



Yankel the innkeeper lived in an isolated hamlet for so long that he hardly remembered that he was a Jew. Shabbat was a word he hardly recalled. Day and night he served the Polish peasants who bought drinks in his little inn. Nothing new ever happened and one year slipped unnoticed into the next.

One day, however, a stately-looking Jew entered Yankel's inn and disturbed Yankel's quiet existence. This visitor was none other than the famous tzadik, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov, who had leased a hut in the middle of a forest in order to meditate and pray in the stillness of the woods. At times, however, he came to the inn to purchase food, and that is how he came to know Yankel.

When the tzadik had first entered his inn, something deep inside Yankel stirred and prompted him to say to the rabbi, "You know, Sir, I too, am a Jew."

"How can you live in a place where there are no other Jews?" the tzadik queried him. "Why, it seems you have even forgotten our holy traditions. My poor brother, why, even the animals of Jews refrain from work on the Shabbat. Can you do even less than that?"

Yankel blushed at Rabbi Moshe Leib's words. "But, Rabbi," he continued, "I have to stay open on Shabbat or the peasants buy their drinks elsewhere, and I will be destitute!"

"Nevertheless," Rabbi Moshe Leib insisted, "you must close on Shabbat. How can a holy Jewish soul do less than the donkey of a Jew who is kept from working on the Sabbath day?"

When Yankel saw that the tzadik was adamant, he began to think and he resolved to close the inn on Shabbat.

Yankel's announcement provoked a bitter reaction from his customers. "If you refuse to sell us liquor, we'll...we'll... complain to the landlord! He'll throw you out! You can't do this to us!"

Yankel knew they were as good as their words -- particularly when it touched the issue of vodka. He walked deep into the forest until he found the hut of the tzadik. "The peasants are threatening to ruin me," Yankel cried.

"Don't worry. Bolt the doors. If the landlord questions you, do not hesitate to tell him that your G-d commanded Jews to keep the Sabbath day holy," replied Rabbi Moshe Leib.

The innkeeper was very frightened, but he resolved to do as the tzadik said. Shabbat arrived and Yankel bolted the door of his inn. The peasants arrived and began to pound on the door and windows trying to get in. Finally, the voice of the landlord could be heard outside, demanding that Yankel open up the inn.

Yankel had no choice but to open, and it was a very angry poritz who entered the inn crying, "Who do you think you are, denying vodka to your customers!? Why else did I lease this inn, except to make a profit?"

"Sire," began a frightened Yankel, "surely you know I am a Jew. Just recently I was told by a holy Jew that our Torah forbids us to work on the Sabbath day. That is why I have closed the inn today."

The directness of the reply intrigued the landowner. "Where is this person? Bring him to me!"

Soon, Rabbi Moshe Leib was standing before the landlord. "Tell me, Jew, does this prohibition against working apply to a Jew who is in danger of losing his livelihood?" he asked, in a cutting tone.

"Sire, it applies even in such a case," was the tzadik's reply.

"Why do you torment this man? I doubt your answer would be the same if it applied to you. I will find out, and if you are really sincere, I will permit the inn to close on the Sabbath." The landlord left, a plan hatching in his mind.

The following Shabbat, the landowner rode into the forest with a bag of gold coins. When he saw Rabbi Moshe Leib leaving his hut, he scattered the coins on the floor of the forest and waited to see what would transpire. At first the tzadik passed right by the coins, but then he returned and examined them closely. The landlord waited gleefully for the fatal moment when the Jew would eagerly scoop them into his hands. But no, he continued walking.

The landowner then rushed out of his hiding place. "I am very impressed, and I will keep my end of the deal. But tell me, why did you first ignore the money and then bend down to examine it?"

"I will explain," began Rabbi Moshe Leib. "At first, I ignored the money, for it was Shabbat. But then, I began to think how I needed the money to rescue many imprisoned Jews. Perhaps that mitzva overrides the prohibitions of the Shabbat.

I became confused, and then I prayed to G-d to give me direction. Suddenly I understood. G-d could certainly provide me with the money in a permissible way. Sire, if I had taken or hidden the money, you would not have understood my motives. You would have assumed that I was taking it for my own desires. I have always scrupulously observed the Shabbat, and now Heaven has protected me from coming to any harm. Surely, now you can see the importance of keeping the holiness of the Sabbath."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT
On Ethics of our Fathers

Shimon HaTzadik... used to say: "The world stands upon three things - upon Torah, upon Divine service and upon acts of kindness." (1:2)

This Mishna refers to the author of its message as Shimon HaTzadik - the Righteous. A truly saintly, righteous person is not satisfied with working upon himself only, but makes an effort to influence the world as well, as the verse states, "G-d is righteous and loves righteousness." (*Biurim I' Pirkei Avot*)

Yose ben Yoezer of Tzreida said: "Make your house a meeting place of the Sages; sit in the dust at their feet; and thirstily drink their words." (1:4)

Whereas Yose ben Yoezer's teacher aimed at perfecting the person himself, Yose ben Yoezer instructed his disciples to aspire to an even higher level - he taught how a person is to permeate even his house with love and awe of G-d. (*The Maharal of Prague*)

Yose ben Yochanan of Jerusalem said: "Let your house be wide open; treat the poor as members of your own family..." (1:5)

Rabbi Yose ben Yochanan continues the theme of perfecting one's house. In order for holiness to permeate one's home, it is insufficient to merely love Torah. The love of Torah must be combined with the love of one's fellow Jew, expressed in acts of kindness. However, this must be done in such a way that one's hospitality will not result in undesirable negative consequences. (*The Maharal of Prague*)

7:12 PM Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
23 Nissan / April 10
Torah Portion *Shemini*
Blessing of the new month of Iyar
Ethics: Ch 1
Shabbat ends **8:13 PM**

Dedicated in honor of dear friends of the
Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. and Mrs. William Shulman

In duplicate on back call (718) 778-6000

בס"ד
1918
23 Nissan, 5786
April 10, 2026

L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
יוסף תורה השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"Jerusalem has mountains around it, and the L-rd is around His people from now and to eternity" (Psalms 125:2)

LIVING WITH THE REBBE
from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

The Torah portion, Shemini, discusses the pure animals that we are allowed to eat, and the impure ones that we are forbidden to eat. The Torah gives two signs to recognize a pure animal: it chews the cud and it has split hoofs.

One of the reasons offered for the dietary laws is that everything a person eats is transformed into blood and flesh, becoming an integral part of that person. The Torah thus prohibits certain foods in order to prevent man from assimilating the evil characteristics of the forbidden food.

If there is a prohibition against eating animals which do not have a split hoof and do not chew the cud, it follows that the proper conduct for man should be one that embraces the concepts of a split hoof and chewing the cud.

The hoof must be split entirely, from the top to the very bottom. The hoof is divided into two, to indicate that our walking on this earth, i.e., our mundane involvements, must include two basic principles: drawing near to oneself that which is good and proper and pushing away that which is not.

But the sign of a split hoof by itself is not sufficient. There must also be the sign of chewing the cud.

One must very carefully "chew over" every mundane activity which one intends to undertake. One must clarify and determine, once and again, whether to do it altogether, and if so, how to do it. Only then will the action itself be a "pure animal" - something which can and is used for our spiritual mission in life.

Regarding fowl, we do not rely on signs alone, but we also require a tradition affirming that species' purity. Off hand, one could ask why we need such a tradition. Observing the signs would seem sufficient. However, this comes to teach us that one cannot rely on one's own intelligence. It is possible to study the Code of Jewish Law and even follow a course of behavior which one's own intellect determines to be "beyond the letter of the law."

One must follow the tradition. The Hebrew word for tradition is mesora, which is related to the word mesira - devotion and being bound together. In order to follow the Jewish tradition we must be devoted to and bound together with other Jews and Torah leaders who can teach us the ways of our tradition.

Why Jews Need An Army

By Rabbi Lazer Gurkow

When the Jews left Egypt, they were a nation of slaves. They had no soldiers and no armies. Yet, the Torah says that the Army left Egypt.

When attacked by enemies in the desert, Jews had to draft an army each time. Moses told Joshua to choose men to defend against Amalek. G-d told Moses to draft fighters to fight against Midian. They didn't have a standing army. So, why did the Torah call the Jews who left Egypt an army?

ARMY OF G-D

The Torah calls them the army of G-d—not for physical battle, but for a spiritual mission. G-d brought the Jews to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah and confront a world steeped in immorality and paganism. Their role was to push back darkness and introduce light.

This is why the term "army" is used. Inner struggle is not gentle—it is war. Distraction in prayer, resistance to charity, and struggles with pride, anger, or envy are all battles. The Torah reframes these inner forces as external enemies. Once identified as such, they can be fought and overcome with clarity and strength.

THE MISSION

In an army, the mission comes first. Planners see the full strategy; soldiers carry out specific tasks. A soldier doesn't need to understand the entire plan—only to act.

This teaches a powerful lesson. Overanalyzing our motives can paralyze us. Like someone refusing to eat until they understand digestion, too much introspection prevents action. Judaism emphasizes action first: "We will do, and we will understand." Growth begins with doing, even before full

comprehension.
SYNCHRONIZED MISSIONS
No soldier fights alone. Each has a role, and success depends on coordination. If one steps outside their assignment, the entire mission can be compromised.

So too in Judaism. Different groups have distinct roles: Kohanim, Levites, and Israelites. Men and women have differing responsibilities. Each generation faces unique challenges—from agricultural laws in ancient times to modern digital temptations.

On a personal level, each individual has their own mission—overcoming hardship, building integrity, giving charity, or developing confidence. The key is not to compare, but to commit. Every mission matters.

SYNCHRONIZED TIMING

War requires precision. Every movement must happen at the right moment. Timing is everything.

Judaism reflects this structure. Each mitzvah has its proper time: Passover for the Seder, Yom Kippur for atonement, and specific times for prayer. Even Shabbat unfolds across the globe in sequence—from New Zealand to Hawaii—as communities light candles in a continuous wave of sanctity.

Our lives follow this pattern as well. Each person is placed in a specific moment in history with a unique role. No one can do everything—but everyone must do something.

When each individual fulfills their mission, at the right time and place, the collective goal is achieved: to elevate the world and bring the era of Mashiach.

This essay is based on the Chassidic discourse, Basi Legani, chapter 10.

