



Tetzaveh

Vol. 9, Issue 17 • 7 Adar 5785 / March 7, 2025

CONTENTS: Francus (Page 1); Kaltmann (Page 9); Bernstein (Page 12)

Sponsorships for future editions of Lehrhaus over Shabbat are available at
<https://thelehrhaus.com/sponsor-lehrhaus-shabbos/>

A Good Deed

Yitzchak Francus's work has appeared in The Atlantic online, The Saturday Evening Post's 2024 Best Short Stories anthology, Meetinghouse Magazine, and the Fairy Tale Magazine, among other places.

Editor's Note: This piece won as an honorable mention in The Lehrhaus' 2024 Short Story Winners.

It was the right thing to do. Every day, for one hundred and forty-three days since his mother's death, Judah recited Kaddish at synagogue. He had another hundred and eighty-one days to go. Morning, afternoon, and evening services all concluded with a Kaddish, so there was no early release option, no matter how long services dragged. Praying solo at home wasn't an option, because Kaddish required a Minyan, a quorum of ten men.

As the morning service schlepped to its penultimate Kaddish, Judah removed the tefillin from his forehead and slid the scored black cube into its container. With the straps wound around the base, it looked like a stocky toy tank bereft of its barrel. He intoned the Aramaic words of Kaddish, synchronizing with the other men in mourning, pausing to let the congregation respond *Amen* after each phrase. Then he unwound the strap on his left arm and removed the second tefillin from his biceps. He zipped the two tanklets into the velvet pouch by his seat on the pew and folded his prayer shawl before joining the final Kaddish.

His recent practice of shedding his tefillin shortly before morning services were over accomplished nothing. The rabbi always led a responsive reading of psalms for some congregant who was in the

hospital, or for the victims of terrorist attacks in Israel or anti-Semitic ones in America. You couldn't walk out on that, but it was okay to remove your tefillin, and everyone did. At least Judah managed to telegraph his impatience. A couple of times the rabbi gazed briefly in his direction as he unstrapped. That felt like an accomplishment.

Thank God there were no schnorrers this morning. Mostly, the schnorrer demographic was ultra-Orthodox men in black hats and black suits or frock coats come to beg for themselves or fundraise for some communal organization. Jewish law was clear about the obligation to any beggar who put out a hand. Communal organizations inhabited a more nebulous legal space but, at the least, it was rude to ignore the pleas; you always gave a few dollars.

Judah didn't resent the schnorrers, but he resented having an unrelated obligation appended to services that already stretched his tolerance. He was careful to exchange a word or two with each schnorrer. His wife had instilled that in him. Mindy was a better person than him; his better twelve-seventeenths, by his algorithmic reckoning.

When Mindy told him asking schnorrers for receipts added yet one more burden to their already trying existence he reluctantly agreed to stop. To her credit, she understood it was a big deal. He'd been tracking expenses since his first summer job in high school. She reminded him that, what with the changes in standard deduction rules, charitable contributions no longer had tax implications for them. She was right, but expenses

still needed to be documented. Instead of trying to explain, he'd acquiesced in accordance with the Talmudic precept of *Shalom Bayit*, domestic harmony.

It was Mindy who motivated him to attend synagogue twice daily, once in the morning and once for afternoon and evening services, which straddled sundown. Mindy was off at a conference on the West Coast. The venue was near the grandkids; they now had eight, *kein ayin harah*—there should be no evil eye. Was there such a thing as a grandparent who would turn down an opportunity to visit the grandchildren on the company dime?

He missed Mindy, sure. But tax season was his busiest time of year, and having another set of hands around the house would've made life easier. The last few nights he'd been working until after midnight. A half-hour to unwind and then before he knew it, six-thirty morning services again. It was hard maintaining virtue in a vicious cycle.

Nathan, his friend from two pews in front—more of a friend-in-law, despite twenty years of acquaintance; Mindy was friends with his wife Janice—caught up with Judah on his way to the bus stop. Nathan was a regular regular, not a Kaddish regular. Twenty years Judah has been dealing with Nathan. The guy was already lobbying Judah to continue attending services when he was done saying Kaddish.

"A bit anxious in there, are we?" Nathan said.

The rabbi wasn't the only one paying attention. Judah released a puff of air and changed the subject. "I can't tell you how much Mindy appreciates Janice's help with the anniversary party."

Nathan laughed. "She's happy to do it. Forty years is a big number."

The downtown bus came to the rescue, delivering Judah to a blur of meetings at the office, a few in the conference room, most on the Zoom tic-tac-toe grid. Instead of working on his tasks, he spent all day accumulating new ones. And then back to services. And then back home to work. And then back to services. And then back to the office. And then.

Judah dragged himself to the bus shelter, one more day's worth of tasks stacked atop the tower weighing him down. A breeze kicked up and he thought about the flat cap in his pocket but settled for buttoning his coat. As he secured the collar, a man approached. He was neatly dressed in a fleece sweatshirt that was optimistic for the season, and dungarees—new, it seemed, but in a style Judah hadn't seen since the 2012 fiscal year. The brown skin of the man's face was inset with startling ice-blue eyes. His gaze didn't meet Judah's, like a schnorrer begging for the first time.

"Excuse me, sir," the man said softly, "my name is Keyshawn. I just got released from upstate and I'm hungry. Do you think you could buy me something to eat?" He pointed to a McDonald's. "We can go there."

Judah appreciated the frankness and was curious what Keyshawn had been in for but Mindy's voice in his head told him it would be rude to ask. Anyway, it was still daylight and there were lots of people around. Maybe he could say 'no'—he wasn't sure if the laws of charity applied to supporting non-Jews—but he didn't want to say no. The man asked for food, not for money he might use to buy drugs or alcohol. Judah made a quick calculation. The afternoon service's only Kaddish was at the conclusion. "Is there maybe something around here you'd prefer to McDonald's?" he said.

Keyshawn studied the storefronts and his eyes settled on a place across the avenue called Barbecue Barbecue Barbecue Mo' Barbecue. Mo' Barbecue was, by a good thirty-seven percent, the most *treif* restaurant of any non-kosher restaurant since the dawn of creation; it practically squealed pork, swine, pig—*hazir*. The guys from synagogue who worked downtown referred to the place as Treif Treif Treif Mo' Treif. Judah reached for his pocket and fitted the flat cap over his yarmulke.

As they stepped into the crosswalk, Judah realized he'd never bought treif food in his life. Which wasn't a problem. Gentiles weren't obligated to keep kosher. And no prohibition precluded Jews from purchasing treif for non-Jews. He and Mindy gave money to the food bank and Meals on Wheels. It occurred to Judah that there were many brown and black Jews. Maybe even the majority of Jews were... *of color*, that was the phrase.

“Excuse me,” he said to Keyshawn. “You’re not Jewish, are you?”

“On my father’s side,” he said.

“Good,” Judah said. “If your mother was Jewish...” He was about to add that they’d have to go to the crummy kosher pizza shop around the corner but Keyshawn laughed and Judah caught on that maybe Keyshawn’s father wasn’t Jewish either.

“Had a hasid celly—cellmate, you know,” Keyshawn said. “In for smuggling cocaine in the bindings of Talmud volumes.” He shook his head. “Clever.” Then he smiled. “Innocent, naturally.”

Judah was appalled at the hasid’s desecration of the name of God, but he forced a smile as they approached the restaurant. He extended his arm to hold the door open for Keyshawn and stole a look at his watch. The place reeked like a lard-rendering factory. He felt the pervasive miasma of treif sinking into his pores but forced himself to stay put. “Whatever you want,” he said to Keyshawn, indicating the overhead menu board. While Keyshawn stood in line, Judah took out his phone and ordered an Uber. Keyshawn was still considering his options as he stepped forward to the counter. The girl at the register studied his dungarees and sweatshirt. “Hey,” she said. “You okay?”

Keyshawn’s lips thinned into a small smile and his eyes glowed. “Yeah, been a little rough, but I’m okay.”

“What can I get you?”

Keyshawn glanced quickly at Judah, who gestured broadly across the menu board to confirm his offer.

The girl turned to Keyshawn and opened her palms. “Well, in that case...”

Keyshawn’s teeth showed between his lips. “I’ll have the jerk shrimp skewers, the pulled pork plate, and fries,” he said. Then he hesitated and looked at Judah. “And a Corona?”

“Sure.”

“Thanks. I appreciate this.”

Judah handed the girl three twenties and she returned his change. “Receipt?” she asked.

“I’m an accountant,” he responded. He didn’t understand why the girl laughed.

The smell of treif grew increasingly oppressive and Judah was relieved to see his Uber pull up curbside. He dropped the coins and a ten-dollar bill in the tip jar, then quickly slipped the receipt and remaining singles into his pocket.

“Thanks, man,” Keyshawn said. Judah resisted the urge to rush out. “You’re welcome, Keyshawn. It was good meeting you. I wish you the best of luck.”

The Uber dropped Judah in time for Kaddish. Then

he sat. They had to wait for sundown—four minutes and twenty-two seconds according to the atomic clock on the wall near the holy ark. The rabbi always discussed a topic of Jewish law to bridge the gap. Over the last few evenings, he'd lent his overwrought delivery style to elucidating the laws of *Mar'it Ha'ayin*, the principle prohibiting technically permissible acts that would give the outward appearance of impropriety. This evening, he discussed the example of hanging wet clothes to dry on Saturday— "On Shabbos!"— which didn't violate any Sabbath prohibition but might lead passersby to conclude you ran your washing machine— "Your washing machine! On Shabbos!"—a clear violation. The rabbi clocked in at four minutes and thirty-seven seconds, not bad. Then someone asked a question. And someone else followed up. Judah pressed his eyes shut and clasped his hands. His thumbs tapped against each other.

By the time they made it to Kaddish at the end of the evening service, Judah had edged his way toward the aisle, coat buttoned, flat cap on his head. At the final *Amen*, the rabbi raised a hand and asked everyone to stick around for a moment. He introduced a schnorrer who was in town collecting money for a hospital visitation society. The rabbi told an elaborate story about how this aid society helped his family when he was in rabbinical school.

The schnorrer rose to his feet. He had a chain draped around his neck, the ends clipped to a placard displaying the organization's name in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish. He positioned

himself before the door, holding a small bucket in his left hand. Those in the nearest pews got in line first. Judah waited his turn, lips pressed, as the schnorrer shook hands and thanked each donor. The man's beard was gray and enormous, a sprawling Brillo pad obscuring his lips. Judah watched as a hole in the steel wool opened and closed to express thanks in a pidgin language derived from English and Yiddish.

After an interminable wait of a minute and fourteen seconds, Judah dropped the remaining Treif Treif Treif Mo' Treif change into the bucket. He hurriedly shook hands with the schnorrer and pushed through the door, barely hearing the man's *Thank you, I appreciate your donation*, which came out as "*Shkoyich. Mamish appreciate the tzdokoh.*"

Judah trudged into the house, bearing his tower of tasks. When he peered into the refrigerator, an empty shelf reminded him he'd finished the leftover salmon and rice. Mindy and Janice had stocked every last cubic inch of the freezer's six cubic feet with food, but that was for the anniversary party. He sighed, pulled a box of spaghetti from the cupboard, and set water to boil. After eating too quickly and slotting his dishes into the dishwasher, Judah returned to the kitchen table to study the spreadsheet showing his to-do list. His last meeting of the day got him to row seventy-three. *Still one million forty-eight thousand five hundred and three to go before I exhaust Excel*, he thought.

Mindy called at ten. She spent eleven and a half

minutes telling him about the kids' and grandkids' flight plans for the anniversary party, and how they might go about housing everyone; two minutes and sixteen seconds telling him about the latest RSVPs to the e-invitations—everyone was coming; and a hair less than twenty-one minutes telling him about the conference. Then she asked about his day. Judah didn't have time to spare, but he didn't want to make her feel guilty about taking it, so he told her about the Brillo-beard schnorrer at services. He must have done a good job because Mindy laughed, and Judah wasn't usually the best at making people laugh. Keyshawn had laughed when Judah started explaining Jewish matrilineal descent, and the Mo' Treif girl laughed when she asked about the receipt, but he wasn't trying to be funny. The receipt. He made a mental note to file the receipt in his expenses folder.

When he was done telling Mindy about the schnorrer, the call seemed to be winding down. "I love you, honey, I'll talk to you tomorrow," he said.

"I love you too."

Before he could disconnect, Judah heard a child in the background and a surge in Mindy's voice. "Hold on a minute, Judah. Rachel wants to say hi."

"Isn't it a bit late?"

"No, Judah," she said, a smile in her voice. "Remember? We're in California; three hours behind you."

"Honey, I..."

"You should talk to Rachel, Judah."

"Hon," he began but thought to himself *Shalom Bayit*. "Sure, put her on," he said, for the glory of the Talmud (hopefully one without cocaine in the binding) and for the sake of domestic harmony.

Eight grandchildren later, he finally got back to work. At two minutes to three AM, he tossed his clothes on the carpet and crawled into bed. When the phone alarm went off in the morning, he hit *Snooze*. The next time he opened his eyes, he bolted upright. His alarm had been sounding for fifty-seven minutes if the nightstand clock could be believed. He'd missed morning services. Judah showered and dressed quickly without bothering to pick up yesterday's clothes. It was okay to miss services, he told himself. Maybe it would raise some eyebrows, but the formal obligation was to say Kaddish once a day. He donned his tefillin in the living room, rapidly recited morning services, and rushed out the door, sliding into a Zoom tic-tac-toe square in the nick of time.

That afternoon, as he squinted down the avenue, waiting for his bus to appear, Judah considered what to say should anyone ask where he'd been in the morning or why he'd been late to yesterday's afternoon service. His contemplation was cut short when Keyshawn crossed into his peripheral vision. It was daylight and lots of people were around, but Judah couldn't say he wasn't a little

apprehensive. He didn't know what Keyshawn had done. Then he thought about his better twelve-seventeenths and what she would tell him to do.

"Good afternoon, Keyshawn," he said. "How are you? Can I get you something to eat?" He remembered he still needed to retrieve the Mo' Treif receipt from the pocket of yesterday's pants.

"I'm good," Keyshawn said. "Wanted to come over and say thank you again." His blue eyes were still startling, but his gaze didn't stray.

When Judah got to synagogue—a few minutes early, today—the Brillo-beard was standing in the lobby with his bucket. Judah felt bad about the previous evening, so he went over to greet the man and spend a moment or two asking about the hospital visitation society, but the steel wool spoke first.

"You veren't here *dem morgn*—dis morning."

"Well, I..."

"You ver the one who, *gelafn*—uh, running."

Being reprimanded by a schnorrer was a new experience for Judah. "I'm sorry."

Nathan raised an eyebrow on his way to the sanctuary. The rabbi nodded curtly as he passed.

The schnorrer waved off Judah's apology. "No. The running. It's why I *gedenkt*—I..."

Judah knew that one, "Remembered," he said.

"Why I remembered it was your *trumeh, trumeh*—donation—in..." He lifted the small collection bucket. "There was a," he struggled to find a word, "a, nu, a *kabboleh*." Judah didn't recognize that one. The schnorrer repeated, "a *kabboleh*," using a finger to draw a small square.

Oh, no. Judah realized *kabboleh* was a Yiddishized version of the Hebrew *kabbalah*. A receipt.

From Treif Treif Treif Mo' Treif.

For jerk shrimp skewers.

And pulled *hazir*.

He was trying to figure out how to explain without sounding like a liar, but the schnorrer didn't look appalled or scandalized. *Was this a shakedown?*

Judah thought through the downsides. If the schnorrer mentioned the receipt to someone, gossip would have it everywhere. And people would think he ate treif. They wouldn't trust he kept his home kosher. Wouldn't come over for meals. And who knew what else? God forbid the rabbi found out.

He took out his wallet and dropped two twenties in the bucket.

The schnorrer uttered a perplexed "*Shkoyich. Mamish* appreciate the *tzdokoh*," but made no

move to produce the receipt.

“The *kabboleh*?” Judah asked, drawing a square.

“Ah, the *kabboleh*,” the schnorrer repeated as his eyes lit up, as if he suddenly understood the request, and Judah realized the man never looked at the receipt, probably wasn’t comfortable enough with English to bother reading it. He’d dropped forty dollars to learn there was no need to drop forty dollars.

“Yaw, yaw,” Judah affirmed in Yiddish. “Can I have the *kabboleh*?” And he put out a hand.

“*Neyn, neyn*,” the schnorrer fluttered his fingers. “You veren’t here *dem morgn*. I gave for you to, uh, rabbi.”

Judah’s face froze in a rictus as he turned toward the sanctuary. When he stepped through the door, he was sure everyone was staring, as if he’d transformed into a Jewish Pig-Pen, accompanied by a cloud of fluffy white lard.

He filed into his pew, alone in the row, exposed, as he waited for services to start. The rabbi sat in his chair, against the wall by the ark, back erect like a judge, eyes fixed on some volume of Jewish law. Judah’s eyes watched the atomic clock above the rabbi’s head ticking closer to the afternoon service. Maybe the rabbi never looked at the receipt. It was folded. *Wasn’t it?* Or maybe he did. If Judah asked for it back, the rabbi would look then. And if the rabbi had already looked, he

wouldn’t say anything. At least to Judah. And what was that curt nod in the lobby about?

The rabbi turned his head to look at the clock, then scanned the room to check for a Minyan. When he got to Judah his eyes settled for a moment. *Or did they?* Maybe Judah was the one who’d completed the quorum.

Following the afternoon service, the rabbi rose to discuss Mar’it Ha’ayin. “My example tonight,” he said, “comes from the story of Hanukkah. When the Greek king Antiochus tried forcing the Jews to give up their loyalty to God, he ordered a respected elderly scribe named Eleazar to publicly eat treif. Pork! *Hazir!*” His hand came down on the lectern.

Judah jolted upright against the back of the pew.

The rabbi’s index finger rocketed up. “On pain of death!”

Was the rabbi looking at him? *Steady, steady.*

“When the great scribe Eleazar refused, the guards offered him a deal: they would prepare kosher meat—a nice brisket, maybe—and Eleazar could simply pretend he was eating *hazir*. As we all know, Eleazar refused, and he suffered a gruesome death. And why? Why? Would he be violating the prohibition against eating *hazir*?” The rabbi widened his eyes and waited a beat. “He. Would. Not!” His chin jutted forward as he snapped off the last word.

Judah shifted in his pew. Had Nathan looked at him with that raised eyebrow?

“Would he be violating any prohibition at all?” The rabbi’s gaze swept the room. “Yes, he would! He would be violating the prohibition against appearing to violate a prohibition. Mar’it Ha’ayin! And this was enough for him to die in sanctification of the name of God.

“Questions?”

Judah had many questions: Was the rabbi talking about him? Did the rabbi think Judah ate *hazir*? Kept a treif kitchen? Had he told anyone?

He didn’t ask any of his questions.

When Mindy called at ten, Judah was sitting at the kitchen table. He hadn’t eaten dinner and couldn’t focus on his work. He put the phone on speaker and laid it on the table.

“Everything alright?” she wanted to know. She was looking at an email from Janice. It said Judah hadn’t made it to morning services.

“No, no, I’m fine,” he insisted, staring at the phone, “I slept through my alarm.”

“And she says you were late for afternoon services yesterday.”

“An issue with the bus. I ended up having to take an Uber but I got there in time for Kaddish.”

Mindy told him about the conference, and put the grandkids on, then took the phone back. “Oh, Judah, one more thing,” she said. “Something a little strange.”

“Uh huh?”

“I have another email from Janice. She says she and Nathan won’t be able to make the anniversary party. I hope everything is okay.”

“Huh,” Judah said. He had two days. Mindy would be back in two days. But emails. They’d be swarming her inbox by the time she woke in California.

“Judah, are you there? Judah?”

He looked up from the phone and stared straight ahead at the blank white door of the freezer. Plus or minus a meal or two, his better twelve—no—*fifteen* seventeenth wouldn’t have to cook for twenty-three days.

You Asked, Rabbi Ulman Answered

Nomi Kaltmann is an Australian lawyer, journalist, and 2023 graduate of Yeshivat Maharat.

Book Review of *MiLishkat HaDarom*

When *MiLishkat HaDarom*—a compilation of rabbinic questions and answers by Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, the senior Dayan of the Sydney Beth Din—was published about a year ago, it largely flew

under the radar. Written in rabbinic Hebrew, the book's dense style limited its reach among English-speaking audiences. Yet behind its unassuming debut lies the work of a global authority on Jewish family law, by a rabbi and scholar whose expertise continues to shape the field in profound ways.

Rabbi Ulman is well known in Australia, and from his office in Sydney, Australia, he fields some of the world's most pressing questions related to fertility, IVF, Jewish divorce, and the status of *Kohanim*. The book includes questions from many countries including Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, Singapore, Austria, and Israel, amongst others.

With endorsements from some of the greatest living rabbis in the world, including Zalman Nechemia Goldberg, Shlomo Moshe Amar, and David Lau, *Milishkat HaDarom* is a groundbreaking work covering halakhic questions from many countries that rarely get attention.

Born in Leningrad in the former USSR, Rabbi Yehoram Ulman's journey has taken him to *yeshivot* in Israel and the United States to his current home in Australia. A prominent figure in the Chabad Lubavitch movement, Ulman's influence extends far beyond his affiliation.

Renowned as a trusted authority, he serves as the go-to halakhic expert for thousands of Chabad *shluhim* worldwide, delivering rulings on complex cases across dozens of countries. A scholar of extraordinary calibre, Ulman is known for his innovative halakhic solutions, stepping in where

others might hesitate—such as navigating the intricacies of arranging a *get* for the ex-wife of the [last Jew in Afghanistan](#) who had been an *agunah* in Israel for many years.

Ulman's book is divided into multiple sections, each with questions and answers on distinct topics such as *Ishurei Yahadut*, questions relating to Jewish Status, *Mamzerut*, which covers illegitimately conceived children, *Kohanim*, covering the priesthood, as well as sections dedicated to questions around fertility.

The questions, which can come from anywhere in the world, are always intricate and fascinating. Rabbi Ulman addresses the role of mitochondrial DNA in questions around Jewish status, as well as what a person should do if they lost their conversion certificate. Fertility questions are wide ranging, including artificial insemination from a husband to a wife, artificial insemination when the father is unknown, as well as questions related to the need for *hashgahah* [supervision] of fertility treatments like egg and sperm extraction. Unsurprisingly, Rabbi Ulman is in favor of [rabbinic supervision of IVF](#), and in 1995 pioneered the halakhic protocol related to these treatments with Rabbi Yosef Feigelstock which is used in many countries.

The complex questions that he receives are eye opening. For example, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, a Jewish couple in China faced an urgent dilemma. They had recently welcomed a baby boy, but with no local *mohel* available and China's borders firmly shut, there was no

foreseeable way to perform their son's *brit milah*. Desperate for a solution, they wrote to Rabbi Ulman, asking if a woman in their community—an Orthodox Jew who kept Shabbat and Kosher and was also a trained surgeon—could perform the circumcision.

Rabbi Ulman carefully considered the unique circumstances, including the possibility that it might take over a year before a traditional *mohel* could reach the couple in China. Ultimately, however, he ruled that the *brit milah* must be conducted in accordance with Jewish law and tradition. While the female doctor was highly skilled in medical circumcision, her training followed secular, non-Jewish methods, which did not align with Jewish tradition. Therefore, he concluded, she could not perform the *brit milah*.

Another question Rabbi Ulman received revolved around a delicate family matter. A couple had divorced, and the woman later married another man. However, her second husband suffered from severe erectile dysfunction, and despite consulting multiple doctors, the couple was unable to consummate their marriage during their nine months together. The second marriage ultimately ended in divorce, and the original couple reconciled, leading to a pressing halakhic question: could the couple remarry?

According to Jewish law, a woman who has been both married to and intimate with another man after divorcing her first husband is generally prohibited from remarrying him. Rabbi Ulman approached the situation with deep sensitivity

and rigorous halakhic analysis. He determined that since the second marriage had not been consummated, the prohibition did not apply. Therefore, he ruled that the original couple could remarry, offering them a path forward within the framework of Halakha.

Some of the most intriguing and emotionally charged questions arise in the sections addressing Jewish status. These inquiries reveal the complex, often painful realities of life, such as a father declaring his son a *mamzer* based on the mother's admission of infidelity, the status of children born to parents married in a Conservative wedding ceremony, or a woman who has been intimate with other men engaged to a Kohen. Among these questions and answers are also deeply tragic cases, like that of a survivor of childhood rape who still wishes to marry a Kohen.

While Orthodox halakhic law is sometimes criticized for its perceived rigidity, reading a modern work like *MiLishkat HaDarom* by Rabbi Ulman offers a refreshing perspective. It demonstrates how remarkably adaptable Halakha can be when a skilled and thoughtful authority examines a complex question, carefully weighing all the facts before arriving at a decision.

As I delved into the many questions and answers written in rabbinic Hebrew, I found myself wishing these fascinating cases could reach a broader audience in English. While I could navigate and understand the Hebrew, I know that many people lack the same textual grounding. Although I haven't asked Rabbi Ulman if he plans to translate

his book, several rabbis I consulted explained that many *poskim* deliberately choose not to translate their works into English. This decision often stems from a desire to prevent their rulings from being misapplied and to ensure that only those capable of engaging with the material in Hebrew can interpret and apply their answers correctly.

In addition, as I read through some of the questions in *MiLishkat HaDaron*, a concerning thought began to surface: the details in the book seemed strikingly specific. It might not be as challenging as one would hope to identify the businessman in Shanghai who discovered late in life that he was a Kohen yet sought to marry a Russian woman he had been involved with, whose parents had converted—and who turned to Rabbi Ulman for guidance. Similarly, within the tight knit global Jewish community it might not be too difficult to pinpoint the civilly married couple in Austria whose rabbi wrote to Rabbi Ulman seeking advice on whether the wife could begin using the *mikveh* in Vienna before they had a Jewish marriage ceremony. While these rulings are fascinating, their personal nature left me questioning whether such specific details should have been shared so openly.

Overall, *MiLishkat HaDaron* showcases the brilliance of a rabbi of Rabbi Ulman's calibre, navigating the complexities of contemporary Jewish life with profound sensitivity and insight. His ability to address the difficult questions facing the Jewish people today while balancing tradition with modern realities shows the enduring relevance and adaptability of halakhic thought.

Woman of Valor: Two Poems

Maya Bernstein's writing has appeared in Allium, the Amethyst Review, By the Seawall, the Ekphrastic Review, Pensive: A Global Journal of Spirituality and the Arts, Tablet Magazine, Vita Poetica, and elsewhere.

Woman of Valor, Tradwife, Sings of Herself

An archetype, I am anchored to the past
By ball and chain. Shackled,
Calm, I wear black clogs,
Drive carpool, peel my husband's
Eggs and serve them warm with arugula,
Farro, sweet potatoes. He chose well.

Gilded, I'm a merchant ship. Prowl the house,
Howl at night in my socks. Slip
Ice cubes in his glass, knife homemade
Jam on his toast. My hair hidden beneath a silk
Kerchief. My fingers grip the spindle,
Lamp never extinguishes,
My hands open to the poor. I do
Not fear the snow.

Observe me! Clothed in scarlet,
Purple linens. I am country-less
Queen without attendants. My crown
Rests on my nightstand. Dream I'm

Soldiering into the sea, salty
Tongue. I've learned not to open my mouth, just
what not to
Utter. Penetrate my armour, lift my translucent
Veil, you'll smell the damp
Wool of my wanting. Unbraid my fla-
Xen hair and sing, *Many daughters have done
worthy things, but
You've excelled them all.* Have I? I'm enervated
Zeal, pushed around the plate. They praise me at
the gates.

Woman of Valor Cooks Chicken Soup

I used the dairy knife
to skin the chicken
breasts for the soup
which my husband ate
with such gusto –
so hot! so delicious! –
tonight for the holy Sabbath
dinner. I don't desire
to be a bad wife,
a plague unto my husband,
an impious woman
who arranges the table
with delicacies – golden
broth brimming with carrots
and matzo balls – but
who arranges her mouth
with deceit, the truth
twisted on her tongue
like the rubbery, feathered
skin peeled from the flesh
cold, coiled about
the sharp blade
which I washed
in warm water
(after I put the soup
up to boil) with the blue
dairy sponge. Forgive me.
It was easier
than searching
for the meat knife
and, moreover,
easier than an affair,
a divorce lawyer,
or another argument
about who upholds
the law
in the kitchen.

Managing Editor:

David Kollmar

Editors:

David Fried

Shayna Herszage-Feldan

Chesky Kopel

Tamar Ron Marvin

Chaya Sara Oppenheim

Michael Weiner

Consulting Editors:

Miriam Krupka Berger

Michael Bernstein

Elli Fischer

Miriam Gedwiser

Yosef Lindell

Chaim Saiman

Jeffrey Saks

Jacob J. Schacter

Sara Tillinger Wolkenfeld

Shlomo Zuckier

Please contact us at editors@thelehrhaus.com