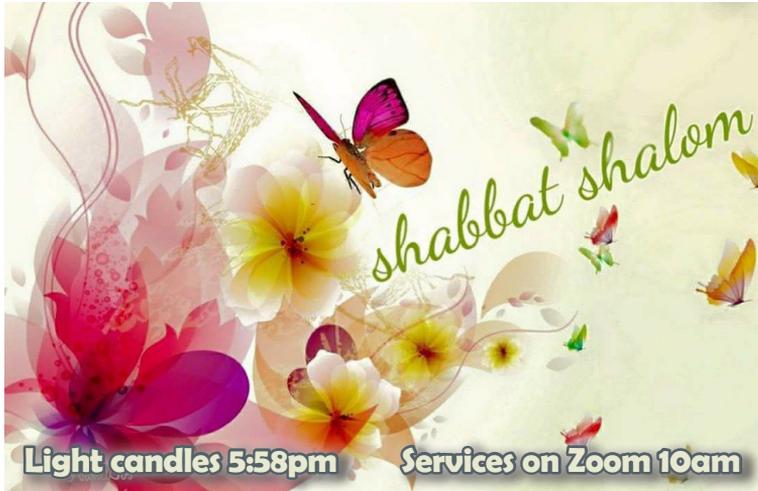




Carnegie Shul Chatter

March 4, 2021



Zoom in for Services

Our abbreviated Shabbos service begins at 10 am and lasts approximately an hour. Click here to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85775113748?pwd=dWZabFE1RUt2R3h5ZkRkKbGVRMk50dz09>

Find the Birnbaum siddur at: <https://opensiddur.org/compilations/liturgical/siddurim/kol-bo/hasiddur-hashalem-by-paltiel-birnbaum-1949/>

Ki Tisa in a Nutshell

Exodus 30:11–34:35

Below is this week's Parshah in a Nutshell from chabad.org.

The people of Israel are told to each contribute exactly half a shekel of silver to the Sanctuary. Instructions are also given regarding the making of the Sanctuary's water basin, anointing oil and incense. "Wise-hearted" artisans Betzalel and Aholiav are placed in charge of the

Lucky Number 13

What a wondrous God we have! A God who is slow to anger and abundant in kindness. A God whose thirteen attributes of mercy give us hope for forgiveness even though we have sinned and will certainly sin again.

Many people think that the number thirteen is an unlucky number. Superstitious people worry about what calamity might befall them on Friday the thirteenth.

But for Jews thirteen is definitely not an unlucky number. To the contrary, for us it is a very lucky number.

- ♦ Jewish boys are Bar Mitzvah at age 13.
- ♦ God has 13 attributes of mercy.
- ♦ Maimonides tells us that there are 13 principles of Jewish faith.
- ♦ There are 13 months in the lunar calendar.
- ♦ When Israel was established in 1948, the first provisional government had 13 members.

I like number 13, how about you?

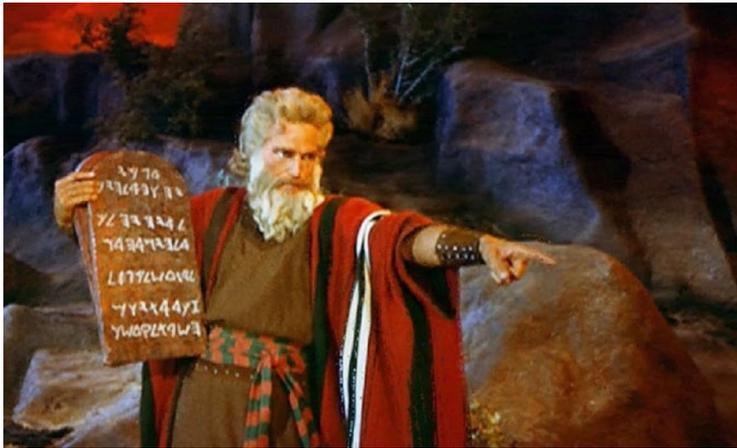
Sanctuary's construction, and the people are once again commanded to keep the Shabbat.

When Moses does not return when expected from Mount Sinai, the people make a golden calf and worship it. G-d proposes to destroy the errant nation, but Moses intercedes on their behalf. Moses descends from the mountain carrying the tablets of the testimony engraved with the Ten



Commandments; seeing the people dancing about their idol, he breaks the tablets, destroys the golden calf, and has the primary culprits put to death. He then returns to G-d to say: "If You do not forgive them, blot me out from the book that You have written."

G-d forgives, but says that the effect of their sin will be felt for many generations. At first G-d proposes to send His angel along with them, but Moses insists that G-d Himself accompany His people to the promised land.



Moses prepares a new set of tablets and once more ascends the mountain, where G-d reinscribes the covenant on these second tablets. On the mountain, Moses is also granted a vision of the divine thirteen attributes of mercy. So radiant is Moses' face upon his return, that he must cover it with a veil, which he removes only to speak with G-d and to teach His laws to the people.

Beyond the Golden Calf

This week we have a most interesting parshah. It includes the story of the Golden Calf, a story which I am sure that all of you have heard countless times and a story about which innumerable commentaries have been written.

But the parshah also includes the thirteen divine attributes of mercy, something that you may not know quite as much about even though they are a highlight of the Selichot prayers on the High Holidays.

On the following page is an article from myjewishlearning.com that tells us about the thirteen attributes.

The 13 Attributes of Mercy

Asking God for forgiveness.

By Ronald L. Eisenberg

The core of the Selichot prayers is the 13 Attributes of Mercy, the very words that God taught Moses for the people to use whenever they needed to beg for divine compassion. Because the Talmud states that God was wearing a tallit at that time, it is customary for the prayer leader to wear a tallit for the recital of the Selichot prayers, even though they otherwise are never worn at this early hour because it is too dark to see the tzitzit (which are meant to be visual reminders, as in the verse, “And you shall see them”; Num. 15:39).

The 13 Attributes of Mercy are found after the incident of the Golden Calf, when God threatened to destroy the people of Israel rather than forgive them (Exod. 32:10). According to the Talmud, Moses felt that Israel’s sin was so serious that there was no possibility of intercession on their behalf.

At this point, God appeared to Moses and taught him the 13 Attributes, saying: “Whenever Israel sins, let them recite this [the Thirteen Attributes] in its proper order and I will forgive them.” Thus this appeal to God’s mercy reassures us that repentance is always possible and that God always awaits our return.”

Biblical Origins

The 13 Attributes of Mercy are based on two verses in Exodus: “The Lord! The Lord! God, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger and Abundant in Kindness and Truth, Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations, Forgiver of iniquity, willful sin, and error, and Who Cleanses (but does not cleanse completely, recalling the iniquity of parents upon children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generations)” (34:6-7).

The Hebrew phrase “v’nakeh lo y’nakeh” (and who cleanses but does not cleanse) is a common biblical grammatical form that uses repetition to stress the action. The Rabbis ingeniously cut off the verse after v’nakeh, thus changing the meaning to indicate that God does forgive all sins.

This remarkable midrashic transformation has become the standard format whenever this Torah verse is used in a synagogue service. Although it may go beyond the plain meaning of



the biblical text, the change is consistent with the general concept of the passage—the merciful and forgiving nature of God.

What Are the 13 Attributes?

The 13 Attributes of Mercy, according to the generally accepted opinions of Rabbenu Tam and Abudraham, are as follows:

- ◆ The Lord! (Adonai)—God is merciful before a person sins! Even though aware that future evil lies dormant within him.
- ◆ The Lord! (Adonai)—God is merciful after the sinner has gone astray.
- ◆ God (El)—a name that denotes power as ruler over nature and humankind, indicating that God’s mercy sometimes surpasses even the degree indicated by this name.
- ◆ Compassionate (raham)—God is filled with loving sympathy for human frailty does not put people into situations of extreme temptation, and eases the punishment of the guilty.
- ◆ Gracious (v’hanun)—God shows mercy even to those who do not deserve it consoling the afflicted and raising up the oppressed.
- ◆ Slow to anger (ereh apayim)—God gives the sinner ample time to reflect, improve, and repent.
- ◆ Abundant in Kindness (v’rav hesed)—God is kind toward those who lack personal merits, providing more gifts and blessings than they deserve; if one’s personal behavior is evenly balanced between virtue and sin, God tips the scales of justice toward the good.
- ◆ Truth (v’emet)—God never reneges on His word to reward those who serve Him.
- ◆ Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations (notzeir hesed la-alafim)—God remembers the deeds of the righteous for the benefit of their less virtuous generations of offspring (thus we constantly invoke the merit of the Patriarchs).
- ◆ Forgiver of iniquity (nosei avon)—God forgives intentional sin resulting from an evil disposition, as long as the sinner repents.
- ◆ Forgiver of willful sin (pesha)—God allows even those who commit a sin with the malicious intent of rebelling against and angering Him the opportunity to repent.
- ◆ Forgiver of error (v’hata’ah)—God forgives a sin committed out of carelessness, thoughtlessness, or apathy.
- ◆ Who cleanses (v’nakeh)—God is merciful, gracious, and forgiving, wiping away the sins of those who truly repent; however, if one does not repent, God does not cleanse.



The kabbalists introduced the custom of also reciting the 13 Attributes of Mercy before taking the Torah from the ark during the three pilgrimage festivals of Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. This was followed by a silent prayer beginning, “Master of the universe, fulfill my heartfelt

requests for good,” demonstrating an understanding that all too often one’s personal goals are not for his or her benefit. Like all personal supplications, the 13 Attributes of Mercy are not recited on the Sabbath or on festivals that fall on the Sabbath.

From The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions, published by the Jewish Publication Society.