

# Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah Kol Korei: Ki Am Kadosh Atah

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Agudath Israel of America, today, shared a Kol Korei from the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues.

At the time of Agudas Yisroel's founding in Katowitz in 1912, it established a body known as the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, consisting of gedolim from across Europe to stand at the helm of the movement. It has always been the hallmark of the Agudah, whether in pre-war Europe or post-war America, that its policies have been guided by the words of the Moetzes. The Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America has steered, advised, and guided American Orthodox Jewry through the challenges of Galus America for some three-quarters of a century, and continues to do so today.

27 Shevat, 5781

“Spring has passed and summer is over – we have not yet been saved.” (Yirmiyah 8:20) Thousands of our fellow Jews, among them Torah giants and tzaddikim, have been afflicted with the terrible COVID-19 disease, and – may Hashem help us! – many of those have passed away. The pandemic has greatly diminished the Torah learning in our yeshivos, Bais Yaakovs, and shuls; it has curtailed our Yomim Tovim and celebrations.

It is clear that there is upon our nation an appeal from Heaven to correct our ways. Every person must examine his behavior and strengthen whatever may be lacking. But, in addition to that, the public – as a tzibbur – must examine its collective actions and lifestyle. We therefore feel it

important to bring up a fundamental and broad point on which the public should now focus.

Klal Yisroel is a “nation of princes and a holy people.” The dedication of our people to Torah learning and to raising thousands upon thousands of families on the foundations of Torah and service to Hashem should be proclaimed far and wide! It is only the nation of princes, the holy people, who can do this despite the influence of the culture surrounding us. How fortunate are we, and how good is our lot!

However, we must remember that the meaning of “a holy people” is a people who – as Ramban, Vayikra 19:2 explains – distance themselves from the pursuit of excess. It is greatly concerning to us that if one examines our community’s lifestyle we see that there is much to improve in this area, as reflected, for example, in the advertisements in periodicals.

There are amongst us people who, notwithstanding their care with mitzvos, pursue fine foods and expensive vacations; they boast of their clothing and furniture; they are swayed by the triviality and bad of unfiltered smartphones and internet. Those who are engaged in these pursuits have turned from the lifestyle that was always a characteristic sign of the chareidi Jew: a modest life centered around Torah, service to Hashem, and kindness to others; a life purposed on being close to Hashem. All Jews are responsible for one another; we must all repent on this direction.

Certainly, in this time of danger, we must act with great care for the health of our communities. It is, however, also a holy obligation on us to uproot this spiritual danger from amongst ourselves and to return to being a holy nation to Hashem.

We turn to the Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbanim – the eyes of the community – and to all leaders in every community: Seek ways

to inspire your yeshivos and shuls to return to what was; not to allow the Jewish nation to descend into the trap of a life of materialism. Through this we will remain a nation of princes and holy people, in the full meaning of the words.

At the same time, we call upon the public to participate in Yom Kippur Katan tefillos this Thursday, and may any who have the ability to accept upon themselves to fast at least half the day, or to accept a taanis dibbur, be blessed.

In the days following Yom Kippur Katan, as well, we call upon the public to increase prayer – by saying Tehillim and crying out to Hashem that He save us, and the entire Jewish people, from the difficult time we are in – until His wrath passes and He takes mercy on us.

May Hashem recognize our prayer and good deeds and send Heavenly salvation from this and from all afflictions, and may Yehuda and Yerushalayim be saved in our days.

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