



Conference of Synagogue  
Rabbonim of Agudath Israel  
ועד רבני בתי כנסיות של אגודת ישראל

בס"ד

Rabbi Moshe Heinemann  
Rabbi Aaron Zuckerman  
Co-Chairmen

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett  
Jerusalem

Dear Prime Minister,

We write you on behalf of the Rabbonim of Agudath Israel of America, representing vibrant Jewish kehillot in the continental United States and Canada, whose mitpallelim number many tens of thousands of Jews committed to Torah, the safety and security of our brethren in Israel, and the maintenance of Jewish standards there.

We are deeply anguished at the news that radical changes to the site of the Kotel Maaravi are being considered.

Since its liberation in 1967, the Kotel has been a place where all Jews have been welcome to meditate and pray, and still are. The Jewish standard of a mechitza toward the front of the Kotel plaza, and adherence to halacha in vocal public tefilla have served as a "highest common denominator" to ensure that all Jews of all persuasions will be able to pray at the site side-by-side – likely the only place on earth where that regularly takes place.

Reconfiguring the layout of the entrance to the Kotel to facilitate its unfortunate balkanization to date, in order to please a tiny number of "progressive" activists (and, not unthinkable, in the future, other even more radical groups with their own social or religious agendas) is a deeply misguided idea. And even more misguided – indeed, dangerous – is to entrust non-halacha-embracing Jews with oversight of the holy place.

As you know, Orthodox Jews are not only the vast majority of those who pray at the Kotel, they will account for more than a third of Israel's population by 2050, according to a new estimate prepared by the National Economic Council. And few of the remaining two-thirds will be adherents of the Reform or Conservative movements.

In the USA as well, more than a quarter of American Jews 17 years of age or younger, moreover, are Orthodox Jews. And, of course, the great majority of olim to Israel are Orthodox.

Please don't disregard their – our – feelings about maintaining a single halachic standard at a site from which the Shechina has not departed.

The solution to the Kotel issue, in the end, is Jewish comity. On the Orthodox side, that requires our treating all Jews with only love and respect, and certainly not acting violently, chalilah, in word or deed, against them, even the provocateurs among them.

And on the "progressive" side, it means relinquishing, in the interest of true Jewish unity, an exciting but ultimately losing battle.

Please preserve the Kotel as a place of peace and prayer, as it has been for half a century, by preserving the Jewish religious standards for public prayer there that comport with the practices of all Jews' forebears.

Please understand our deep pain at the thought of the last arena of true Jewish unity being balkanized and made into a sad symbol of discord.

THE RABBI MOSHE SHERER NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

42 BROADWAY • NEW YORK, NY 10004 • 212.797.9000 • FAX: 646.254.1600



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*Co-chairmen*

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Ahavat Shalom  
Los Angeles, CA

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Zichron Naftaly  
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Netive Ezra  
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Heritage Russian Jewish Cong.  
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Rabbi Yisroel M. Levin  
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Rabbi Aaron Zuckerman  
*Co-chairmen*

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Brooklyn, NY

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Kol Yaakov  
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Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce  
Toronto, Ontario

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Glendale, WI

Rabbi Benzion Twerski  
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