The SCOOP

The Happenings of Congregation Beth Israel

June 2023

Jewish Father's Day

We just read the 10-Commandments on Shavuot, which, surprisingly to some, includes the commandment to honor one's parents. It does not mention doing it one day a year, or once a month, but every day of our lives. And while that may seem like a tall order, there it is.

Still, Father's Day means a lot to so many of us, and that can be the case whether your father is still alive or not. Many of us have memories associated with this special day that conjures up the warmest of thoughts of our dad.

So on this Father's day, let's think about all the dads that mean so much to us, and let's extend the magic of that day to the rest of the year.

After all, the 10-Commandments, in all their splendor and glory, say that's exactly what we should do.

Happy June and Happy Father's Day from the CBI Team.

Want To Make Something For A Father's Day Brunch? Try This Israeli Favorite

THE CORNER

Amid Tragedy, a Rose Bloomed
(the true story of one girl's courage and resolve in the 1911 **Triangle fire tragedy**)

by **Irv Miljoner**

It was the first Saturday of Spring, March 25, 1911, a brilliant sunny warm day, full of promise for the beautiful seasons ahead, particularly for a bright energetic teenager spending the day in the company of 500 of her peers, mostly other young girls, on the outskirts of Washington Square Park in New York City. So many of them were recent immigrants, mostly Jewish girls, with reason to hope and dream for lives better than those they and their parents had in the old country. In the century and their lives before them, they were a tenement-dwelling working class of young people with unlimited potential for happiness and success--seemingly. Except that these young ladies were not taking a stroll in the park on that bright Spring day. They were down the block, on the upper three floors of a 10-story building, amid a dawn-to-dusk shift as garment workers in the dark dingy confines of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, an early 20th-century garment sweatshop.

Rose Freedman was one of them, and at 17, she was luckier than most, at work, and beyond. Her good language skills, quick-wittedness, and other talents allowed her to land the relatively favorable job of operating a large machine that attached buttons to blouses. Most of the other workers suffered great damage to their hands and backs and eyes and lungs, with more difficult sewing and finishing and cutting and cleaning work. Three to ten dollars per week was their typical wage, if they could demonstrate their worth, which many had to do at the start with no wages at all. If they were good, they were sometimes rewarded with overtime hours paid at as much as an additional fifteen cents. (The federal minimum wage law would not yet be enacted for nearly 3 decades). For pennies per hour, they continued, most working at least six days per week, all day, in sweltering grime, and danger.

This, however, would not be their lot forever.

In the late afternoon of that Spring Saturday, a disastrous fire broke out in the factory. It spread quickly, fueled by the rolls and pieces of cloth surrounding the women. Some workers escaped down the elevator and shafts, others down one narrow stairway. Both ways soon became blocked. People were trampled in the panic. The other doors leading out of the factory were locked, and the workers were trapped with no exit. The factory doors were always kept locked by the owners, either to keep workers at their machines or to prevent them from stealing scraps of cloth.

With no other way to escape, and with firefighting equipment of the time inadequate to reach them, scores of girls and young women jumped out of the eighth-and ninth-story windows, skirts aflame. They jumped--to their deaths.

Rose escaped the inferno by thinking about what the owners were doing. She figured that they would somehow find a safe way, so she went to the tenth floor, where the owners had their offices. There she found them escaping to the roof, where firefighters pulled them to the safety of the roof of an adjacent building. So too did Rose escape. But 146 of Rose's co-workers, mostly young teenage girls, did not escape and perished in the tragedy.

The owners of the factory were tried and acquitted of manslaughter charges when it could not be proven that they ordered, or even knew that the doors were locked. Rose told the story of how one of the owners tried to bribe her to say that the doors were not locked. In 1914, civil lawsuits by relatives of 23 victims, ended with judgments for payments of only $75 to each of those families.

Rose Freedman, who was born on March 27, 1893, would live for 90 more years after the fire, into a third century for her. Rose led an eventful and consequential life after the fire, the horror of which never left her consciousness. She led a life of activism and involvement for most of those next 90 years, participating in labor rallies, lobbying efforts, and other advocacy activities on behalf of workers, their welfare, and social justice. Many such efforts led to the passage of labor laws to protect workers. She spoke publicly and extensively about the tragedy, with her last interviews at age 107 for National Geographic and History Channel documentaries on the event. She continued, for her whole life, to be angry and passionately critical of what she saw as the factory owners' greed. "It should never have happened," she said. "The owners with a couple of steps could have opened the door."

After the fire, Rose did not return to work immediately. She first went to college, then worked a variety of jobs, including a position at a Manhattan insurance company, where she worked until age 80.

Rose Freedman died on February 15, 2001, a few days short of her 108th birthday, the last survivor of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire.

Her life of consequence means much to us all.
Think about how you spend your day, or the passing weeks or months, or your years on the job or in your community. If it starts to seem like something of a burden, or if you begin to question the purpose or significance of your life or the meaning of it all, take a few moments to remember Rose and those young innocent victims with whom she spent most of her waking hours. Think about them, and Rose–her life, her toil, her horror, her legacy, and the defining event of her life, which has much to do with how one person, and each of us can make a positive difference, even in the face of tragedy.

The Rabbi Speaks

Dear Friends,

We have just completed the holiday of Shavuot, the holiday that is often overlooked by many American Jews but one that is so important in the pantheon of Jewish holidays that it ought not to be.

In a sense, the holiday is—if one is to attribute levels of importance to these kinds of things—the most important of them all because it's when all that we have today in the cultural and knowledge sense came into being. In a sense, without Shavuot, which is the day of the gifting of the Torah at Mount Sinai, we would not have anything of substance, and we would probably have disappeared as a people a long time ago.

How this holiday became negligible in the eyes of the modern Jew is hard to put one's finger on, but suffice it to say that many Jews have almost never heard of it.

While walking with a fellow Rabbi friend from the synagogue on the first day of Shavuot in Riverside Park last week, a man, all sweaty and dressed in athletic gear, stopped us and asked us, "Wait, is it Shavuot?"

We both got a chuckle out of that encounter, but it told us that, yes, Shavuot is the kind of holiday that people forget about. The man was genuinely befuddled as to why people were walking to a Jewish holiday picnic on a Friday at the end of May.

At CBI we did not forget about it, and we had a very meaningful Zoom learning session on Friday night (with cheesecake and wine), and a moving Holiday/Yizkor service on Shabbat morning—the second day of Shavuot.

We then had a scrumptious Dairy Kiddush, with great conversation, some new guests, and much communal fanfare. It was a beautiful day all around and I felt that the community appreciated that they were celebrating a holiday "less traveled," knowing that the roads less traveled are always the ones that bring you to interesting places.

Each day and each week can be a road less traveled, if we only choose to make it one.

Let's try to do that as a community as we welcome the summer of 2023.

Wishing you all well, and please reach out if you'd like to speak to me about anything. I'm always available for you.

See you in Shul.

Warmly,
Rabbi Abe

Do you enjoy our Shabbat lunch following our service? What about our dessert Onegs following Kabbalat Shabbat?

Sponsor or contribute toward a Kiddush or Oneg today to celebrate a Simcha or to remember a loved one.

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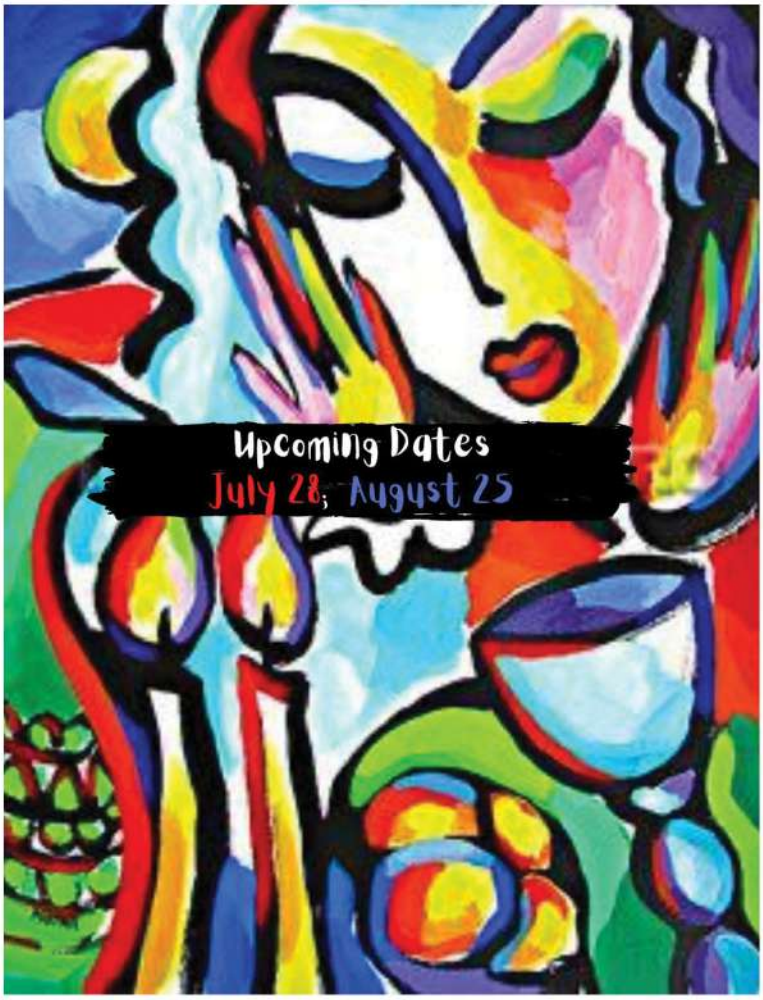

Musical Kabbalat Shabbat @CBI

Join us these Friday nights

June 23

July 28

August 25

@7:30 PM

Oneg to follow services

Registration required by
the Tuesday prior
on our website homepage

www.cbicg.org

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A One-Man Show
Written and Performed by Tom Dugan

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All proceeds go to forwarding the work of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

For Tickets, Click Here.

"Are you sure? — I don't *feel* guilty."

"For Father's Day, I'm giving my dad an hour of free tech support."

The CARTOON KRONICLES

I **TOLD** YOU WE SHOULD HAVE SPELLCHECKED IT BEFORE PLACING THE ORDER...

Come on, laugh a little!

June Yahrzeits

- Isaac Janvey 6/1
- Ruth Sherman 6/3
- Joseph Dolgow 6/5
- Fannie Mandell 6/5
- Nathan Zaum 6/8
- Edith Dolgow 6/9
- Robin Krauss 6/14
- Abraham Rosenthal 6/15
- Hank Karen 6/17
- Samuel Stone 6/20
- Irving Rothman 6/21
- Samuel Skulsky 6/22
- Benjamin Ginzberg 6/25
- Abigael Robayo 6/25
- Maria O. Cedeno 6/27
- Samuel Hescovicci 6/27
- Molly Janvey 6/27

In Memoriam & Yahrzeit Donations

Muriel Levine (at the yahartzei of my sister in law, Calire Parvin)

Matilda Lovinger (at the yahrzeit of my husband, David Lovinger)

Marianne Baker (at the yahrzeit of my father, Samuel Stone)

Terry & Nancy Goldsmith (for the yahrzeit of Dorothy & Morris Goldsmith)

Ellen Zimel (at the Yahetzeit of Julius Zimel)

Alan Mantis (at the Yahetzeit of my cousin, Gail Schwartz)

Irv & Shari Miljoner (to the Rabbi's discretionary fund in memory of Mary Ellen Byers)

Rick Schwartz (in memory of my wife, Gail Terry Schwartz)

Linda & Steven Krull (at the Yahetzeit of parents, Edith & Joseph Dolgow)

General Contributions

Muriel Levine (In appreciation of the Yom Hashoah program, and the work and workers who made it possible)

Ilene & Robert Rothschild (in honor of Rachel Epstein)

Marianne Baker (for the superb Yom Hashoah program)

Irv & Shari Miljoner (Thanking Rabbi Abe and Roberta for the meaningful Yom Hashoah event, and for giving Irv the honor of lighting the memorial candles)

Susan Bass and Alan Glassman (congratulations for a wonderful Yom Hashoah program)

Sam Seifman (to the Rabbi's discretionary fund)

Mindy & Monty Leeper (thank you for being so welcoming)

Aileen & Lenny Goldberg (in honor of the Yom Hashoah event)

Linda & Steven Krull (in honor of the birthday of Robin Cinnamon)

Meryl & Martin Krasne (in honor of the Yom Hashoah event)

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