

On Friday, Rose walked to work, lunch bag in hand and head stooped in thought. She sat at her machine throughout the day, listening to the humming of the other machines as she absentmindedly went about her job of mass-producing. Would it be so awful to do this tomorrow as well? Decision time was nearing.

*Whirr, bzzz whirr, bzzz.* The machine kept tune to Rose's troubled thoughts. What should she do -- or was the question, what could she do? As the sun slipped over the parapets of the Lower East Side, Rose knew there was really no question. **She was Jewish, and she would keep the Sabbath.**

Sabbath in America was not like the warm day Rose had known at home. This week was the worst yet. She lacked the courage to face her relatives and tell them of her resolve. Instead, she left the house in the morning, pretending to be headed for work. Back and forth through the streets of Manhattan she paced. Together with the city pigeons, she rested in Tompkin's Square Park. "Tatte, this song is for you," she whispered. The pigeons ruffled their feathers. "Yonah matz-ah bo manoach" ("on it [the Sabbath] the dove found rest..."). There she sat among the pigeons, singing the traditional Sabbath songs, with tears in her eyes and sobs between the verses. When three stars finally peeked out from the black sky announcing the end of Sabbath, the moon shone down on a weary girl and bathed her face in its glow. Rose had triumphed, but her victory would cost her dearly. She had no job and had alienated her family.

"*Baruch HaMavdil. . .*" (the blessing said upon the departure of the Sabbath). It was time to face the hardness of the world. Rose trudged homeward dreading the nasty scene to come when her relatives learned that she hadn't been to work.

As she neared home, a shout broke into her reverie. "Rose! What . . . what . . . I mean, how are you here? Where were you?"

Rose looked up at her cousin Joe, her expression woebegone.

"Joe, what will become of me? I kept Sabbath and lost my job. Now everyone will be angry and disappointed with me, and oh, Joe, what will I do?" The words tumbled out together with her tears.

Joe looked at her strangely. "Rose, didn't you hear?" he asked gently. "Hear what?"

"There was an awful fire in the factory. Only forty people survived. There was no way out of the building. People even jumped to their deaths." Joe's voice was hushed, and he was crying openly. "Rosie, don't you see? Because you kept Sabbath, you are alive. Because of your Sabbath, you survived."

**Out of 190 workers, Rose Goldstein was among the minority of those who survived. The infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire on Saturday, March 25, 1911, claimed the lives of 146 immigrant workers present. Because it had been Sabbath, Rose Goldstein was not there. As her father had said, more than the Jews keep the Sabbath, the Sabbath keeps the Jews.**

Content of this lesson has been culled from JLI Torah Studies Courses taught at Aleph Learning Institute throughout the year

Dear Friend:

We bring you our second "Lesson in a box" together with delicious home-made whole wheat honey challah for Shabbat! This class is all about Shabbat. We have enclosed Shabbat candles for your convenience too.

We want you to know that Shabbat observance is a lot easier than you think! Each week you just give yourself a break, R & R in the comfort of your home. There is no need to pack and prepare for a trip or vacation, *in order to relax*, just take your weekly vacation at home. It is truly invigorating and will bring you peace of mind!

We would also like to extend an invitation to you and your friends to experience Shabbat with us. Please contact us and we will be happy to arrange to accommodate you for any particular Shabbat that you choose.

*Until next time, Shabbat Shalom!*

Sincerely,



Rochel Kaplan

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## Lesson 2 Shabbat



Positive commandment "Six days you shall work and perform all your labor" exodus 20:9.

Proverbs 10:22 "The blessing of G-d will bring riches, and toil will add nothing to it".

The question becomes, if we were commanded to work but we are told that toil will not add anything since it all comes from G-d ultimately, *so why work?*

The understanding advanced in Judaism is that the reason we work is to create a medium through which G-d can channel His blessing and thereby heavenly sustenance is received. Though it may seem that our genius and cunning is what earns us the buck, in reality it is merely the act of doing "something", and then G-d figures out how to deliver His blessing into the vessel provided. *It may seem that your brilliant calculation that Apple stock would soar in the latter half of the decade is what made you rich*, but in reality, G-d could just as easily decide that your stakes in real estate, be the catalyst for your wealth.

The Talmud provides insight as follows: G-d doesn't only want us to recognize that everything is from Him but also to believe that even the naturally proven methods of making heaps of cash, are from G-d. In other words, *natural* means that it is the work of G-d, incognito.

**Judaism teaches that we are positively commanded to put in the effort and to work hard and not to rely on miracles. But, even when you do work hard and your bank account and investments grow, it is the hand of Almighty G-d, at work.**

The verse in **Exodus 20:8-11** continues, "But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your G-d; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your beast, nor your stranger... **for in six days G-d made the heaven and earth and he rested on the seventh day.**"

Then again in **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**, the Torah repeats "Six days may you work, and perform all your labor. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your G-d...**and you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your G-d took you out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm**, therefore, the Lord, your G-d, commanded you to observe the Sabbath day."

According to **Maimonides** (1135-1204), we are given two reasons for the mitzvah of Sabbath observance. One in Exodus and the second in Deuteronomy, respectively; 1)we honor the Shabbat and thereby demonstrate accepting the truth of the *creation* (maaseh breishis) narrative, 2)we rest on the seventh day, to attest to the true symbol of freedom (exodus from Egypt) and to remember G-d's kindness that we now enjoy.

**Nachmonides** (1194-1270) writes concerning Sabbath observance that should one have any doubts that G-d created and that G-d runs the world, and manipulates it at will, remember what you witnessed in Egypt, and that will serve as sufficient proof. It is proof because the Jews saw with their very eyes, that G-d-by virtue of His being the creator-indeed runs the show.

**The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi M.M. Schneerson** in one of his Chassidic discourses expounds: The Jews present at Matan Torah( Mt. Sinai), were at the pinnacle of spiritual heights, experiencing an unprecedented revelation of G-dliness. As such it is no wonder that these Jews were able to see G-dliness within the creation itself, *nature itself*. All they needed to be told was to look around and pay attention to the phenomenal workings of the universe! With that, during the glorious dawn of our people, they immediately were able to bear testimony to G-d’s creative power, and for them, creation was a great reason for Shabbat observance. Consequently, the reason given for Shabbat observance in the book of Exodus, cites the narratives about six days of creation and the seventh day of rest.

Fast forward almost 40 years as the Jews are about to enter the land of Israel, in the book of Deuteronomy, we are looking at a very different picture. At this juncture, the Jewish people are moving away from the desert years, with its other-worldly lifestyle, manna from heaven, clouds of glory for protection, and constant open Divine intervention, to embark on a journey of the mundane, day to day.

Holy as it is, entering the Land of Israel, the Jewish people will need to build their homeland down to the nitty gritty. No longer will it be so obvious that all sustenance is ultimately Divine and no longer will the people be totally immersed in spiritual pursuits. Rather in this new reality, the Jews may find it difficult to readily recognize the Divine in creation, alone. In this reality, to feel the need to observe the Shabbos would be implausible, So, G-d gave them a different reason. G-d explained that the reason for the Shabbos is because G-d took us out of Egypt, open display of G-dliness, pretty much irrefutable. After that, Shabbat observance can come more naturally.

Life is a funny thing. It has the habit of reaching a point where it seems to be grinding forward, all on its own. Nature runs its course and there doesn’t seem to be anything G-dly about it.

So what are we to do? How do we shake things up and bring out the true reality of who is really behind everything, at every turn?

Recall the amazing time when you could feel the hand of G-d in your life. Relive it. Try to remember and to implement the nostalgia of G-d’s presence in your life. Perhaps the High Holidays, or even a miracle you experienced or just the success you had that you are grateful for. Moreover, how about making it an exercise on a weekly basis, where Heavenly intervention can begin to become more palpable and appreciated.

*Just as your week is imbued with recognition that six days, every six days of every week, was and continues to be created by Almighty G-d, so shall you effect the seventh day of your week, as a day of rest, then and now.*

**More than the Jews kept the Shabbos, the Shabbos kept the Jewish people.**

Content of this lesson has been culled from JLI Torah Studies Courses taught at Aleph Learning Institute throughout the year

## *The Shabbat that Kept Rose* By Goldy Rosenberg

A young girl stood near her father on the quay of a Polish harbor, a steamer trunk at her feet. Out of her nine siblings, twelve-year-old Rose was the child chosen to be sent to the “golden land,” America. Life in Poland was hard, hunger a constant visitor in her home. After much scraping and pinching, her family had saved enough for a single one-way ticket to the United States. And Rose, the youngest of the nine, was the lucky one chosen to go.

Her father hoisted the trunk on his shoulder and walked silently, his coattails flapping behind him. Rose could see the effort he was making to keep his emotions in check. The weight of living was apparent on the lines of his face, in the burning sadness of his wise eyes, and in the gray in his beard. His back, however, was ramrod straight, in seeming defiance of his tribulations.

With an involuntary sigh, her father dropped the trunk on the deck and turned to his daughter. A gray head bent over an upturned innocent face, as the father gazed deep into his daughter’s unclouded eyes. He felt an urge to scream, to protest the cruelty of fate. How he longed to snatch Rose back home, to hold her as he had held her when she was a mere infant. Instead, he laid a trembling hand on her cheek.

“Rose, *mein kind* (my child), remember: G-d is watching over you every step of the way. Remember His laws and keep them well. **Never forget that more than the Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews.** It will be hard in the new land. Don’t forget who you are. Keep the Sabbath -- no matter what sacrifice you must make.”

“*Tatte! Tatte!*” (Father! Father!)

Rose buried her face in the scratchiness of her father’s coat, her slender arms wrapped tightly around him as if to anchor herself to

all that was familiar in Poland. Tatte gave another heaving sigh. His straight shoulders bent over his daughter as his tears mingled with hers. A blast from the ship tore the two apart. Tatte bent down and hugged Rose again, squeezing the breath out of her in a hug meant to last a lifetime. Then he turned and walked down the gangplank, a stooped man, finally defeated by life’s hardships. As the ship steamed away from the shtetl life of Poland, a fresh sea wind blew on the passengers preparing to start life anew.

For Rose, the journey was crammed with questions and uncertainty. Would her relatives really extend a welcome to her, or was she to be all alone in the new land? How frightening was the thought of a new life without her loved ones. As the ship made its entrance into New York harbor, the passengers stood plastered against the railing, shouting and clapping as they saw the “new land.” Rose stood aside, shy and unsure. Would the new land fulfill its promise of hope, freedom, and riches? Would her relatives meet her there -- or was she now homeless?

Rose did not have long to worry. Her relatives were waiting for her, solicitous of their “greenhorn” cousin. She was soon safely ensconced in their home. With her mature appearance and demeanor, it was not long before Rose found a job as a sewing machine operator.

Life in America was new and strange. Polish mannerisms were quickly shed -- along with religion. Modesty, keeping kosher, and Torah were abandoned, together with the outmoded clothing and accent. Rose’s relatives insisted religion was “old-fashioned”: an unnecessary accessory in America. Rose, however, never forgot her father’s parting words. She put on the new clothes her relatives gave her, cut her hair to suit the fashion, but never gave up on the Sabbath.

Every week without fail, Rose devised a new excuse for her boss to explain why she did not come to work on Saturday. One week she had a toothache, another week her stomach bothered her. After three weeks, the foreman grew wise. He called her over. “Rose,” he said in a tone that indicated he only had her welfare in mind. “I like your work, and I like you. But this Sabbath business has got to stop. Either you come in this Saturday, or you can look for a new job.”

Upon hearing of this development, Rose’s relatives were adamant. Work on Sabbath, she must. They applied pressure; they cajoled, pleaded, and enticed. Rose felt like a leaf caught between heavy gusts of wind, pushed and pulled with no weight or life of its own. She was so young and vulnerable. She wanted to please her relatives. But her father’s words kept echoing in her head. What should she do?

The week passed in a daze for Rose. Her emotions were in turmoil. *On the one hand, Tatte is not here to help me be strong. I do want to please my new friends. I want friends. I want to fit into this new land,* she reasoned. And then just as quickly came another thought: *On the other hand, how can I forget Sabbath? How can I give up the beauty Tatte taught me?*

“Rose, sweetheart, listen to us. It’s for your own good.” On and on went her relatives, until Rose’s determination wavered.

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