; the Israelites were being persecuted by King Jabin of Canaan and his general Sisera. Deborah summoned Barak son of Abinoam and transmitted to him G-d’s instruction: “Go and gather your men toward Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun. And I shall draw to you, to the brook Kishon, Sisera, the chieftain of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will give him into your hand.” At Barak’s request, Deborah accompanied him, and together they led the offensive. Sisera was informed of the Israelites’ mobilization and he gathered his forces and proceeded towards the Kishon River. Barak’s army below and the heavens above waged battle against the Canaanites and utterly destroyed them. The river washed them all away; not one of the enemy survived. The defeated general fled on foot and arrived at the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite. She invited him in and offered to hide him. When he fell asleep, Jael took a tent-peg and knocked it through Sisera’s temple. The next chapter of the haftarah is the Song of Deborah, which describes the miraculous victory and thanks the One Above for His assistance.

Iran sanctions bill advances

Source: JTA-1/29/2015

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A key Senate committee advanced new Iran sanctions.

The Senate Banking Committee on Thursday voted 18-4 to advance a bill authored by Sens. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) to the full Senate, although a number of the lawmakers who approved noted that the measure would not be considered by the body until March 24 at the earliest. Menendez has said that Democrats will delay voting on the bill until then to give time for the talks between the major world powers, including the United States, and Iran on swapping sanctions relief for guarantees that Iran is not advancing toward a nuclear weapon. March 24 is the deadline for a framework of an agreement; June 30 is the deadline for the final deal. The Obama administration opposes new sanctions now, saying that their passage would unravel the talks. The bill adds new sanctions that would trigger if the talks fail or Iran reneges. A number of amendments that would weaken presidential discretion on implementing the sanctions failed. A freshman senator on the panel, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), said he believed the talks should stop because he believes Iran is untrustworthy and President Barack Obama is mishandling the negotiations. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which backs the bill, praised its advance. "The Kirk-Menendez legislation will increase the prospects for successful negotiations by making it clear to Iran that it will again face steep economic pressure if it stalls or fails to make the compromises needed to reach a deal," AIPAC said in a statement.

2 soldiers dead, 7 wounded as Hezbollah hits Israeli tank

Source: JTA-1/28/2015

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Two Israeli soldiers were killed and seven were wounded when a Hezbollah anti-tank missile struck an Israeli patrol on the Israel-Lebanon border. Wednesday's attack by the Lebanese terrorist group included shelling of Israeli army positions in Israel's North, according to Israeli reports. In response, the Israel Defense Forces hit southern Lebanon with artillery strikes, killing a Spanish soldier serving in UNIFIL, the United Nations peacekeeping force. The Hezbollah attack came hours after the IDF struck a Syrian artillery post controlled by Syrian President Bashar Assad, scoring direct hits. The strikes were in response to two rockets that hit the Golan Heights on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, according to Israeli reports, the IDF was searching for tunnels under its northern border dug by Hezbollah. Destroying a network of tunnels under the Israeli border with Gaza was one of the Israeli military's main objectives last year in its war with Hamas.

Hungary's Orban acknowledges country's complicity in Holocaust

Source: JTA-1/26/2015



BUDAPEST (JTA) — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban apologized for Hungarians' role in deporting Jews to concentration camps, his first acknowledgement of Hungarian complicity in the Holocaust. In a speech Monday at a Jewish cemetery in Budapest, Orban called the Holocaust a "national tragedy" for Hungarians. "We were without love and indifferent, when we should have helped, and very many Hungarians chose bad instead of good, the shameful instead of the honorable," Orban said, according to the French news agency AFP. Orban also paid tribute to Jewish Hungarian soldiers who fought in World War I. "Without the sacrifices that Hungarian Jews made during the First World War, it would have been impossible to defend our homeland," Orban said Monday at a ceremony to mark the renovation of World War I-era graves in the Kozma Street Cemetery, the largest Jewish burial place in the Hungarian capital. Orban said hundreds of Jewish soldiers who fought in the war, from 1914 to 1918, were buried in the cemetery. The Hungarian government provided funding for the graves' recent renovation. Some Hungarian Jews criticized the timing of the event, one day before International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau. Half a million Hungarian Jews were killed at the concentration camp.

Yazidi militia makes public request for Israeli help

Source: JTA-1/29/2014

(JTA) — An official in a militia organized by Iraq's Yazidi minority has issued a public call for Israeli assistance. Lt. Col. Lukman Ibrahim, speaking to Al-Monitor, said the militia needs weapons and aid, and would like Israeli assistance so it can fight Islamic State, or ISIS. He said the Yazidis support Israel and fight similar enemies. Israel has yet to respond to the Yazidi request. The militia, with 12,000 members, was organized in August to defend against ISIS, which has persecuted and killed the minority since capturing Yazidi cities last year. Most of the fighters are untrained. "What happened to us is the biggest genocide since the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe," said Dr. Mirza Dinnay, a pediatrician, told Al-Monitor. "In the Holocaust, the goal was to annihilate an entire people, the Jews. IS has a similar plan — to exterminate an entire people, the Yazidis." It has been estimated that 23 million Yezidis have been killed by Moslems and their other self-proclaimed enemies during the past 700 years.

Influence of the Lamedvavniks

From: JEWISH STORIES by L. Grunfeld

Prologue:

36 Lamedvavniks figured in kabbalistic folk legend of the 16th-17th centuries and in hasidic lore from the end of the 18th century. At times of great peril, a lamedvavnik makes a dramatic appearance. Using hidden powers to effect the fate of the world, after which the Lamedvavnik returns mysteriously to obscurity.

CHAPTER #3- Chaos as Disguise

"What exactly do you think that Tikun 'repairing the world' really means Avram?" -challenged the rabbi.

"It is when everything that was broken, becomes fixed... whole again... understandable and sensible. The end of chaos. Or as we say in mathematics: resolved. At present, the world seems as though an insoluble equation exists... dividing the world into increasingly more complications... like one divided by infinity. A situation, in which the answer is indeterminate." -responded Avram.

The rabbi formulated his response, "And if the world were divided by no complications whatsoever... would the answer not also be the same? One divided by zero... also an irrational result. Because where there are no actions, there are no mitzvahs and consequently no purpose. The trick is to realize that the equation can be stabilized by converting the zero to 'zero-factorial'. And this is our goal here... to realize that complications can be rearranged into a unity. Is it not true Avram, that 'zero-factorial' equals one?"

Avram was taken aback by the rabbi's astute retort. He could only agree that "Indeed, in mathematical expressions, zero-factorial did equal one." A silence followed as the rest of the class took time to think about this new analogy.

Yakov Arie's ponderings took a different direction and he decided to break the silence. "Rabbi, is there a connection with the words 'First Day' and these three gradations? It seems as though this might refer to creation...no?" As Yakov spoke, he heard his own voice trail off with an insecure volume and was now regretting his utterances without first seeing the rest of the rusty pendant's inscriptions. But it was too late. The rabbi shot a piercing glance toward Yakov and waited for a whole minute before responding.

"Well, Yakov... 'Yom Rishon', the 'First Day' is certainly an indication of the beginning of 'order'...and that can lead to the eventual influence of 'gradations'. But not unless there is a 'guiding force' to keep the progression of order on track... toward a specific purpose. So you see, there is a connection." The rabbi perceived a new energy that had entered the discussion. He had to reply with vague references that allowed for multiple perspectives.

At home that night, Yakov cleaned the pendant more carefully. Two more points of the star were revealed. The second point was tagged with "Yom Sheni" and the third point was unmarked. What happened to the "order"?

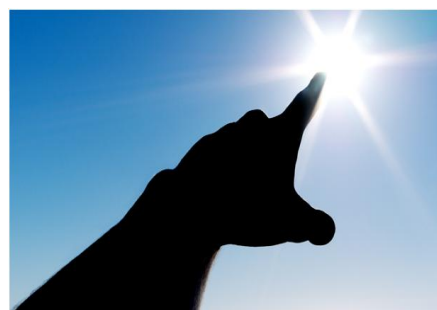


AMIT needs your help! צדקה



Founded in 1925, AMIT educates and cares for Israel's youth, including the most vulnerable children in Israel. The AMIT schools promote religious tolerance, service to the state and the recognition that every child is blessed with unique talents and abilities.

Contact: Rabbi Avi Kasten



שבת שלום

BAT KOL NEWS

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NEXT WEEK'S SERVICES*

Candle lighting	5:01 PM
FRIDAY Minha / Maariv	5:00 PM
SATURDAY morning	9:30 AM
SATURDAY Minha / Maariv	5:00 PM
Shabbat ends	6:08 PM
SUNDAY	8:10 AM
TU B'SHVAT	FEB 4

*Subject to change per Rabbi's announcements.