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Historic Agudas Yisrael Convention Held in Netanya

By Hamodia Staff | Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 3:50 pm | כ"ד שבט תשע"ט



(Aharon Krohn/Flash90)

The national convention of Agudas Yisrael opened today, Wednesday, in Netanya. This historical event will be remembered for years to come as one of the important milestones in the development of *chareidi* Jewry in Eretz Yisrael, following the path of the holy Baal Shem Tov, *zy" a*, and his disciples.

The national convention, which will continue tomorrow, Thursday, at the Galei Sanz Hotel in Netanya, is being attended by hundreds of Agudas Yisrael members from all over Eretz Yisrael, representatives in the Knesset and the local city

councils, public figures and *askanim*, activists of the movement and representatives of the many communities identified with Agudas Yisrael. They are holding intense discussions about the essence and path of the movement and the legacy it seeks to convey to the younger generation of *askanim* and activists.

The pinnacle of the conference was tonight, when the leading Rebbes, Rabbanim and *Roshei Yeshivah* of the chassidic communities around the country joined the convention for a special session. The session was filled with *drashos* and *divrei brachah* delivered by leading Rebbes, *shlita*.

Earlier this afternoon, Agudas Yisrael members began to convene at the Galei Sanz Hotel ahead of the opening session.

The session was chaired by Rabbi Tuvia Freund, deputy mayor of Modiin Illit. The main address at the session was delivered by Harav Yosef Kuperberg, chairman of Agudas Yisrael. Harav Zusha Horowitz, Rav of Khal Chassidim in Elad, also spoke. The crowd was then enthralled with the *chizuk drashah* given by Reb Shalom Mordechai Rubashkin, who traveled especially from New York for the event. He spoke of the *achdus* experienced by *Klal Yisrael* both during his imprisonment and later with his release.

In anticipation of the historic convention, the Agudas Yisrael deputy ministers gave wide-ranging interviews, speaking about the objectives and the essence of the convention from their point of view.

Deputy Health Minister Rabbi Yaakov Litzman said, "This is the time to unite and to proudly elevate the good name of this holy movement." He quoted the Imrei Emes, *zy"ta*, who said when Agudas Yisrael was established that it would operate as a movement that would unite all of *chareidi* Jewry until the arrival of Moshiach. "We see that despite temporary crises, the movement is alive and vibrant, and is successful in uniting the spectrum of *chareidi* Jewry under its banner."



(Aharon Krohn/Flash90)

Deputy Education Minister Rabbi Meir Porush said in an interview that in order to preserve the crown of leadership that has been reserved for it since its establishment, Agudas Yisrael has to intensify and more firmly establish its connections with all communities. He added that "each time period has its innovations and its unique challenges. What was right 10 or 20 years ago is not necessarily effective today. Likewise, however much is done to maintain and increase the connection, it is always possible to do more. I am sure that we are changing direction already now, in a positive way, of course, and my expectations are that, *b'ezras Hashem*, during the convention we will be able to pick up speed and make more significant changes."

Tomorrow, the second day of the convention, will feature continued discussions of issues on the agenda. There will be a panel on issues of

shemiras Shabbos, which will address the erosion of the status of Shabbos in the public sphere in Israel. This comes against the backdrop of the shameful Shabbos desecration last week in Tel Aviv, with the construction of the Yehudit Bridge, despite the opposition of Torah observers and traditional communities throughout Israel. One of the most important values for the Jewish nation — Shabbos, which protects *Am Yisrael* — was trampled.

Agudah members and activists were very excited about the convention, and the widespread sentiment was that they were taking part in a historical event that will be remembered for many years to come as an important milestone in preserving Torah-true Jewry in Eretz Yisrael.

"This is a test for Agudas Yisrael," the movement's leaders say. "Our central goal is to unite Torah-true Jewry under the broad umbrella of Agudas Yisrael, and to return everyone home, not only on Election Day, when every *yarei Shamayim* votes Gimmel, as instructed by our *Gedolim* and Rabbanim in recent generations, and, *ybl"tc*, the *Gedolei Hador*, *shlita*.

"We aspire to restore the situation to one where every G-d-fearing Jew knows that Agudas Yisrael is not just a party that he votes for in Knesset and local elections, but also his natural home, the place where he can always feel like he belongs. We hope that, indeed, this is the message that will emerge from this conference, and we will merit to be in a state of *yachad shivtei Yisrael*, one man with one heart, to increase *kvod Shamayim*."



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