



29 Teves 5782 / January 2, 2022

Honorable Prime Minister Naftali Bennett  
Rosh Ha'memshala  
Medinat Yisrael

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I trust this letter finds you well.

I write in my capacity as chairman of the board of trustees of Agudath Israel of America, a national organization representing Orthodox Jews across the United States. In addition, I serve as co-chairman of Am Echad, an organization devoted to ensuring the proper representation of the growing, vibrant international community of Orthodox Jews in policy discussions affecting the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

While we have separately called your attention to a number of concerns we have with respect to issues that undermine the longstanding "religious status quo" in Israel, my purpose here is simply to share with you the deep and growing sense of frustration many of our constituents have expressed regarding the extreme restrictions Israel has imposed upon American travelers (among others) seeking to enter Israel.

We understand, of course, that these are extraordinary times, and that certain travel restrictions may be necessary to minimize the risk of further spreading the COVID virus. However, the steps Israel has taken to prevent entry from other countries are broadly acknowledged as among the strictest in the entire world. This is not one of those instances where we should take pride in Israel going beyond the broadly accepted international norm.

The restrictions affect all American travelers (and others whose countries are on your "red list"), but they especially affect Orthodox Jews. That is because of the very high percentage of Orthodox Jewish Americans whose children are studying in Israel, even living in Israel. The severely curtailed flow of traffic from America to Israel has resulted, and continues to result, in severe human hardships for those families – and in many cases reconsideration of plans to make aliyah. This is a tragedy.

Respectfully, but urgently, I beseech you to re-evaluate the travel restrictions that make it so difficult for families to get together in Israel to celebrate family smachot, and to ease the restrictions in a way that continues to promote good health practices while still allowing for greater traffic flow into the State of Israel.

Many thanks for your kind consideration. I hope to have occasion to see you again soon.

Sincerely yours,

Shlomo (Sol) Werdiger  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

SW/aa



**The Rabbi Moshe Sherer National Headquarters**

42 Broadway, 14th floor, New York, NY 10004

**P 212.797.9000 F 646.254.1600**

[www.agudah.org](http://www.agudah.org)

[reception@agudah.org](mailto:reception@agudah.org)