

Echoing the Theme of Together We Will, Agudah Opens Weekday Convention Sessions to the Public

November 20, 2017



After endless hours of planning and months of preparation, the eagerly awaited 95th annual convention of Agudath Israel of America is about to unfold with a full schedule of programming featuring prominent speakers who will be joining the convention from all across the globe. While the convention is completely sold out, numerous sessions are open to the public who are invited to join the landmark event in person at the Crowne Plaza Stamford or through the Agudah's dedicated Livestream.

Programming begins on Thursday afternoon promptly at 4:45 PM with a pair of concurrent sessions. Rabbi Yitzchok Pindrus, Deputy Mayor of Yerushalayim, and Rabbi Avi Schnall, Agudath Israel of America's New Jersey director, will offer an in depth look at managing reactions as existing Jewish communities continue to spread beyond their borders. Also on the agenda is a session on future leadership with Boruch Ber Bender, president, Achiezer, Rabbi Yehuda Kasziner, executive director, Bikur Cholim of Lakewood,

Yisroel Besser, contributing editor, Mishpacha Magazine, and Charlie Harary, a highly regarded lecturer and business executive.

At 6 PM, sessions will address maintaining our standards of *ruchniyus* in today's distraction-filled world, adapting business strategies in our personal lives and learning to recognize the signs of at-risk behavior. Featured speakers will include Rabbi Mordechai Becher, senior lecturer, Gateways, Rabbi Mordechai Finkelman, Mashgiach Ruchani, Yeshivas Ohr HaChaim, Rabbi Ilan Meirov, director, Chazaq, Charlie Harary, Naftali Horowitz, managing director, JP Morgan, Rabbi Shmuel Berkovic, S'gan Menahel, Yeshiva Ketana of Passaic, Yaakov Bess, a Minyan Shelanu volunteer and Dr. Shloime Zimmerman, a clinical psychologist and Amudim board member.

The highly anticipated Thursday night keynote session will begin promptly at 7:30 PM with Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Gedola of Philadelphia, and Rabbi Elya Brudny, Rosh Yeshiva, Brooklyn's Mirrer Yeshiva, delving into the convention theme of *Together We Will*. The keynote session will also include remarks by Rabbi Dovid Schnell, convention co-chairman and president emeritus, Agudath Israel of Illinois.

Programming will continue at 10 PM with additional timely topics. Rabbi Shlomo Lewenstein of Lakewood, Dr. David Lieberman, a well known author, speaker and consultant, and Rabbi Avi Neuberger, Rav, Congregation Shaarei Tefillah in New Hempstead, will offer important insights to making successful shidduchim. Rabbi Eliezer Feuer, Rav of Young Israel of Bayswater and Rabbi Paysach Krohn, noted author, lecturer and mohel, will address managing emotional distress, both in ourselves and in others. An open Q&A session moderated by Yisroel Besser featuring Rabbi Brudny and Rabbi Mordechai Respler, Rosh Yeshiva, Mesivta of Long Beach, will also take place during the same time slot as will the Agudah Live broadcast with Rabbi Avi Schnall and Rabbi Shlomo Soroka, Agudath Israel of Illinois' director of government affairs, featuring interviews, a session recap and other contemporary issues throughout the convention.

A short Friday still leaves times for plenty of morning enlightenment and the first group of concurrent sessions will kick off at 9:45 AM. Rabbi Yaakov Perlow, the Novominsker Rebbe, Dr. Irving Lebovics, Agudath Israel of

California's president, and Rabbi Yitzchok Pindrus will take a look at ongoing clashes that threaten to undermine the integrity of Eretz Yisroel, while Rabbi Mordechai Becher and Rabbi Ari Neuwirth, Menahel, Mesivta Derech HaTorah will talk about infusing our yiddishkeit with new energy. A second round of sessions will follow at 11 AM, with Rabbi Dr. David Fox, a forensic and clinical psychologist, Rabbi Doniel Frank, a marriage and family therapist, and Rabbi Yaaov Robinson, executive director of Midwest Agudas Yisroel Council of Synagogue Rabbanim and Rav, Beis Medrash Mikor HaChaim, will offer insights into the many facets of shalom bayis at any stage of marriage. Rabbi Eliezer Feuer, Rabbi Avi Hoffman of Westchester's Jewish Renaissance Experience and Rabbi Akiva Tendler, Associate Rav, Khal Zichron Mordechai in Monsey, will talk about reaching out to individuals on the fringes of our communities during the same time period.

After an inspiring Shabbos filled with Divrei Torah, ruach, zemiros and more, regular sessions will resume once again on Motzei Shabbos at 7:15. Topics to be tackled will include ensuring opportunities for Limud Torah, understanding how the alt right- alt left movement affects the Jewish community and creating a proper balance between the ideal and the real in Jewish family dynamics. Featured speakers will include Rabbi Shlomo Cynamon, Rav, Khal Bnai Torah, Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Aderes HaTorah, Yitzchok Wagner, Rosh Chabura, Kinyan Hamesechta, Rabbi Abba Cohen, Agudath Israel's vice president for federal affairs and Washington director and counsel, Rabbi Avi Shafran, Agudath Israel's director of public affairs, Rabbi Yeruchim Silber, Agudath Israel's director of New York governmental relations, Rabbi Robinson and Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, Menahel, Ohr Naava, Ateres Naava and Bnot Chaya Academy for Girls.

The highlight of the convention, the Motzei Shabbos keynote session, will take place at 8:30 PM and will feature the Novominsker Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America, Rabbi Ephraim Wachsmann, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshiva Meor Yitzchok in Monsey, Shia Markowitz, CEO of Agudath Israel of America, Rivie Schwebel, convention chairman and Agudah board of trustees member, and an audio-visual presentation titled *We did. We do. We will!*

The convention will close out with an inspiration filled Sunday morning, beginning with a 9:30 breakfast symposium on the benefits of working together moderated by Rabbi A.D. Motzen, national director for state relations. Joining Rabbi Motzen will be a full panel of well known names including Rabbi Abba Cohen and Agudah regional directors, Rabbi Yitz Frank, Rabbi Moshe Matz, Rabbi Ariel Sadwin, Rabbi Avi Schnall, Rabbi Yeruchim Silber and Rabbi Shlomo Soroka. The symposium will be followed at 10:15 by the convention's final concurrent sessions featuring Rabbi Daniel Mechanic, director of Project Chazon, and Rabbi Chaim Veshnefsky, director, Yesodei Hadas, speaking about strengthening emunah and Boruch Ber Bender, Jacob Rosenberg, founder and partner, Bernath and Rosenberg, and Shia Markowitz addressing the many financial difficulties faced by today's middle class.

The closing keynote session on the alarming problem of addiction in our community will take place at 11:30 AM. The session will be moderated by Rabbi Labish Becker, executive director of Agudath Israel of America and will feature Rabbi Dr. David Fox, Rabbi Yosef Viener, Rav of Congregation Shaar Shomayim in Wesley Hills, and Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein.

In addition to the three keynote sessions, the fourteen concurrent weekday sessions and the Sunday breakfast symposium, there will also be several women's-only sessions that are open to the public, both in person and via Livestream. Mrs. Zehava Farbman, associate director, Project Chai, and Mrs. Debbie Fox, director, Magen Yeladim International, will speak on Thursday night at 7 PM at a special shul rebbetzins' session and again at a 9:45 Friday morning session on dealing with trauma prevention and reaction. Dr. Aviva Biberfeld, a licensed clinical psychologist, educator and lecturer, will be joined by Dr. David Lieberman, noted author and speaker, in a discussion on nurturing relationships with difficult people on Friday morning at 11 AM. These are in addition to the many sessions that are geared towards women that will take place over Shabbos.

Other goings on during the convention will include daily Daf Yomi and Yarchei Kallah shiurim, the annual directors' meeting of Pirchei Agudath Israel of America, a meeting of the Agudah's Maryland delegation, the Bnos

Agudath Israel leadership event, a closed session of the Conference of Synagogue Rabbonim of Agudath Israel of America and a Sunday morning Agudah Women of America breakfast.

“With the convention just hours away, we are extremely excited to be able to invite the public to join us in what is sure to be an unforgettable event,” said Shlomo Werdiger, chairman of the board at Agudath Israel of America. “Whether you are joining us as a convention guest, are coming to enjoy sessions in person, or are tuning in online, we are elated to be able to share the unique inspiration of an Agudah convention with you in any way we can.”