**RECIPE FROM ROSE ESKONONTS: BUMUELOS DE PESACH**

These traditional Passover delicacies are typically eaten for breakfast during the holiday, but may be eaten at any time and are served with simple syrup (recipe to follow) or powdered sugar. They are the Sephardic version of matzah brei, by the Ashkenazi Jews, and have been compared to Italian zeppole.

**Ingredients for Bumuelos:**
- Matzah, Eggs, Salt

It takes one egg per each matzah. (For this recipe, 12 eggs and 12 pieces of matzah.) Wash the matzah in cold water for at least 10 to 15 minutes. Separate out all water and mash the matzah with your hands. Sprinkle in salt (for this 12 matza, 12 egg mixture, I used a teaspoon of salt). Add one egg at a time, beating until all eggs are incorporated and the consistency is of thickened oatmeal.

Pour oil into bumedalo pan and heat over medium heat until hot. Add heaping tablespoonfuls of batter to heated oil, carefully. Turn each one when golden brown on the bottom and then golden brown on top. Repeat.


**Passover**


**Contact Information**

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**Our synagogue is called Kehila Kedosha Janina (The Holy Congregation of Janina). The word kehила has another meaning: community. From antiquity to the present, a synagogue served the community. The congregation was the community. Our forefathers could have named their synagogue many things: synagogue, temple, congregation, but they chose the traditional name used in Greece among Romaniote Jews for a Jewish house of worship. ‘kehila’. For the founding fathers of Kehila Kedosha Janina, the structure built in 1927 was more than a house of worship or a place to study. It was a place for the community to preserve its traditions, customs and language. The four walls of the structure would wrap itself around the ‘community’ and embrace the congregants within, offering security from the sometime hostile new world they found themselves living within. As they gathered to worship, connections were made, job opportunities were discovered, advice was offered and, often, marital matches proposed. The ‘community’ was reinforced. The harshness of their lives eased.

With the passage of time the demographics of the ‘community’ have changed. Geographically, the ‘community’ is no longer just on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, nor even just within the area of the northeastern United States. Our spiritual ‘community’ is now worldwide, as Kehila Kedosha Janina has become the center of Romaniote Jewry. Now, in a world no longer bound by traditional definitions of ‘community,’ our kehila still offers a place to worship, a place to remember and a place to preserve traditions and customs: a place to conserve and a place to grow, a place that speaks of the past and reaches into the future.

Our ‘community’ now acts as an inspiration to other communities. Here on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, those of us involved in preservation, have a saying: “We all walk in someone else’s footsteps. Make your imprints deep so that others may walk in yours.” Our founders left deep imprints. Hopefully, we at Kehila Kedosha Janina have lived up to their expectations. Hopefully, we will leave deep imprints for the next generations to walk in.


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**The Romanicle**

Newsletter of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum
We have asked our members to open up their hearts to help our synagogue in Ioannina repair their Torahs, and now have asked them to contribute to the repair of the Tikkun of these same Torahs. Our Sisterhood Newsletter goes out to members noting special occasions, both glad and sad, so that we may keep our “community” informed of our “comings and goings,” no matter how far away they may be. We are all bound together to Kehila Kedosha Janina, our home base, for this is the community where it all began.

Thank you,
Rose Eskononts
President

THE TRADITION OF THE ALEF

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to have the largest collection of Alefs (amulets created for the brit milah ceremony) in the world. In Ioannina and, for a short time after the community came to the USA, it was traditional to have an Alef made for each male child. To a lesser extent, it was also a tradition in Romanite communities of Arta, Preveza and Corfu. Over the course of years, many scholars have studied our Alefs, many pondering why and how it became a tradition in Romanite communities west of the Pindos Mountains but not elsewhere in Greece. We still do not have an answer to that question but we have a good idea as to the purpose of the amulet. It was to protect the newborn child for forty days after the brit milah (circumcision) and contained formulas, some traditional and others kabbalistic. In a standard Alef, there are the angels that protect the baby from Lilith (known to have a desire to steal male babies), the prayer of the Cohanim, the Shema, the 67th psalm (a psalm praising G_d) inside the menorah (traditional symbol of Judaism). The Patriarchs and the Matriarchs are also listed and, what is especially interesting in the Alef, Adam and Eve, and Moses and Tsiporah are also listed. On the bottom of the Alef, we have the genealogy of the baby when his Hebrew name is given to him at the brit milah ceremony and the names of his father and grandfather are also listed with prayers for his physical and spiritual health. In researching a recent acquisition, an Alef donated to the museum by Eli Jenny, one that had been held by his father, Leon of Blessed Memory, and given to Eli after his father passed, we were finally able to find out for whom the Alef had been made. The name on the bottom did not bear the name of anyone in the family and, in addition, it was very strange that the mother’s name was also mentioned, something that is not included in a traditional alef. Thanks to Len Neuhaus, the mystery has been solved. The Alef was made for a sick child, an older sibling of Leon, who did not survive infancy.

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry was founded in 1997. Our initial mission was to organize Greek Jewry in the Diaspora to work on restoration projects in Greece. Aware of how few we were in number, and how those who had immigrated to other European countries, Israel and the United States still preserved their local identities (Yanniotis, Corfitos, Salonikis, Rhodèles, Kastorilis, etc.), we had wanted to unite Greek Jewry to work together on projects that went beyond local affiliations. We have succeeded. A few of the many examples of joint collaboration were Yanniotes contributing to the memorial plaque in Corfu, Salonikis helping in restoration projects in Ioannina, and how all were involved in raising funds to help restore Eiz Hayim in Crete after an unfortunate arson attack in January 2010.

As part of our endeavor to create a community of Greek Jewry, we have published a number of books and have run, and continue to run, annual tours to Jewish Greece, enabling interested individuals to learn about our little corner of the world and to facilitate Greek Jewry to reconnect with their roots. In the Spring of 2011, we visited Salonika, Ioannina, Corfu and Athens, with a fascinating day trip to Albania. In 2012, we visited Salonika, Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Athens and Chalkis, with a three-day cruise in the Aegean. In June 2013, we helped celebrate a Bar Mitzvah in Ioannina and, for the first time, included Bulgaria, Skopje and Bitola (Marrasit) in addition to Salonika and Athens. Get on our mailing list to join us on a future tour.

We are proud of the community we have created. We have made a difference. Become a member of the Association (check off the box on the appeal card for further info) and join us.

Marcia Haddad
Hononomopoulou
President

BECHORAKIS GHENIS

In 2012, we had two family reunions in the Genee/Jenny family, both to celebrate special birthdays, Lili Genee’s 90th and Eli Jenny’s 80th. The Jenny and Genee families are related to each other. The spellings of the names were changed during immigration. In the Ioannina Municipal Archives the surname was spelled Genni (or misspelled Gini). Marty Genee’s father, Hy of Blessed Memory, was a Genee on his father’s side and a Jenny on his mother’s. As part of the research for the reunions, we created exhibits to honor the families. We finally found Hy’s father, Morris, on a ship manifest. He was listed as Bechorakis Ghenis. On the ship manifest he is listed as a laborer going to A. Negrin, his “countryman.” He had $10 in his possession and was 5’6”, dark complexioned with black hair and brown eyes. Bechorakis was detained at Ellis Island because the young boy from the Atas family that he had brought with him was awaiting the arrival of his father. We can only imagine his thoughts, arriving in a new land, not speaking the language and watching as others from his ship went ashore.

The ship on which Bechorakis traveled was the Marsilla, leaving Patras on June 4th in 1907 and arriving on the 21st. On the same ship was a Bechorakis Mytioni (Abraham Mione), grandfather of Jerry Pardo, who also sits on our Board of Directors, I can envision Abraham and Morris (the two Bechorakis) watching from Heaven as we conduct our Board Meetings and feeling satisfied that the “community” they helped create has flourished.
In Marty Genee’s own words: “I have often wondered if one individual, or one person can truly make a difference. Will my vote in this election really matter? Will my letter/petition to an elected official change anything? I do know of one instance in which one individual did make a difference. That individual was my father, Hyman Genee, of blessed memory, who kept the Kehila Kedosha Janina going in the lean years. While today making minyany on Shabbat and the holidays is sometimes difficult, the Kehila is open and operating thanks to a core of regulars and dedicated members of the Board of Directors of the Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum. My father kept the synagogue going; he maintained traditions and a sense of community, and ultimately the rebirth of a community. This was a great surprise for my Dad. My son Jordan knows the Shabbat morning melodies. I believe I have successfully instilled an appreciation for the Romaniote traditions in both Arielle and Jordan. I recited my Bar Mitzvah in the Ashkimzai shul where I went to Hebrew school. My favorite services are on the eve of a holiday: Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Pesach, Shavuot. I truly enjoy the Arvit melodies and the special Holiday Piyut. Some of the Piyut are not in the prayer books and you had to have the special handwritten photocopied document to fully participate.

“I learned a lot from my Dad and have incorporated much Romaniote tradition in my observance. Friday night kiddush is recited Greek style, with my wife Marla participating at the appropriate times. I lead my Pesach seder as my father did (well, pretty close). I taught my daughter Arielle to recite a few of her Friday Bar Mitzvah prayers Greek style; this was a great surprise for my Dad. My son Jordan knows the Shabbat morning melodies. I believe I have successfully instilled an appreciation for the Romaniote traditions in both Arielle and Jordan. My wife Marla, a zig-a-nuk, has accepted these traditions and also makes a terrific spanokopita. I have followed directly in my Dad’s footsteps in servicing the Romaniote community by becoming a member of the Brotherhood Board of Directors and its President from 2005 to 2009. I will continue to serve the Kehila by attending Shabbat services as often as possible and work hard as a member of the Board of Directors.”

Marty is a graduate of Stuyvesant High School and Brooklyn and Baruch colleges. He has worked for City of New York agencies for 37 years and has been married to his wife Marla for 37 years. They have two children, Arielle who is married to Josh, and Jordan.

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In the Spring of 2011 our present exhibit, our most extensive to date, opened to a packed house. “Memories” tells the story of the world they left behind, the world they found here (especially on the Lower East Side) and the arduous journey over. It is truly the story of our community. We are particularly grateful to the municipalities in Ioannina and Salonika for sharing archival photos with us, many of which have never been on display anywhere else. Our special thanks to Bob Bedford from the Foundation for the Study of Sephardic Culture for sharing his collection of photos of pre-1917 Salonika, before the devastating fire that destroyed so much of the old city. In addition, Marvin and Andrew Marcus, located historical photos of our particular corner of the Lower East Side that have become part of our present exhibit. “Memories” has given us the opportunity to do extensive research on ship manifests and census records, both of which have given us priceless information on the early Greek Jewish community in New York. This information has enabled us to have mini-exhibits highlighting some of our founding families, the exhibits acting as adjuncts for special events: birthdays, memorials, family reunions. To date, we have told the story of the Moses family at Malcolm Varon’s surprise birthday party, the Genee family at Lil Genee’s 90th birthday celebration, the Josephs and Hametz families at Irwin Josephs’ memorial, and the Jenny family at Elly Jenny’s surprise birthday party. You may access our website (www.kkjsm.org) to get a glimpse of these exhibits as well as past exhibits: Our Gang, Weddings (Something Old, Something New), and Families (Dikos Mas, Los Muestros). Do come to visit us to see our synagogue and Museum.

As always nothing could be done without the help of our volunteers and the support of our Board of Directors. A very special thanks to Sol Kofinas.

Dear Friends,

If I could turn back time, what would I see at the corner of Broome Street and Allen Street? Max Nachmanus playing stickball, Sophie, Anna, and Estelle Yohanan walking to their father’s store, Success Apron; and Mevorah Apparel Manufacturing on the corner next door to the Kehila.

Across the street at 275 Broome, we see Rabbi Cohen, Emanual DeCastro, the Askinazis/ Eskonontis, and Betty Miones, mother of Board Member Jerry Pardo. Next door, we also see a young Tica Benjamin, future wife of Max Negrin.

The neighborhood has changed quite a bit, becoming the new home of Asian immigrants and young professionals. One thing that has not changed is Kehila Kedosha Janina’s presence on Broome Street. Through the efforts of our Board of Directors, the museum at KKJ, and many volunteers, we continue to be a part of the history of the Lower East Side.

The one thing we need most of all is your support. We have always depended upon your financial support but equally important is your presence at the Kehila. A commitment to join us for services, see our new exhibits at the museum, or just visit and share old stories will help to preserve our long history on Broome Street.

It is with great joy on behalf of the Board of Directors that I wish all our friends and families a Happy and Healthy New Year, L'Shana Tova, Chronia Pola, Anos Muchos y Buenos.

Sincerely,
Marty Marcus
President