



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending October 3, 2014

U.S. - ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

President Obama Welcomes Prime Minister Netanyahu to White House

U.S. President Barack Obama welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Oct. 1. In advance of the bilateral meeting, the two leaders underscored the enduring strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship. In light of the challenges facing the Middle East, President Obama told Prime Minister Netanyahu that the meeting provides “an opportunity once again to reaffirm the unbreakable bond between the United States and Israel, and our ironclad commitment to making sure that Israel is secure.” Prime Minister Netanyahu thanked President Obama for his “unflinching support,” and “for the continuous bond of friendship that is so strong between Israel and the United States.” President Obama outlined his agenda for the meeting, which included discussions on the reconstruction of Gaza, and more broadly, finding sustainable peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. Regarding the latter, Prime Minister Netanyahu voiced his commitment, “to a vision of peace of two states for two peoples based on mutual recognition and rock solid security arrangements on the ground. In a related matter, the two leaders discussed the vital role of Iron Dome in the recent conflict. President Obama said that “the American people should be very proud of the contributions that we made to the Iron Dome program to protect the lives of Israelis at a time when rockets were pouring into Israel on a regular basis.” Prime Minister Netanyahu offered the utmost gratitude to the United States for the additional installment of support for the system, which he said saved many lives across the border.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Netanyahu to Ban: U.N. is biased against Israel

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon Tuesday afternoon at the U.N. offices in New York, and complained that the U.N. holds Israel to a different standard of behavior than other states, reports [The Times of Israel](#). Netanyahu argued that unlike the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, Israel did not direct attacks against civilians and added that he regretted any harm done to innocents. The Prime Minister’s Office also reported that Netanyahu complained to the U.N. chief that the U.N. Human Rights Council was not focusing its inquiry on Hamas, which allegedly used U.N. facilities in order to fire at Israel, and asserted that Israel would struggle to change that. Repeating a theme emphasized in his speech Monday before the United Nations General Assembly, Netanyahu said that the council was biased against Israel and defends Hamas. In a reference to U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay’s complaint during Operation Protective Edge that Gazans “had not been provided” with the Iron Dome to protect themselves against IDF operations, Netanyahu said that he did not intend to apologize for the fact

that Israel manufactured the Iron Dome to protect its own citizens. The prime minister met with the U.N. leader at the conclusion of a three-day visit to New York centered around his Monday plenary speech.

IRAN

Netanyahu to Obama: Don't allow Iran deal that leaves it at nuclear threshold

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday that he must make sure that any final nuclear deal with Iran does not leave it at the "threshold" of being able to develop nuclear weapons, reports [Reuters](#). "As you know, Mr. President, Iran seeks a deal that would lift the tough sanctions that you worked so hard to put in place and leave it as a threshold nuclear power," Netanyahu said. "I firmly hope under your leadership that would not happen." Though Israel backs Obama's efforts to forge a coalition to confront Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria, some Israelis fear that world powers could go easy on Shi'ite Iran's nuclear program so it will help in the fight against the Sunni Islamist group. "The president made clear to the prime minister that regional events, including the need to destroy ISIL, won't change our calculus on this issue," said White House spokeswoman Bernadette Meehan. "We must see concrete, verifiable steps that Iran's program is exclusively peaceful." Netanyahu has cast Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat to Israel. Iran and six world powers ended 10 days of talks in New York last week that made little progress toward a long-term agreement by a November 24 deadline.

For more information on the nuclear threat from Iran please click [here](#).

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

What did King David drink? Israeli wine researchers aim to revive ancient libations

The small cardboard box in Elyashiv Drori's palm looks like it's full of black pebbles. Closing the box quickly, he explains that it cannot be open for long. The pebble-like pieces, which were uncovered in an archaeological dig near Jerusalem's Old City, are in fact remains of a kilo of grapes stored nearly 3,000 years ago. They were preserved under layers of earth from the era when David and Solomon ruled over the Land of Israel. Next to his laboratory at Ariel University, Drori—an oenophile who has judged international wine competitions—already has barrels of wine made from grapes that have grown in Israel for two millennia. According to [JTA](#), finding a living sample of the 3,000-year-old grapes will be the next step in his years-long quest to produce wine identical to that consumed in ancient Israel. "It's not interesting to make chardonnay in Israel because there's chardonnay that comes from California," said Drori, the agriculture and oenology research coordinator at the Samaria and Jordan Rift Center of Ariel University. "But if you can make wine in Israel that isn't elsewhere and that connects to the history here, that's much more interesting." Today there are hundreds of Israeli wineries, but they largely use varieties of grapes that are indigenous to Europe. "I understood how much local species are connected to their countries," said Yakov Henig, one of Drori's student researchers. "Every nation has its species, and we have a culture and tradition of making wine. This is connected to our identity."