



SUMMER
5777/2017

G E S H E R

Washington Heights Congregation

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A Message From The Rabbi ...

Haughtiness and Tzaraat

by Rabbi Yaakov Hoffman

Although we normally associate Tzaraat, the Divinely-inflicted skin disease, with the sin of lashon hara, speaking ill of others, that is actually only one of seven sins that Chazal (Arachin 16b) tell us can warrant such a punishment.

Some of the Tzaraat-worthy sins are indeed very severe – besides lashon hara, we have the likes of swearing falsely, murder, and theft. However, there is one sin on the list that seems out of place: גְּסוּת הַרוּחַ “haughtiness.” Haughtiness is not even a specific sinful action, but rather a poor character trait. Why should it be on the list with such major infractions? And what is the connection to Tzaraat?

In order to answer that, let’s take a look at how the Torah reviews the mitzvah of Tzaraat in Sefer Devarim. The verse in Parashat Ki Teitzei begins **הִשָּׁמֵר בְּנִגְעַת הַצָּרְעָתָה לִשְׁמֹר מְאֹד וּלְעֲשׂוֹת** “be very careful about the affliction of Tzaraat to keep diligently and do.” How would you expect the verse to continue? We should be very careful about Tzaraat and make sure we never get it! Don’t speak lashon hara! Don’t steal!

The actual continuation, however, is: **כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִרְוּ אֶתְכֶם הַכֹּהֲנִים** **וְהַלּוּיִם כֹּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתֶם תִּשְׁמְרוּ לְעֲשׂוֹת**, once you have Tzaraat, do everything that the Kohanim instruct you. But isn’t following all the rules an intrinsic part of every mitzvah? And why wait until we are already suffering from Tzaraat to be “very careful” about it? The Torah implies that the listening process to the Kohanim is a crucial part of truly recovering from Tzaraat and its causes.

When we think about it, this relates very well to the trait of haughtiness. A haughty person always thinks that he or she is right, and has difficulty accepting mistakes and retracting errors. While Tzaraat is always a humbling experience, there is an aspect of it that is particularly difficult for the haughty. Presumably, even a haughty person would have little problem responding to an unambiguous divine revelation.

(continued next page)

Tzaraat, however, is not so clear-cut. Ultimately, whether or not someone has Tzaraat depends on the Kohen, not solely on God.

This is why one of the main messages of Tzaraat is specifically addressed to the haughty. The requirement that we defer to an authority figure serves to break this person's habit of strongly giving precedence to his or her own thoughts and opinions, without sufficient pause and humility.

Although we no longer actually fear being afflicted with Tzaraat, it is important that we learn its lessons. May we search for all traces of haughtiness within ourselves, and recognize that we need not always follow our perhaps mistaken personal beliefs and opinions. The Torah places great importance on seeking guidance from religious leaders. 🏛️

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Orthodox Union in supplementing the Maot Chitim funds of our congregation to assist those in need this Pesach.

Shul Events:

Pesach: This year – and many thanks to **Rabbi Hoffman** for organizing this! – we had special speakers between Mincha and Maariv throughout Pesach as well as for the drasha on Shabbat Chol HaMoed. They were: **Rabbi Yosef Blau; Rabbi Etan Schnall; Rabbi Netanel Wiederblank; Rabbi Ezra Schwartz;** and **Rabbi Avrohom Hoffman**. And, thanks to the Rebbetzin's delicious mezonot, we had kiddush every day of yom tov as well as on Shabbat, and a Neilas HaChag as well. A wonderful time was had by all!

Yom Yerushalayam Luncheon, May 20, Behar-Bechukotai: This year's lunch was sponsored in part in memory of **Martin Spier** o'h by his grandchildren **Benjamin Chervin, Kate Chervin, Rebecca Chervin, Jaime Chervin, Raquel Hochroth** and **Niki Hochroth**, and by his wife **Monica Spier**. **Rabbi Emeritus Ellis Bloch** was the speaker. He wove together memories of Martin with thoughts about the 50th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem. The caterer of the delicious spread was K-Grill in Riverdale.

Shavuot: This year we had many shiurim, all of them well-attended by people from throughout the neighborhood. Rabbi Hoffman arranged for special speakers before and after Mincha both days. They were: **Rabbi Hoffman** himself, **Dr. David Sclar**, **Rabbi Shmuel Kresch**, and **Rabbi Ezra Schwartz**. We also had daytime shiurim for the first time. Many thanks to **Adina Gerver**, whose idea this was and who worked hard to ensure its very successful outcome. These speakers were: **Daniel Serrulha**, **Dr. Ira Saiger**, **Adina Gerver**, and **Elan Rieser**. **Adina, Elan, and Margot Fein** provided child care. Margot helped in many other ways as well. Thanks to all!

Many thanks to **Elan Rieser**, who led a shiur/discussion group about Contemporary Contemplations on Shabbat that met 30 minutes before Mincha on Friday afternoons.

מזל טוב / Congratulations

To **Alexander & Nina Srogovich** on the birth of a great granddaughter, **Maya Likhachova**, and to the grandparents, **Margarita & Vladimir Safonova**, and to the parents, **Allahasha Safonova & Max Likhachova**

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the birth of a great grandson, and to the grandparents, **Nechama & Tovia Horowitz**, and to the parents, **Sara & Yitzi Horowitz**

To **Alma Schatten** on the Bar and Bat Mitzvah of twin grandchildren, **Dylan Ari** and **Hope Erin Schneider**, and to the parents, **Rebecca & Scott Schneider**

To **Gloria Spira** on the Bar Mitzvah in Israel of a great grandson, **Yechiel Cooper**, and to the grandparents, **Sari & Ira Cooper**, and the parents, **Shani & Yaakov Cooper**

To **Ilse Gruenspecht** on the Bat Mitzvah of a great granddaughter, **Rose Secemski**, and to the grandparents, **Isaac & Esther Secemski**, and the parents, **David & Leora Secemski**

To **Pinny Bulman** on the selection of 4 of his poems for 2016 Anna Davidson Rosenberg Awards, including publication by Poetica in a special print collection

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the birth of a great granddaughter, **Devorah Leah Assaban**, and to the grandparents, **Mark & Chani Grunwald**, and the parents, **Avi & Aviva Assaban**

To **Sonya Jacobs** on the Bar Mitzvah of her great grandson, **Yaakov Yosef Halevi**, and to the grandparents, **Shmuel & Michelle Jacobs**, and the parents, **Nechemia & Ahuva Kraus**

Kiddush Sponsors:

April 29, Tazria-Metzora: **Mordecai & Leslie Segall**

May 13, Emor: Sit-down kiddush given by **Laura Whitcup** to celebrate **Morris's** special birthday

May 27, Bamidbar: **Margot Fein** on the yahrzeit of her mother, **Sylvia Fein** (Tzivia bat Shaye Tzemach), and **Dvora Hersh** on the yahrzeit of her father, **Richard Lowe** (Kalonymus ben Yitzhok)

June 3, Nasso: **Alma Schatten** on the first yahrzeit of **Ira Schatten**, and in honor of their grandchildren's Bnei Mitzvot

June 10, Beha'alotcha: **Morris & Laura Whitcup** on the yahrzeit of Morris's father, **Jacob Whitcup**

June 17, Sh'lach: **Sheva & Izya Shtaygrud** on the yahrzeit of Sheva's parents, **Tuba Perlmann** (Tova bat Yitzchak) and **Jacob Perlmann** (Yaakov Yosef ben Chaim)

If you are interested in sponsoring a Kiddush, please call the Shul office **(212) 923-4407**

Condolences to:

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Melchior Nutovich's mother, Audrey Nutovich (Chaya Fraida bat Yaakov) o'h, on Friday, June 9th

May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

הַמָּקוֹם יַנְחֵם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר אֲבֹלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם

Washington Heights Congregation Zmanim

Summer 5777

Zmanim subject to change: please consult the website and weekly e-mails for the latest times

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM PARASHAT SH'LACH

JUNE 16-17

Earliest Candles	6:56
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:11
Shacharit (note early start)	8:35
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:20

ROSH CHODESH TAMMUZ SHABBAT PARASHAT KORACH

JUNE 23-24

Earliest Candles	6:57
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:13
Shacharit (note early start)	8:35
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:22

SHABBAT PARASHAT CHUKAT

JUNE 30 – JULY 1

Earliest Candles	6:58
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:20*
Candle Lighting	8:13
Shacharit (note early start)	8:35
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:22

SHABBAT PARASHAT BALAK JULY 7-8

Earliest Candles	6:57
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:12
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	8:10
Maariv/Havdalah	9:19

FAST OF 17 TAMMUZ TUESDAY, JULY 11

Fast begins	3:32
Fast ends	9:08

SHABBAT PARASHAT PINCHAS JULY 14-15

Earliest Candles	6:55
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:15*
Candle Lighting	8:09
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	8:05
Maariv/Havdalah	9:15

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM PARASHAT MATOT-MASEI JULY 21-22

Earliest Candles	6:51
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:10*
Candle Lighting	8:04
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	8:00
Maariv/Havdalah	9:09

SHABBAT HAZON PARASHAT DEVARIM JULY 28-29

Earliest Candles	6:46
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:05*
Candle Lighting	7:58
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:55
Maariv/Havdalah	9:02

TISHA B'AV
JULY 31 – AUGUST 1

Fast begins	8:09
Maariv	8:55
Shacharit	8:20
Chatzot	1:02
Fast ends	8:49

SHABBAT NACHAMU
PARASHAT VAETCHANAN
AUGUST 4-5

Earliest Candles	6:40
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:00*
Candle Lighting	7:50
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:50
Maariv/Havdalah	8:53

SHABBAT PARASHAT EIKEV
AUGUST 11-12

Earliest Candles	6:33
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	6:55*
Candle Lighting	7:42
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:40
Maariv/Havdalah	8:43

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM
PARASHAT RE'EH
AUGUST 18-19

Earliest Candles	6:25
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	6:45*
Candle Lighting	7:32
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:30
Maariv/Havdalah	8:32

SHABBAT PARASHAT
SHOFTIM

AUGUST 25-26

Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:20
Candle Lighting	7:22
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:20
Maariv/Havdalah	8:21

SHABBAT PARASHAT KI
TEITZEI

SEPTEMBER 1-2

Candle Lighting	7:11
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:20
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	7:05
Maariv/Havdalah	8:09

SHABBAT PARASHAT
KI TAVO

SEPTEMBER 8-9

Candle Lighting	6:59
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	7:05
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	6:55
Maariv/Havdalah	7:57

SHABBAT PARASHAT
NITZAVIM-VAYEILECH
SEPTEMBER 15-16

Candle Lighting	6:47
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat	6:55
Shacharit	8:40
Mincha	6:45
Maariv/Havdalah	7:44

*For those whose families daven with the shul's minyan, candles should be lit no later than 25 minutes after Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat starts

The Eruv

Information about the boundaries of the Washington Heights and YU Eruvin can be found at http://images.shulcloud.com/131/attachments/6279_DOC082112-003.pdf.

Note that the eruv does not extend into Fort Tryon Park or Gorman Park.

Find the CURRENT STATUS of both eruvim at <http://www.mtsinaishul.com/>, or call 646-450-ERUV, or send a text message (SMS) to 412-213-8991. If only the YU eruv is listed as unchecked, check www.yueruv.org closer to Shabbat, or listen to announcements in shul on Friday night.

Message from the Spier family:

We would like to express our sincere thank you to Rabbi Hoffman, the Sisterhood, and all the members of the Washington Heights Congregation for their kindness during Martin's illness and their support throughout the shiva. **Monica and Family**

Message from Dvora Hersh:

I would like to thank Rabbi Hoffman, the Sisterhood and the members of our shul for the visits, phone calls, cards, donations, companionship, and delicious food that was sent to me while I was sitting shiva for my beloved mother, Marjorie Lowe a"h. All these expressions of condolence brought great comfort to me. **Dvora Hersh**

We need your participation in an important mitzvah: Hachnasat Sefer Torah

We are planning a program of activities and sponsorships to welcome a new sefer Torah into our congregation. Commissioned by the shul from an Israeli sofer, it will be completed this summer and is scheduled to arrive before Rosh Hashana. If you are interested in joining one of two committees, please let the Shul Office know. There is a Hachnasat Torah Fundraising Committee to raise funds to complete the sefer and a Hachnasat Torah Event and Education Committee to organize an appropriate celebration.

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