Dear Members and Friends,

This week, the fightback against “woke culture” – the almost Orwellian control of what one is allowed to think and say in polite company – finally got underway in earnest. Bari Weiss, a well-credentialed left-wing journalist, announced her resignation from the bastion of liberal journalism, the New York Times, effective immediately, simultaneously publishing a sharply worded resignation letter she had written to the newspaper’s proprietor, A. G. Sulzberger.

“A new consensus has emerged in the press,” she wrote, “... truth isn’t a process of collective discovery, but an oxymoron already known to an enlightened few whose job is to inform everyone else.” But truthfully, if all we had to tolerate was a bunch of self-righteous woke forces forcing us to hear them out, it wouldn’t be that much of a big deal – after all, we’ve all been forced to listen to the vehemently delivered opinions of those we disagree with at one time or another.

And once we’ve heard them out, and politely (or impolitely) offered our own alternative viewpoint, the conversation ends there and life goes on.

Well, that’s not the case anymore. The difference today, as Weiss’s own experience highlights with bells ringing and red lights flashing, is that “wokeism” – which is ostensibly there to offer safe haven for those who are vulnerable to abuse and prejudice – has now evolved into what is known as “cancel culture”. If you have the temerity to disagree with the most up-to-date accepted opinion on anything, be it politics or sexuality, or the environment – then you will likely be subjected to a “cancel” campaign on social media, namely a concerted effort by a mob of saboteurs to delegitimize you, shame you, and even get you fired from your job.

Just listen to what Bari Weiss had to say in her letter to Sulzberger: “My own forays into Wrongthink have made me the subject of constant Jewish bullying by colleagues who disagree with my views. They have called me a Nazi and a racist... Several coworkers, particularly those involved in online editing, have been and continue to be hostile and confrontational, particularly after the publication of her thoughtful but controversial blog-piece last month. In the wake of a saga that began after she tweeted her support for Maya Forstater last December, Forstater, a tax advisor who had previously served as a chief tax officer for a company-wide Slack channels where masthead editors regularly weigh in. There, some coworkers insisted she was “an unapologetic white supremacist and homophobe” who had to be “quieted” because she was spreading “hate and misunderstanding.” In the aftermath of her dismissals, one of the victims and a Twitter employee who lost her job for “transphobic” tweets, had taken her employers to an employment tribunal in an attempt to get a judge to rule on whether her philosophical belief that a person’s sex is determined by biology is protected by the law. Remarkably, despite the fact that it wasn’t, in the meantime, Rowling’s support for Forstater was apparently a trigger for transphobic activists, and they have made her life miserable ever since.

The tyranny of wokeism and online harassment has infiltrated itself so deeply into modern life that we barely notice it until it impacts us, and while A-list celebrities may be able to withstand the effects of torrents of abuse they must endure for their “controversial” views, lesser mortals subjected to “canceling” – people like Bari Weiss, for example – can lose their jobs, their livelihoods, their reputations, and occasionally their mental stability or even their lives, as a direct result of insidious campaigns to destroy them.

So how ironic, that those who purported to stand against the underdog’s mistreatment by society have turned into a mob of self-righteous bigots, with no concern for the suffering they are causing to millions of ordinary people by their actions and behavior. This mob has resorted to nothing less than the methods of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, who is purported to have said “you cannot make a revolution with silk gloves,” and in the late 1920s personally authorized the death by starvation of 6,000,000 kulaks, middle-class peasants whose “sin” was that they owned land and made money by selling their produce.

In fact, the Kulaks eked out a meager existence from the small parcels of land they owned, exploited no one, and certainly bore no responsibility for the excesses of the Tsarist regime. But none of this mattered as far as Stalin was concerned. To him achieving the result was far more important than any methods employed to get there. And so, if the success of the communist revolution required innocent victims – firstly they weren’t so innocent (after all, who is?); and secondly, it was a price worth paying.

There is a verse in Mattot that exemplifies Judaism’s abhorrence of such an ideology. After the tribes of Reuben and Gad requested permission to settle in the plains of Moab, they offered to be at the vanguard of the conquest of Canaan, so that after one would say they had opted out of being part of the task that lay ahead for the nation as a whole. Moses accepted their offer, and concluded his response by saying (Num. 32:22) – וְאַחַר תָּשֻׁבוּ וִהְיִיתֶם נְקִיִים מֵה’ וּמִיִּשְרָּאֵל – “and afterward you shall return—you shall be clear before God and before Israel.” The plain understanding is that once these tribes had honored their military obligations, they could return to the plains of Moab in the knowledge that they were free and clear of any blame.

But the Talmud interprets the word “nekiyim” – ordinarily translated as “clean” or “clear” – to mean “guiltless” or “innocent” (Shabbat 133b). Even when listening for something you believe in, every precaution must be taken to ensure there is no possibility of impurity, or even the suggestion of it. Judaism is very clear that the ends never justify the means if those means are destructive and hurtful. Moses wanted to stress the fact that if after the conquest of Canaan the behavior of Reuben and Gad indicated they had been less than forthright about their true intentions, it would call into question everything they had done, even the good stuff. No campaign that is underpinned by skulduggery can ever be fighting a battle for purity.

With the resignation of Bari Weiss from the New York Times, and her accompanying letter, those on the left who suffered the indignity of guilt by association may finally wake up to the fact that their cause has been devastatingly hijacked and damaged by wokeism and the cancel culture. Let us hope that with a little wind in its sails, the deteriorated political climate of the western world can now begin to come to its senses, and reject the bullying and extremism that has dominated the atmosphere for far too long. It is time for all of us to be “faultless in the eyes of Israel and God.”

Thank you for praying for your safety and health, and for only good news, with God’s help. and Shabbat Shalom!

Rabbi Pini Dunner

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SHABBAT SCHEDULE
FRIDAY, JULY 17
6:30pm KABBALAT SHABBAT IN SHUL & VIA ZOOM
7:45pm CANDLELIGHTING

SATURDAY, JULY 18
8:48pm SHABBAT ENDS
9:15pm HAVDALAH VIA ZOOM

WEEKDAY DAVENING TIMES
Sunday 8:00am & 7:45pm
Mon - Friday 7:00am & 7:45pm
We are continuing to stream via zoom. https://zoom.us/j/226829899

Guidelines for Praying at home:
When davening at home, it is best to daven at the same time that you would have davened when in shul. Although you cannot *hear* the kriat Hatorah, you should still read the torah portion and haftorah.

Those who are going to be go to the tennis court in Beverly Hills, to daven at the same time that you would have davened when in shul. This can be done at the time of your choosing.

Please be sure to use the zoom links provided below.

To attend via Zoom:
25 Tammuz ● Parshat Matot-Masei ● Birka’t Rachodesch
Stephen Rothman, President ● Rabbi Pini Dunner, Senior Rabbi ● Nati Bar-Am, Chazon 310-827-9760 ● office@vinhh.org

Thank you Aaron & Lillian Fuchs and Jason Fuchs for sponsoring this week’s Daf Yomi Series in memory of Aaron’s mother and Jason’s grandmother, Sara Fuchs, Chaya Surah bat Gittel a”h, whose yahrzeit is on 26 Tammuz.

All services are being held at a private residence tennis court in Beverly Hills.

Those who are going to be attending our in-person minyanim must pre-register. Services are open to MEMBERS ONLY at this time. Space is limited.

All services are being held at a private residence tennis court in Beverly Hills.
It is a double Mazel Tov to Dr. Stephen Schloss
Mazel Tov on the birth of a great granddaughter, to grandparents Judy and Aaron Lampert and to parents Noa and Amichai Lampert and on the birth of a great grandson Roi Binyamin, to grandparents Michael and Elise Schloss, and to parents Lara and Chayim Ehrman.

We have moved weekday minyan to the Nissel tennis court due to the new Los Angeles rulings of indoor House of Worship closings.
A THREE WEEKS
ISRAEL JOURNEY

ON LOCATION AND IN OUR HEARTS
DAILY THOUGHTS DURING THE THREE WEEKS FILMED AT KEY SITES ACROSS ISRAEL

SUNDAY

20 Tammuz | July 12
Hebron Hills Vineyard
The Sin of the Spies
RABBI DOV LIPMAN
EVE HAROW

21 Tammuz | July 13
Nebi Samuel
Bloodshed
RABBI MENACHEM LEIBTAG
EVE HAROW

22 Tammuz | July 14
Hinom Valley
Idol-Worship
RABBI DAVID AARON
RABBI BARNEA SELAVAN

23 Tammuz | July 15
Herodian Quarter
Baseless Hatred
RABBI BINNY FREEDMAN
RABBI BARNEA SELAVAN

24 Tammuz | July 16
City of David: Area G
Rejecting RebuKe
RABBI MOSHE TARGAN
RABBI KEN SPIRO

MONDAY

27 Tammuz | July 19
Yavneh
Torah from the Depths
DR. YAEL ZEILEF
RABBI BARNEA SELAVAN

28 Tammuz | July 20
Har Grizim and Har Eival
Jewish Responsibility
RABBI YISHAI FLEISHER
EVE HAROW

29 Tammuz | July 21
The Ophel and Shiloh
Relationships
RABBI YOSEF ZVI BIMON
EVE HAROW
RABBI KEN SPIRO

1 Av | July 22
Ketef Hinom Graves
Unrequited Love
RABBI DORON PEREZ
RABBI BARNEA SELAVAN

2 Av | July 23
Kever Rachel
Never Giving Up
RABBI JEREMY SIMPEL
EVE HAROW

TUESDAY

5 Av | July 26
Jerusalem Archeology
Appreciating What We Lost
RABBIAN RACHELLE FRANKEL
RABBI KEN SPIRO

6 Av | July 27
Madaba Map and Sussya
The Centrality of Jerusalem
RABBI SHALOM ROSEN
EVE HAROW
RABBI KEN SPIRO

7 Av | July 28
Batei Machshe Square
Bringing The Redemption
RABBI YEHOSHUA FASS
RABBI KEN SPIRO

8 Av | July 29
Temple Mount Lookout Point
The Legacy of Rabbi Akiva
RABBIAN RACHELLE FRANKEL
RABBI BARNEA SELAVAN

WEDNESDAY

9 Av | July 30
Full Tisha B’Av Program

THURSDAY

THE CAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTION

WHAT WE NEED TO FIX

WHAT WE YEARN FOR

VIEW ON DEMAND OR REGISTER TO RECEIVE THESE TO YOUR EMAIL OR WHATSAPP AT www.mizrachi.org/threeweeks