

The Jewish Weekly

THE BEST WHISKEY OF ALL

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Leibel and Shoshana had eleven children, yet they lived a life of ease and comfort. Their tavern was the most popular in their area, as the expertise of Leibel as a brewer was head and shoulders above any competition. In the cellar of their house Leibel had set up a small factory for making whiskey. He labored long hard hours in the production of his unique whiskey, while his good wife administered the business side of the tavern.

One day, though, tragedy struck. Leibel fell severely ill, and in but a short while he returned his soul to its Maker.

His death left his widow totally broken-hearted, nor did she understand how she would be able to obtain the large amounts of food necessary to feed her eleven orphaned children. The tavern was doomed; she hadn't the faintest idea how to prepare the whiskey; nor was there anyone to ask. The secrets of its recipe and its manner of preparation went down into the earth with her husband.

Leibel was accustomed to visit the 'court' of his Rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Yaakov of Sadigora (the son of the 'holy Rhiziner'). Shoshana well remembered how every time he returned from a visit to the Rebbe, he was in an excellent mood. So she decided that she should now go herself to the Rebbe and seek his blessing.

Face to face with the Rebbe, Shoshana reported her situation through a veil of sobs and tears. The Rebbe listened with full attention and visible compassion to every word. After, he blessed her and encouraged her to place her trust in G-d Almighty.

Several months went by as the widow's financial circumstances deteriorated further. Creditors were repeatedly knocking on her door, including representatives of the poritz, the local nobleman landlord, to whom much money was owed even before Leibel's death aggravated the situation.

Shoshana made another journey to the Sadigorer, but this time refused to be satisfied with his blessing only. Feeling under enormous pressure, she began enumerating to the Rebbe various methods she imagined that the Ribono Shel Olam (Lord of the Universe) could employ to help her.

For example, He could arrange that she should happen to be on the road at the exact moment that the poritz returned from an excursion, and when he descended from his coach his wallet could fall from his pocket, and only she would notice it.

"Then," she explained, "I could extract the money inside it and keep it. After all, the poritz is exceptionally wealthy, so he won't feel damaged by the loss. I'll then take the majority of the money and give it to the poritz to clear our debt to him, while the remainder will provide sustenance for myself and my children for a long while."

Sharing the pain of her desperateness, the Rebbe gazed at the widow with empathy and mercy before responding gently, "We don't need to give advice to the Creator of All; He knows quite well all by Himself how to provide a solution."

One day not so long after the above encounter, at an hour when the widow was not at home, her oldest son, a lad of fifteen, heard a persistent knocking on their front door. When he opened it, he was startled to see the poritz himself standing there, in all his glory.

"Is your father at home?" he asked. The boy answered that it is months already that his father has not been among the living.

"What!" cried out the poritz in a shocked tone. "I am so sorry to hear that. I was never told about it." Then he immediately switched to the matter for which he had come.

"I have always purchased my whiskey from your father exclusively. In another two weeks I will be making a wedding for my daughter, and I need a very large amount of quality whiskey, like that which your father knew to prepare."

Leibel's son answered that since his father passed away, all activity in the cellar has ceased. "There is no whiskey left. The barrels are all empty."

The poritz, however, figured that the teenager was simply trying to act like a sharp businessman, and his disclaimer was in order to establish a bargaining position. "There is no reason to negotiate," he replied. "I'll pay you double or triple the usual price; just agree to prepare this large order on time for me."

The boy froze in fear. He could not understand what the poritz expected of him, so he remained silent. The exasperated poritz ran out of patience and raised his voice. "Why don't you answer me, boy? Take me immediately to the cellar. I want to see for myself what remains."

Leibel's son, in trepidation, barely managed to drag himself down the stairs. The poritz, however, was becoming happier and more excited with each step. "Ah!" he exclaimed as he sniffed the air. "The scent of whiskey - good, strong whiskey! - is seeping into my nostrils."

In the cellar, the poritz began to inspect the barrels, one by one. So far, they were all empty. The son was becoming increasingly apprehensive, frightened even. He knew that the only casks with any liquid in them were the few that were full of water, soaking in order to remove the last dregs of the whiskey. What would be the poritz's reaction when he finished his survey?

When the poritz reached the first water-filled barrel, he stepped back in surprise. "What is this?" he asked the boy in an inquisitive yet demanding tone.

"Water," was the one-word response.

Suspicious, the poritz scooped a bit of the contents with his hand and swallowed it. His face lit up and he roared with joy. "I'm amazed. The taste of this whiskey is even better than what your father used to make!"

"You tried to fool me! I shall forgive you, but only on the condition you prepare for me in time for the wedding three barrels of whiskey with this supremely delicious taste exactly."

The poritz next took out his wallet, removed from it a thick wad of bills, and handed it to the trembling teenager. Then he walked quickly up the stairs and departed.

It Once Happened...

The boy ran to tell his mother the astonishing turn of events. She immediately departed in the first available carriage to Sadigora.

"Rebbe!" She cried out. "How can I possibly acquire three full barrels of high quality whiskey in less than two weeks?"

The Rebbe smiled warmly and answered, "Is water lacking? Fill the barrels with water from the river, as you usually do when cleaning."

The woman returned home, astonished and perplexed by the words of the Rebbe. Nevertheless, she and her son hurried to fulfill the Tzadik's directive. A few days later, she managed to deliver the barrels to the poritz, who was so grateful that he extended to her a generous bonus.

The day of the wedding of the Poritz's daughter arrived. The men guests were out of their minds with delight at how tasty and strong the whiskey was. They demanded to know the identity of its maker. The Poritz revealed that it was a teenage boy! - the son of the departed Leibel, the master brewer.

The next morning, representatives of all the wealthy noblemen that had been at the wedding crowded into the courtyard of the widow. They all wished to buy the unique whiskey they had imbibed the previous day.

Shoshana ran inside to tell her son. They looked at each other, shrugged in bewilderment, and did the only thing they could think of: hustle to the river with a wagon of empty casks and fill them with water from the river. Maybe the miracle would re-occur, they prayed.

Their eager customers nevertheless took the precaution of tasting. They were immensely satisfied; within the hour all the barrels were sold at a premium price.

Not a week passed and nearly all the nobles sent to purchase more of 'the best whiskey ever.' It did not take long after that until Shoshana was able to pay off all their debts to the poritz and other creditors. Nor did that use up all the money from the sales. Plenty remained to support the large family.

Soon after, the widow journeyed to the Rebbe again, this time to thank him for his miraculous blessing. The Rebbe smiled his warm smile and said, "Didn't I tell you that the Al-mighty doesn't need our suggestions!"

The woman replied innocently. "Please, the Rebbe should believe me. I thought of so many different possibilities for salvation, but this method, that water should be converted into whiskey, I have to admit that never occurred to me!"

Reprinted from an email from KabbalaOnline.org.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Chayei Sarah

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:03	5:17	5:55
Tel Aviv	4:17	5:18	
Haifa	4:07	5:16	
Be'er Sheva	4:21	5:20	



A Marriage Blessed In Heaven By Sherri Mandell

It is said that ever since G-d created the world, He has been kept busy making shidduchim, making marriages. And that making a good match is as hard as the splitting of the Red Sea. Forty days before a child is born a voice is heard: this person is destined for that one. Somehow our bashert, the person destined for us, waits for us. But that doesn't mean we find him.

Gila and Ben found each other. And on the day of their wedding, each went to visit Yosef Goodman's grave in order to thank him. Ben left the wedding invitation at the grave.

It was Yosef who was their matchmaker.

But this time something went terribly wrong. Yosef had been in Maglan, an elite combat unit of the paratroopers of the Israeli army. Yosef enjoyed the freedom and excitement of parachuting. Even on the day of his accident, his friends told Yosef's mother that as he was jumping, he was happy and shouting. He, together with four others who were the best guys in the unit, was doing special training jumps. But this time – his 36th jump – something went terribly wrong. His commander's leg became entangled in the rope of Yosef's parachute. They started to spin quickly in circles. Yosef tried to save them both by cutting himself free from his parachute while opening up his emergency parachute. The commander landed safely. Yosef's emergency parachute was released but he was too close to the ground for it to fully open.

Yosef Goodman died on February 2, 2006. He was 20.

Yosef's parents, Ann and Mordechai Goodman, are immigrants from the States; Mordechai grew up in Texas, Ann in New York. Ann trained as a lawyer; Mordechai is the owner of Pizzeria Efrat, famous for its wonderful pizza and Ben & Jerry's ice cream. If you go to the pizza place, you often see the kids working there. Yosef put in many hours baking pies and delivering pizza. He was tall and lean, good-looking, and he loved to laugh.

Gila Wolbromsky lives a few houses away from Yosef's family. Gila's younger brother was Yosef's good friend. They grew up together; all their childhood stories are shared ones.

One Friday afternoon, when Yosef came home from the army for Shabbat, he went over to Gila's house and told her that he wanted to set her up with his former commander, Ben Berdichev. Though Ben had completed his army service, he and Yosef still spoke often on the phone and had a very close relationship.

When Yosef told Gila about wanting to set her up, she didn't think that he was serious. She was already dating somebody and she didn't think much about the suggestion.

Two and half weeks later Yosef died in the parachuting accident. Gila's last conversation with Yosef had been about Ben.

The day he died, Yosef called Ben. "Did you call her yet?" he asked. Ben said: "We'll speak about it later." He wasn't planning on calling. He was going to Australia to work at a Jewish day school and he didn't think it made sense to try to begin a new relationship when he was leaving. But Yosef insisted, and Ben promised he would call.

But Ben didn't call.

After Yosef was killed, during the week of shiva, Ben spent a lot of time at the Goodman house. He wanted to be there, to grieve and to talk about Yosef. Gila saw him there, but she had no idea that he was the commander that Yosef had been talking about.

But he heard her name there, and knew who she was.

"The last day of the shiva, Ben came over to me and apologized to me. I didn't know why. But then I realized that he was Ben. Yosef had been serious and he had given Ben my number and made him promise to call me," Gila said.

"You have nothing to apologize about," she told him.

"I promised Yosef I would call."

That was the beginning of their relationship. They kept on meeting, even though they are very different and Ben was soon to leave for his trip to Australia. Gila grew up in an observant home, Ben's family was not religiously observant. Gila didn't know why Yosef had put them together.

They started seeing each other and when Ben went to Australia, after six months, Gila went to visit him. Ben returned from Australia early, after ten months, because he wanted to be with Gila.

Once they were dating, they told the Goodman family about their relationship. Ben and Gila worried because they felt that in some way they were an extension of Yosef. If they broke up, would it be a blow to the Goodman family? But Ann and Mordechai told them to feel free to do whatever they needed. Not to feel any pressure.

Soon they were making plans to be married. "Our wedding was in October. The wedding was meant to be outdoors but during the reception there was a dramatic rainstorm with thunder and lightning, and the wedding was moved indoors at the last minute, with the guests' help. The night Yosef died had also been a rainy night with thunder and lightning. We felt that Yosef was dancing with us," says Gila.

Mordechai, Yosef's father, was honored with a blessing under the chupah. He said, "I am saying this blessing instead of your matchmaker, Yosef."

Ann Goodman says, "When they got married it was almost two years after Yosef died, and it was a wonderful feeling: I felt that I was still getting nachat, pleasure, from Yosef."

Both Ben and Gila feel privileged to have Yosef play such an important role in their lives. They know that their marriage is truly a match blessed in heaven.

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org Magazin.



In this world, we're all only passing through. The commencement of Parshat Chayei Sara provides the sad details of the burial arrangements for Sarah carried out by Avraham. Presenting himself before the children of Cheit and inhabitants of Canaan, Avraham introduced himself by saying "גר ותושב אנכי עמכם" - I am a stranger and a resident in your midst."

Isn't this the sad reality that repeats itself again and again throughout Jewish history? That Jewish people, having moved to a particular place, even though they might have lived there for a long time, are still considered the 'גר' – the outsider?

The Dubner Maggid gives added depth to this statement by Avraham. Avraham said, "גר ותושב אנכי עמכם," – "A stranger," – that's me, I'm the stranger – "and a permanent resident," – you are the permanent residents.

Avraham here was describing why it was important for him to have a choice piece of land with which to bury his wife. He was saying, "Your worldview is so different from mine. As far as you're concerned, in this world, you are permanent residents because you believe that you're not going anywhere else from here. But as far as I am concerned, I am only a temporary resident here. I'm a visitor on earth." That's why in tradition we call our cemeteries 'בית הקיים' – the home of the living – or 'בית עולם' – the home of those who exist forever. That's something that Avraham appreciated and that's why he wanted to bury his wife appropriately.

There's a story about a man who traveled through many countries in Europe in order to reach Radin, a town in Belarus of today, where the Chafetz Chaim used to live. He had the privilege of being able to meet the Chafetz Chaim and discuss some issues with him. When he was brought into the Chafetz Chaim's home he noticed how modest it was, in fact, the Chafetz Chaim found it difficult to find a chair for the man to sit on.

This visitor asked the Chafetz Chaim, "Why don't you have much furniture here?" The Chafetz Chaim replied to the traveler, "Tell me – while traveling through Europe to see me, did you bring your lounge furniture with you?" "No," said the man, "I'm only passing through." "Me too," said the Chafetz Chaim, "I'm only passing through this world until I reach the next."

This was the message that Avraham was giving to the Canaanites, and it brings us a lot of reassurance. We should never fear what is going to happen to us once our physical lives on earth end, because we're only passing through. As we are taught in Pirkei Avot, this world is the passageway which leads towards the great banqueting hall which is waiting for us.

But in the meantime, let's perform as many mitzvot as possible; let's build-up credit through the merit of our deeds, in order to guarantee that in the course of time – we're not rushing – we will benefit from Hashem's full blessing in the true and everlasting world.

One way to merit these good deeds is by showing our kindness by praying together for our soldiers and emergency service personnel who risk their lives to defend and help us, as well as those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

Although none of the 613 mitzvot are counted from Chayei Sarah, we learn about burial of the dead, and funeral practices such as eulogizing the dead. We also find lessons relating to marriage in this Parshah.

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 105

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1402

NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5314

HAFTORA: Melachim I 1:1-31

Shabbat Mevarchim Chodesh Kislev

Rosh Chodesh – Thursday, Nov. 24 and Friday, Nov. 25, 2022

חיי שרה

Sponsored by Family Rice
for a complete reufah for
Elchanan Efraim
ben
Rive Essie

