

LUCKY NUMBER 13

Gabrielle Donati

When I was asked to write an article for the Pesach edition of Bereshith, I wasn't quite sure what my focus would be. Maybe I would expound on how much I enjoy an entire week of eating foods that are quite different from my rest-of-the-year routine. One year, I made matzah brei every morning for breakfast; I had a sweet version with honey, and a savory version with onions. I became so enamored of that meal that I asked my friends to give me their leftover matzah at the end of the holiday so that I could make my amazing breakfast last a few weeks longer.

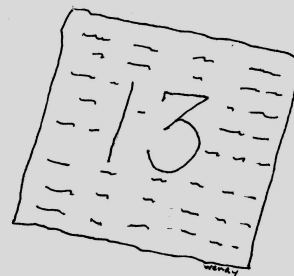
Or maybe I would write specifically about my experience of Pesach in Israel - from the dense matzah rolls that replace *chametz* in nearly every restaurant and kiosk in the country (oooo those slightly-sweet rolls are so good with coffee!), to the vendors at the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem who choose this one week to erect open-air "*al-ha'ish*" (BBQ) grills and serve cooked-to-order seared burgers with sides of salad and matzah that are "to die for." Or how the one-day observance of the seder in Israel seems to infuse the evening with additional meaning and significance because there is no "do over" the next night. There was much to write about, and I hadn't even touched upon the layers of meaning in the seder itself! Once I began, however, I remembered that this will be my thirteenth experience of Pesach as a Jew, and surely there was some significance in that.

I chose to enter the mikveh just prior to Pesach of 2003. For me, the holiday commemorating the exodus was the perfect symbolic representation of my personal journey - a mental exodus from a previous belief system and way of life, and, six-months later, my physical exodus from the country of my birth to Israel - the homeland of the Jewish people. Unlike the superstitious negativity associated with the number thirteen in most western cultures, in Judaism, the number thirteen is considered a "lucky" number - a number of great spiritual significance and positivity. Not only do the words *ahava* (love) and *echod* (one) add up to thirteen in Hebrew *gematria* (numerology), but there are quite a few important concepts in Judaism in which thirteen is the defining number: The Thirteen Principles of Faith, the Thirteen Attributes of G-d's Mercy, the thirteenth year of a young man's life (Bar Mitzvah), and Abraham's Thirteen Covenants with G-d, to name a few. Given the importance of this number in our culture, the fact that this year, 5776 (2016), is the thirteenth year since my conversion to Judaism seems to be no minor anniversary.

As I continued my research for this article, I took a deeper look at the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Traditionally recited on fast days and in the *slichot* prayers leading up to Yom Kippur, they were revealed to Moses after the sin of the Golden Calf, as detailed in Exodus 34:5-7, when G-d advised Moses that he would forgive Israel's sins if the attributes were recited in a specific order. We invoke His mercy, sympathy, goodness, truth, and affection for us, while admitting our own shortcomings. It is as though our recitation of G-d's Thirteen Attributes reminds G-d of His capacity for forgiveness in a moment when our behavior is least deserving of it. Personally, I certainly have moments in which I am so angry, hurt, or appalled at the behavior of others that my immediate response is one of retribution rather than mercy. But, as we stand before G-d reciting the attributes as a plea for His mercy upon ourselves and for our transgressions, should they not also serve as a reminder to us to show mercy toward our fellow human beings and ourselves? How many relationships are broken because we are unable to forgive? How much do we berate ourselves for our lack of perfection, instead of lovingly accepting that we, as humans, aren't perfect?

Personally, I don't feel comfortable asking G-d for a mercy that I am unwilling to extend to others. And so, as I joyously celebrate this Passover holiday and both its spiritual and edible delights, I will take a closer look at those Thirteen Attributes and how I can consciously bring them into my personal interactions with myself and with others, and strive to become a small reflection of those profoundly empathetic qualities with which G-d lovingly blesses us. *Pesach Samayach!*

Gabrielle Donati is a former member of the Beginners Service, a rabid fan of Rabbi Buchwald, and happily resides in Tel Aviv, Israel.



CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

Amira Kipnis and Adam Goldberg
Mazal Tov to parents,
Robin and Neil Goldberg



MARRIAGES

Serach Gottlieb and Elyada Deutsch
Mazal Tov to parents, Wendy and Dr. Seymour Gottlieb
Dayna Weiner and Michael Fleisch
Mazal Tov to parents, Meira and Thomas Fleisch
Moriah Alioua and Akiva Jacobs
Mazal Tov to parents, Batya and Eddie Jacobs
Mazal Tov to grandparents,
Vicki and Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
Ariella Polakoff and Raffi Leicht
Mazal Tov to parents, Renee and Allan Leicht
Dr. Victoria Perez and Amir Ron

BIRTHS

Shira and Jared Boschan, on the birth of a daughter,
Eliana Brielle
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Robin and Neil Goldberg
Chava and Naftali Burnham, on the birth of a daughter,
Hodaya Tiferet
Henny and Avraham Gilman, on the birth of a daughter,
Ayelet

Mazal Tov to grandmother, Chana (Pat Papock) Gilman
Lea and Seth Goldberg, on the birth of a son,
Harry Bernard (Dov Bear)
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Robin and Neil Goldberg
Chava Yehudis and Akiva Moshe Goodman,
on the birth of a son, Menachem Mendel
Mazal Tov to grandparents,
Sharone D'vora and Shmuel Goodman
Mindy and Aryeh Goodman, on the birth of a son,
Menachem Mendel
Mazal Tov to grandparents,
Sharone D'vora and Shmuel Goodman
Shoshana and Mark Gottlieb,
on the birth of a daughter, Nechama Chaya
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Wendy and
Dr. Seymour Gottlieb
Megan Quattlebaum and Ben Klein,
on the birth of a son, Leo Jacob (Aryeh Yaakov)
David Popik on the birth of a granddaughter, Rosa
Sophia and Akiva Moshe Prell,
on the birth of a daughter, Rut
Sarita and Mordechai (Motti) Saban,
on the birth of a daughter, Na'ama Esther
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Irene and David Disenhouse

Nechama and Reuven Weiser,
on the birth of a daughter, Ayelet Tehillah
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Sema and
Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Reich

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

John Liam (Yochanan) Bousbib
Mazal Tov to mother, Diana Bousbib
Yehuda Wildes
Mazal Tov to parents, Jill and Rabbi Mark Wildes
Gabriela Yohananoff
Mazal Tov to parents, Daniela Weiss and
Dr. Avi Yohananoff

CONDOLENCES

Alene Brodsky, on the loss of her mother, Phyllis Bloom
Andrew Fleisch and Thomas Fleisch,
on the loss of their mother, Eleanor (Ellie) Fleisch
Bill Greenbaum,
on the loss of his mother, Theodora Greenbaum
Amy Kase, on the loss of her father, Harold Nelkin,
father of the late Leslie Nelkin, z"l
Eric Johnson, on the loss of his brother, Walter Johnson
Yosef Maccaba, on the loss of his father, James McCabe

Continued on the reverse

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Fri April 15, 2016 - 7th of Nissan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:14 PM
 Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 6:45 PM
 Candle Lighting 7:19 PM
 Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:25 PM

Sat April 16, 2016 - 8th of Nissan
SHABBAT HAGADOL Metzora
Beginners Passover Shabbaton
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 AM
 Mincha 6:50 PM
 Shabbat HaGadol Drasha 7:15 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 8:20 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:25 PM

Thu April 21, 2016 - 13th of Nissan
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM
 Bedikat Chametz after 8:25 PM

Fri April 22, 2016 - 14th of Nissan
EREV PESACH - Ta'anit Bechorot
 Morning Services with Siyum 6:30 & 7:30 AM
 Latest time to eat Chametz 10:00 AM
 Latest time to burn Chametz 11:17 AM
 Candle Lighting 7:26 PM
 Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:30 PM
 Begin Seder after 8:15 PM

Sat April 23, 2016 - 15th of Nissan
PESACH
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Mincha 7:20 PM
 Candle Lighting 8:27 PM
 Start Seder after 8:27 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:35 PM

Sun April 24, 2016 - 16th of Nissan
2nd DAY PESACH
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Mincha 7:35 PM
 Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends 8:29 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 7:35 PM

Mon April 25, 2016 - 17th of Nissan
CHOL HAMOED PESACH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Tues April 26, 2016 - 18th of Nissan
CHOL HAMOED PESACH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Wed April 27, 2016 - 19th of Nissan
CHOL HAMOED PESACH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Thurs April 28, 2016 - 20th of Nissan
CHOL HAMOED PESACH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Candle Lighting 7:32 PM
 Mincha/Maariv 7:35 PM

Fri April 29, 2016 - 21st of Nissan
7th DAY PESACH
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Candle Lighting 7:33 PM
 Mincha/Maariv 7:40 PM

Sat April 30, 2016 - 22nd of Nissan
8th DAY PESACH - Yizkor
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Mincha 7:25 PM
 Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends 8:35 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 7:40 PM

Fri May 6, 2016 - 28th of Nissan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:30 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 7:41 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:45 PM

Sat May 7, 2016 - 29th of Nissan
Acharei Mot
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Luncheon 12:30 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:00 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:30 PM
 Bible Class 6:30 PM
 Mincha 7:30 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 8:42 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 7:50 PM

Sun May 8, 2016 - 30th of Nissan
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Mon May 9, 2016 - 1st of Iyar
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Beginners Shmooze 8:15 PM

Thurs May 12, 2016 - 4th of Iyar
YOM HA'ATZMA'UT
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM

Fri May 13, 2016 - 5th of Iyar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:36 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 7:48 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 7:50 PM

Sat May 14, 2016 - 6th of Iyar Kedoshim
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:05 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:35 PM
 Bible Class 6:35 PM
 Mincha 7:35 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 8:49 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 7:55 PM

Fri May 20, 2016 - 12th of Iyar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:41 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 7:54 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:00 PM

Sat May 21, 2016 - 13th of Iyar
Emor
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:10 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:40 PM
 Bible Class 6:40 PM
 Mincha 7:40 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 8:56 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 8:00 PM

Thu May 26, 2016 - 18th of Iyar
LAG B'OMER
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM

Fri May 27, 2016 - 19th of Iyar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:46 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 8:00 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:05 PM

Sat May 28, 2016 - 20th of Iyar Behar
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:15 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:45 PM
 Bible Class 6:45 PM
 Mincha 7:45 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 9:02 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 8:10 PM

Fri June 3, 2016 - 26th of Iyar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:50 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 8:05 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:10 PM

Sat June 4, 2016 - 27th of Iyar
Bechukotai
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:20 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:50 PM
 Bible Class 6:50 PM
 Mincha 7:50 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 9:07 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 8:15 PM

Sun June 5, 2016 - 28th of Iyar
YOM YERUSHALAYIM
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
Tues June 7, 2016 - 1st of Sivan
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri June 10, 2016 - 4th of Sivan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Earliest Candle Lighting 6:54 PM
 Regular Candle Lighting 8:10 PM
 Mincha 6:45 & 8:15 PM

Sat June 11, 2016 - 5th of Sivan
Bamidbar EREV SHAUVOT
 Morning Services . . . 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Service 9:15 PM
 Beginners Mishnayot 6:25 PM
 Talmud/Pirkei Avot Class 6:55 PM
 Bible Class 6:55 PM
 Mincha 7:55 PM
 Light Candles after after 9:11 PM
 Beginners Shavuot Learn-In 11:30 PM

Sun June 12, 2016 - 6th of Sivan
1st DAY SHAUVOT
 Morning Services 4:58 & 9:00 AM
 Book of Ruth 7:05 PM
 Mincha 8:15 PM
 Light Candles after 9:10 PM
 Maariv 9:11 PM

Mon June 13, 2016 - 7th of Sivan
2nd DAY SHAUVOT Yizkor
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Book of Ruth 7:05 PM
 Mincha 8:15 PM
 Ma'ariv/Yom Tov ends 9:11 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 8:15 PM

SAVE THE DATE

Beginners Shabbat Luncheons

Sat, 12:30 PM - \$25

May 7, June 4
Sept 10

Beginners Shmooze - Free

Mon, May 9, 8:15 PM

All Night Shavuot Learn-a-thon

Sat, June 11, 11:30 PM - 7:00 AM

Continued from the reverse

Miriam Savir, on the loss of her mother, Hannah Gelber
 Sara Schandelson, on the loss of her father,
 Dr. Emanuel Parzen
 Doug Schiller, on the loss of his father, Lewis Schiller
 Barbara Seplowitz Schumer, on the loss of her mother,
 Nancy Seplowitz Prague
 Sarah Stambler, on the loss of her mother, Helen Latner
 Lou Vynerib, on the loss of his sister, Roslyn Halpern
 Chaviva Warner, on the loss of her brother, GuoQing Zhao
 Jill Wildes, on the loss of her mother, Marcia Brandfon

SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Dana Hudes, Chaim Daniel Baruch ben Rivka Breindl
 Beatrice Stoller, Bracha Sarah Fayga bat Sima
 Regina Ullendorff, Rachel bat Feige

CONGRATULATIONS

Elizabeth and Blair Axel on being honored at the 29th

Anniversary Dinner of the Yeshiva Ketana of
 Manhattan
 Aidel and Ephraim Buchwald on the 40th anniversary
 of the founding of the LSS Beginners Service
 Ephraim Buchwald on his 70th birthday
 Ephraim Buchwald on being honored at the Annual
 NJOP Dinner
 Lynn (Malka) Gold on being honored at the Chabad of
 Washington Heights' Annual Dinner
 Dr. Shanna and Adam Herbst on being honored at the
 COJO of Flatbush Legislative Breakfast
 Masami and Marko Issever on being honored at the
 22nd Annual Dinner of Yeshiva Gedola of South
 Monsey
 Ellen and Mordecai Lipkis on being honored at the
 Annual NJOP Dinner
 Dr. Eliya Stromberg on the publication of his book,
 "Chosen Fathers: Life lessons learned from fathers of
 children with disabilities"

Happy 95h Birthday to Regina Ullendorff
 Jill and Rabbi Mark Wildes on being honored at the
 Yeshiva University High School Annual Dinner
 Laurie and Richard Wolff on being honored at the
 Young Israel of New Rochelle's 49th Annual Dinner

TODAH RABBAH

Shabbat Across America committee: Tova and Assaf
 Alster, Mordechai Beilis and Deborah Bendheim
 David Basch, Peter Farkas and Alessandra von Eikh,
 for writing and producing the Beginners Purim
 Shpiel
 David Basch, Alejandro Cadena, Peter Farkas,
 Samantha Lee, Diana Lyon, Naydalis Peralta and
 Maya Shaposhnik, for acting in the Beginners Purim
 Shpiel