

## OPENING ADDRESS AT THE SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF THE AGUDAS ISRAEL FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR RELIGION

By RABBI ELIEZER SILVER

In opening this special conference of the Agudas Israel we are fully conscious of the frightful holocaust that has enveloped the world and realize the special grave danger that threatens the whole of our people at the hands of the demon loosed upon the earth. In this fateful and most crucial hour we turn to the Creator in supplication for succor.

Our approach to the Almighty is similar to the manner in which we appealed to the State Department, when about two years ago a delegation of venerable talmudists and patriarchal chassidic rabbis came to Washington to secure special visas for our great leaders and teachers whom we were anxious to rescue from the Hell of Eastern Europe. At that time we addressed the heads of our State Department as follows; "We come to you not as great orators nor as astute politicians; Not as leaders of worldly influence nor as great lawyers with shrewed arguments. We come to you with millions of bleeding Jewish hearts, with the totality of Israel's great catastrophe, with hands outstretched in silent appeal from hundreds and thousands of our great Talmudic scholars and present day Sages, representing the very flower and nobility of traditional Jewish learning and wisdom, who plead for rescue. Our own limited power of speech prevents us from putting this plea in words, nor are we able to put it in writing on paper. We beseech you to receive this silent plea as if it were uttered in words coming from your own hearts."

And thus we humbly approach the King of the Universe that in the past we did possess great pillars of our Torah, Gaonim, who were able to advocate our cause before Him. We did have great Tzadikim, men of action who intervened with the Almighty in our behalf. For it is said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, decrees and the Tzadik annuls." It may be that there are no such advocates in our midst today, but we hardly need them. Now we may storm Thy gates of mercy, oh Lord, with millions of Thy people of Israel who are tortured, disgraced and broken in heart and spirit. We come to Thee with countless disrupted