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**Summer Advice for**

**Husbands and Wives**

**By**[**Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**](https://www.jewishpress.com/author/rabbi-moshe-meir-weiss/)



 It’s that time of year again! Thoughts of driving down the 17 with beach chairs, a barbecue grill, and other paraphernalia in tow fill many minds. Others dream of their summer home in Deal or the mountains above Denver. Wherever we plan to go, rest assured that the *yetzer hara* is traveling with us. So it behooves us to be on the lookout for the dangers that lurk around us at this time of year.

 The Torah states in *Parshas Behaloscha*, “*Al pi Hashem yachanu v’al pi Hashem yisa’u*.” Homiletically, these words teach us that our lives must be in line with Hashem’s commandments both at home and when we’re on the road. This directive is especially relevant during the often spiritually challenging months of the summer.

**The Importance of One’s Community**

 *Pirkei Avos* (2:4) teaches us, “*Al tifrosh min ha’tzibor* – Do not separate yourself from the community.” When you’re part of a community, you experience peer pressure not to deviate from the correct path. That’s why, for example, it’s advisable to *daven* in the same shul most of the time and not “*shtiebl* hop.” For if we always *daven* in the same place, it’s not easy to take off one Shabbos since we know we’ll have to answer for our absence!

 During the summer months, though, many of us feel less peer pressure. We’re in the country, without the invasive eyes of our more scrupulous city neighbors. We must therefore make a commitment to ourselves that we won’t allow this fact to affect our religious behavior.

**No Excuse for Men Remaining in the City**

 Men who remain in the city the entire week should also realize that they no longer have the usual excuse (“I’m too busy,” “I’m taking care of the children”) for not attending the nightly *Daf Yomi shiur* or visiting their parents. They would be wise to inject into their summer routine *mitzvos* that they have neglected because of time pressure during the rest of the year.

 Another summer challenge is avoiding the dangers of *shochen ra* (a bad neighbor). The Yad Yecheskail asks why Yehoshua needed special prayers from Moshe and Kalev needed the protection of the *avos*in Chevron to be saved from the wiles of the other 10 *meraglim*. Didn’t they have enough spiritual stamina to come through the ordeal untainted? Evidently not. Evidently, says the Yad Yecheskail, a bad environment is so harmful that it can even affect people like Yehoshua and Kalev.

**Be Careful of the “Environmental Hazards”**

 Thus, it behooves us during the summer to be wary of “environmental hazards.” Both men who gather around a supper table after a hard day’s work and women who have time to gossip around the umbrella table by a pool must keep in mind the deadly sin of *lashon hara*! It’s not easy to train ourselves to avoid talking about people, but we should bring such a commitment with us to the mountains. It’s at least as important as the suntan lotion and insect repellent.

 We should especially avoid the lethal habit of talking to others about our spouses. The climate of an all-male crowd in the city and an all-female crowd in the mountains breeds confidences, but they are almost always very, very wrong! The Torah mandates “*v’davak b’ishto*,” to be loyal to one’s spouse, and included in this directive is honoring his or her privacy and not divulging the affairs of one’s home to others.

 It’s also important to avoid fraternizing with members of the opposite gender (with our spouses 125 miles away). What seems like harmless socialization may be trampling on one of the Ten Commandments!

**Love Your Wife Like Yourself**

 The Gemara (*Yevamos* 62b) teaches us that a man should love his wife like himself. Similarly, we know that the primary purpose of a woman is to be a partner to her husband. Therefore, during the summer months, when husband and wife are often apart, they should be extremely vigilant to take actions to demonstrate that they miss each other.

 They should call each other often and make themselves available when they’re called. It’s a grave error when a husband or wife lets the other feel that he or she is secondary to the other things in his or her life.

 Summer weekends can be beautiful moments or, *chas v’shalom*, marital nightmares. Wives have to realize their husbands drive back and forth for long hours, sometimes in horrendous traffic, for just two short days every weekend! It’s unwise to plan shopping trips in crowded ShopRites for them and visits to their (the wives’) friends as their total weekend itinerary! At the same time, husbands must be mindful of the fact that their wives are alone with the children the entire week and need his disciplining help over the weekend.

**The Words of a Wise Woman**

 The wise woman will openly display to her husband how much he was missed and educate the children to do so as well! The smart husband will act the same toward his wife, and giving her an occasional gift or a bouquet of flowers would be a wonderful touch.

 Couples should be mindful of their lack of quality time together during the summer, and although one might prefer to socialize Friday night, one should be mindful of the great importance of having sufficient quality time together just as a couple.

 In the merit of our spiritual vigilance, may Hashem bless us and our loved ones with a healthy, happy, and wonderful summer!

*Reprinted from the May 28, 2021 website of The Jewish Press.*

# Rav Avigdor Miller on

# Battling the Gay Rights Bill



 **QUESTION:** **What should we do now that the Gay Rights Bill was passed in New York?**

 **ANSWER:** We have to maintain a constant battle against the Gay-Rights Bill. We have to bombard all the politicians with letters or with other means to let them know we’re very angry; we won’t stand for it.

 I’ll explain what’s doing. This bill can be implemented in a soft-peddled way and it can be implemented in a militant way. If there will be a big angry reaction from all the citizenry, they’ll be slow, they’ll be careful in being militant about it.

 Because what the gays really want is, they want that the youth should be taught that this is a perfectly normal way of life. They want to corrupt the entire youth. Don’t be mistaken about it – it’s not about gay rights; it’s about corrupting the youth.

**The Danger of a Candy Bar**

 They want to teach Mankind that little boys can be taken off the street; they want to lower the age of the consent and so for the sake of a candy bar, they can get little boys to be their victims.

 Now this wickedness it seems to us very far from reality. But you have to know the North American Man/Boy Love Association says that openly and Koch, yemach shemo vezichro, marched together with them in the Gay Rights Parade. That’s what they want! It’s no joke; it’s very serious. And so any little boy in the streets can be bribed by a candy bar. And once he gets into a bad habit, he’s ruined for life.

 And therefore, not like up till now you were asleep; up till now the Jewish people were asleep. The general public was surely asleep. Those who listen to the radio and read the New York Times, they don’t have any brains of their own; they just think what the media tell them, and the media is controlled by gays.

**The Need to Write Letters to the Politicians**

 But the Jewish people, those that have some sense, have to maintain a constant drumming, battling, shooting. Constantly bothering them, pestering them with letters all the time. And don’t think it’s not a mitzvah; it’s a big mitzvah to do it all the time! Write letters to all the politicians. Write letters to everybody else. Wake up the rabbis who are asleep. They don’t know what’s doing here. They think it’s none of our business; they don’t realize that this evil is penetrating into frum houses too; it’s penetrating.

 And therefore we have to battle for our lives against the gay rights.

*Reprinted from the June 2, 2021 email of Toras Avigdor. Adapted from Tape #591 (March 1986).*

**Who is Wise?**

 Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from every person, as it is stated: "From all those who have taught me I have gained wisdom; indeed, Your testimonies are my conversation" (Ethics 4:1)

 The verse stated, "From all those who have taught me I have gained wisdom," whereas the Mishna adds that one must learn from every person. One must learn not only Torah from one's teachers, but also the good qualities of character and upright conduct which one discerns in any person, even if he is an ignoramus or a wicked fellow. *(The Maggid of Mezritch)*

*Reprinted from the 5756/1996 Parshat Shelach edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*

**Parshas Korach**

**The Danger of Machlokes**

**By Rabbi Bentzion Shafier**

**Founder of TheSmuz.com**



 “…*Dossom and Aviram went out upright at the entrance of their tents with their wives, children, and infants*.” - I16:27

**The Rebellion**

 *Korach*, carried away by jealousy*,* led two hundred and fifty men in rebellion against Moshe and HASHEM. These were all great individuals; they had all witnessed Moshe going up to *Har Sinai* to accept the Torah, and they all heard HASHEM speak through Moshe.

 Yet they willfully and intentionally set out to depose Moshe – to prove that he had veered off from that which HASHEM had told him. Moshe, recognizing the danger that they were placing themselves in, did everything he could to get them to back down. Nevertheless, they remained steadfast in their revolt, and marched to their destruction. In the end the entire congregation, man, woman infant, and child – died a terrible death.

 Rashi explains that this teaches us how terrible *machlokes* (conflict) is. “*Bais Din* (Jewish court) doesn’t punish a person until he is thirteen years old. The heavenly tribunal doesn’t punish a person until he is twenty years old. Yet here, even the nursing infants were punished.”

 That is how far the punishment for conflict goes.

**What was the sin of the infants?**

 This Rashi is very difficult to understand: Clearly, he is saying that the nursing babies were *punished*. Yet what sins could infants be guilty of? An infant doesn’t have premeditated thought. The infants were completely unaware of what was going on. How could they be punished?

 The answer to this question requires a deeper understanding of some of the systems that HASHEM uses to run the world.

***Immutable Laws of Nature***

 HASHEM created this world with immutable laws of nature. Gases tend to expand. Heat tends to rise. Heavy objects tend to fall. These laws are the bedrock foundation of this world that govern all of physicality throughout the cosmos. These laws, however, are neither cruel nor kind. For instance, if a baby is left unattended on a changing table and falls, likely he will be injured. The result may be tragic, but we wouldn’t accuse gravity of being heartless. Gravity doesn’t judge and it doesn’t decide. It is a fact—a part of reality.

 Just as HASHEM created laws that govern the physical world, so too, He created laws that govern the spiritual world. These as well are specific and exact, and have real consequences.

 One of these laws is *din* (justice). The basic tenet of *din* is *accountability*—simple and unadulterated. You are responsible for what you do.

**Din is Very Demanding**

 However, while, din, loosely translates as justice it is quite different than man’s understanding of what is just and proper. *Din* is very demanding. *Din* is very exacting. It makes no room for mitigating circumstances. If something comes about through an action of yours, you are responsible – whether you intended it, or not. Whether you recognized the consequences, or not. If you brought it about or if through you it came about, the results are attributed to you and you are held accountable.

 *Din* is just. *Din* is appropriate. If you are to be rewarded for what you have done right, you should be punished for what you have done wrong. Before HASHEM created the world, He considered (if it could be) creating it with the *Middas Ha’Din* (strict justice) in operation. However, if this system were in place, no man could survive.

 The *Mesillos Yesharim* (*Perek* 4) explains that if *din* were in force, any sin that man might commit would bring about one result – his immediate death. The Kings of Kings said not to do X, and you violated His wishes! The consequence of any transgression would be death, immediate and irrevocable. And so, the world couldn’t exist.

**The World was Created with the System of Mercy**

 Therefore, HASHEM created the world using the *Middas HaRachamim* – the system of mercy. *Rachamim* introduces mitigating factors into the equation—You have to take into account who the person is, where he is coming from, what he was going through at the time… When taken in context, what the person did isn’t as egregious. Keeping in mind everything else that was going on at time, what he did is more understandable. And now a person is given leeway. He’s given time to understand the gravity of his actions, and the concept of *teshuvah* is possible.

 `The result is that the operating principle in our world is compassion. Justice, however, cannot be ignored. So both *rachamim* and *din* are in existence, and both have their say. The balance, however, between them can change. If you envision a slide rule, with *din* on one side and *rachamim* on the other,. The slide can be moved so that more of one or the other is introduced into the equation. If an average day might be 50/50, there are some days with more mercy, like Yom Kippur, which is a day of forgiveness. The person doesn’t change, and the act doesn’t change, but the system of judgment changes, and that change makes all the difference in the world.

**You Can Determine the Way You are Judged**

 There are other things that can influence the balance. *Chazal* tell us that the *middah* with which you judge others determines the way that you are judged. The amount of strictness or compassion that you exude becomes the standard by which you are then measured. And extremes in attitude or behaviors can bring extremes in the system of judgment.

 *Machlokes* has the power to bring about extremes. When people cleave to hostile groups, their opinions and attitudes become severe. There is no tolerance, no understanding. You are on our side or theirs — you are a *tzaddik* or a *rasha*. Because the divide is sharp and acceptance non-existent, the *middah* of *din* flares, and when that happens, judgment is at its strictest.

**The Result of Conflict**

 This seems to be the answer to Rashi. Korach launched a rebellion, bringing about a complete divide in the nation. Because of this, complete *din* was brought into operation. Now there were no mitigating circumstances. No considerations. If something comes about through you, you are responsible. And so, the nursing infants were judged. Not for their intentions, not for their plan, but for the outcome. Through them the rebellion was larger. It was no longer two hundred and fifty men against HASHEM. It was now two hundred and fifty men *and* their wives and children. Each person added to the group. Whether they recognized what they were doing or not, whether they realized it or not, the revolution was larger, and the price had to be paid.

 This is a powerful lesson for us on two levels. Firstly, in terms of understanding the extent of responsibility and the remarkable advantage of being judged with mercy.

**The Easy Way to Fall into the Machlokes Trap**

 And secondly, in a very practical manner. While no one wants to be involved in a *machlokes*, unfortunately it is only too easy to get pulled in. Often, without meaning or intending to, we find ourselves on one side or the other, and before we know it, we are deep into the thick and thin of it. The *Chofetz Chaim* writes that *machlokes* is like a raging fire – anyone nearby gets burned. By recognizing the effect of such disputes and the mortal danger that we place ourselves and our families in when we get drawn into machlokes, it wise for us to heed the advice of our sages and run from it like we would run from a fire.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Theshmuz.com.*

**The Reward for a Mitzvah**

 Ben Azzai said: Run to perform even an easy mitzva, and flee from transgression; for one mitzva brings about another, and one transgression brings about another; for the reward of a mitzva is a mitzva, and the recompense of a transgression is a transgression. (4:2)

 The reward given to a person for doing a mitzva is not the same as payment given to a worker for doing a job. A worker plows and sows, etc., and the owner of the field pays him money for his labor. However, the worker does not create the money he is given as his wage. However, in our case, the mitzva itself creates its reward. *(Likutei Pirushim l'Tanya)*

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**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parashat Korach 5781**



 The Torah teaches us in this week's reading that one should never underestimate the power and influence that ego and arrogance can play within the lives of people who are otherwise seen as wise, capable, and even moral. Throughout the ages, the commentators have asked themselves the famous question, quoted by Rashi and based on midrash: “What drove Korach to commit such a foolish act?”

**The Great Miscalculation of Korach**

 Rashi points out that Korach understood that his descendants in future generations would be prominent people of great leadership. He could not imagine that they would achieve such a status of power and recognition when he himself was not able to boast of such an achievement. While this explanation certainly cast some light on the issue, it does not fully resolve the problem.

 There are many instances in life and history when later generations of a certain family rose to power and influence, even though their origins were humble. Most commentators fall back on the idea that it was the great wealth that Korach possessed that drove him to this folly of behavior.

**The Power of Money to Warm or Destroy**

 We are aware that wealth and money many times do strange things to otherwise normal people. The Talmud always pictured money – coins – as being made of fire. They can warm and illuminate or burn and destroy. That certainly is true of the nature of money and how it affects individuals, especially those who have become wealthy over a short period of time. Our world is full of examples of wealthy people who suddenly become experts in all sorts of disciplines in life, whereas before they were wealthy, did not claim such expertise.

 It is interesting to note that the Torah sought to limit the potential for any of the Levite families from becoming exceedingly wealthy. Levites in the land of Israel were subject to public service. Their income was based upon the goodwill of their Israelite neighbors, who would grant them their share of the food  ordained by the Torah. I imagine that no matter how much of the tithe any given Levite would have received, the feeling of being wealthy – certainly, exceedingly wealthy – would not ever be experienced.

**No One is Secure**

 People who are dependent upon the goodwill of others never feel themselves as secure as those who possess great wealth. The truth is that no one is secure, and that even great wealth can disappear in an unknowing and unpredictable fashion. Nevertheless, when a person knows that he or she does not possess great wealth, that person is more careful and circumspect in advancing opinions and demanding honor. The combination of the natural ego that exist within all of us, and especially those like Korach who have aristocratic bloodlines combined with the largess of great wealth, can oftentimes be a lethal mix that leads to disaster. That certainly was the case regarding Korach and his group of followers.

*Reprinted from this week’s website or rabbiwein.com*

**The Need for Jews to Combine Intention and Mitzva Performance**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



 In this week's Torah portion, Korach, we read about the controversy Korach instigated against Moses after the Twelve Spies returned from their scouting mission to the land of Israel.

 Why did Korach wait until then to incite the people against Moses? What was so significant about the sin of the Spies that Korach took it as his cue to challenge Moses' authority, saying, "Why do you lift yourselves up above the congregation of G-d... the whole congregation is holy!"?

 The Spies wanted the Jewish people to remain in the desert so they could continue to learn Torah without distraction. Thus, their report discouraged the Jews from attempting to conquer and enter the Holy Land. Moses, however, countered that in Judaism, "the deed is the main thing." Only by performing concrete actions -- observing G-d's commandments -- would the Jews be able to fulfill G-d's will.

There is an essential difference between learning Torah and observing practical mitzvot.

 Torah study requires comprehension. Yet not all people are on the same intellectual level. Some individuals are able to understand G-d's wisdom to a greater degree; others, to a lesser extent. Thus, every Jew learns Torah based on his own intellectual capacity.

 But when Jews perform mitzvot, they are all on the same level. People have different intentions when they do the mitzva, but the mitzva itself is intrinsically the same.

 Korach recognized that Moses' intellectual stature was far superior to anyone else's. He knew that Moses had received the Torah directly from G-d, and that his understanding of G-d's wisdom was on a higher level than any other Jew. This fact was undisputed.

 But after the error of the Spies, when it became clear that the Jew's main objective is the actual performance of mitzvot, he began to grumble. Aren't all Jews equally holy? Don't they all perform the same mitzvot? If this is the case, why should Moses be superior to anyone else?

 "In the morning G-d will show who is His," Moses replied to Korach.

 By using of the word "morning," Moses alluded to the fact that a Jew's mitzvot must be as bright and illuminating as the light of day. True, we all perform the same mitzvot in the same manner, but without the proper intentions our mitzvot will not bring about the same revelation of G-dliness in the physical world that they could have.

 This contains a teaching for us as well:

 A Jew must never content himself with intentions alone, for the actual performance of the mitzva is what truly counts. But at the same time we must always strive that our mitzvot be "illuminating," thereby making for G-d a "dwelling place" down below.

*Reprinted from the 5756/1996 Parshat Shelach edition of L’Chaim Weekly. Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vol. 4*

**Unable to Understand Why The Wicked Prosper**

 Rabbi Yannai said: We are incapable of understanding either the well- being of the wicked or the sufferings of the righteous. (4:15)

 Why do the wicked prosper? And why are the righteous plagued with troubles and suffering? Most of the prophets expressed their views on this matter, some at greater length, and others more briefly. Rabbi Yannai, however, stresses that we are incapable of understanding G-d's ways in these matters. *(Meiri)*

**A Living Tribute to**

**Rabbi Berel Wein**

**By Daniel Keren**



**Rabbi Berel Wein**

 A few months ago, I wrote in this column (March 26th) about the Sheloshim Tribute orchestrated by ArtScroll for the late Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, zt”l. Around the same time I came across a one hour and eight minutes video recalling the July 3, 2019 Tribute Dinner bestowed upon Rabbi Berel Wein by the members of his Anglo shul Congregation Bet Knesset Hanasi in the Rechavia neighborhood in Yerushalayim on the occasion of his 85th year of life (he was born in Chicago on March 25, 1934).

 A tribute dinner in my opinion is always a much happier event than a Sheloshim or Yahrtzeit gathering, although even those more somber presentations of a noble life can offer much inspiration to those attending or listening to videos of such tributes.

 The Jerusalem tribute for Rabbi Wein – “the Voice of History” was indeed a highly inspiring event about the achievements of one of the great Torah teachers of our times - the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

 We learn from the tributes given to Rabbi Wein that he was born in Chicago to Rabbi Zev and Esther (nee Rubenstein) Wein who immigrated to the United States and served in the Chicago rabbinate until the 1970s.

 Rabbi Berel Wein grew up in Chicago at a time when most people thought there was no future for Orthodox Judaism and even his own father discouraged his son from pursuing a career as a rabbi. He attended the Beis HaMidrash LaTorah in Chicago (now known as the Hebrew Theological College) where Rabbi Wein was deeply influenced by such dedicated teachers as Rabbi Chaim Kreiswirth, Rabbi Mordechai Rogow and Rabbi Yisroel Mendel Kaplan.

 While he did obtain semicha (rabbinical ordination) from his Chicago alma mater, Rabbi Wein simultaneously earned a bachelor’s degree from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a law degree from DePaul University, also in Chicago.



**Rabbi Chaim Kreiswirth, zt”l**

 After marrying the late Yocheved Levin (whose father was a prominent rabbi in Detroit), Rabbi Berel Wein was a practicing attorney for nine years in Chicago until his mentor Rabi Kreiswirth finally persuaded him to give up his law career and become a rabbi.

 Rabbi Kreiswirth found a small storefront shul in Miami Beach with just 39 families that Rabbi Wein could become the spiritual leader for. Eight years later when he left to work with the Orthodox Union in Manhattan the shul blossomed into a membership of a few hundred families.



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

 Wherever Rabbi Wein has gone, he has created or inspired growth in Torah institutions around the world. It was while in Miami Beach that Rabbi Wein developed a reputation for his outstanding and inspiring lectures on Jewish history. A prolific author on Jewish topics, Rabbi Wein has become the preeminent Orthodox Jewish historian in the world with the help of ArtScroll.

 At the same time that Rabbi Wein served as the rabbinic administrator of kashrut supervision division of the Orthodox Union in the 1970s, he also established Congregation Bais Torah in Suffern, NY and Yeshiva Sharei Torah of Rockland (County).



**Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt”l**

 In 1997 Rabbi Wein and his wife made Aliya to Eretz Yisroel and settled in the Rechavia neighborhood of Jerusalem. At first he joined the nearby Bet Knesset Hanasi synagogue that is popular with English-speaking immigrants and began delivering Torah and historical lecture. Within a few years he was made the rabbi of the Shul. He also established the Destiny Foundation that offers Jews around the world the chance to purchase audio tapes, books as well as drama and documentary film projects on Jewish history.

 A number of prominent Torah personalities, including Rabbi Hershel Schachter of Yeshiva University, the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein of South Africa via video presentations offered heartfelt tributes to the ongoing contributions that Rabbi Wein continues to make to the Jewish world. The highlight of the Jerusalem tribute to Rabbi Berel Wein was the keynote speech of the honoree himself. May Hashem continue to bless Rabbi Wein with many more years of good health and continued success as an author and Torah teacher.



**Rabbi Warren Goldstein**

 For readers interested in viewing this delightful video tribute to one of the greatest English-speaking Torah personalities of our time, please google – youtube – Rabbi Berel Wein’s Tribute Dinner.

*Reprinted from this week’s email of the Jewish Connection.*