

WOMEN OF VALOR

Music by
Cantor Moshe Taubé

Lyrics and Narration by
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NARRATOR:

A woman of valor who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.

How frequently in our lives we have heard these simple yet profound words, which are only two lines from the beautiful stanzas of Proverbs 31. The talmud says "It is a woman alone through whom God's blessings are vouchsafed to a house". The role of the woman in the world underwent many changes through the ages; socially, politically, economically and spiritually, until it evolved into a position of stature, pride, reverence and honor. We pay tribute today to many famous, dedicated women in history, from modern times, back through the years to our biblical ancestors, - true "Women of Valor" - and to all women of our own Beth Shalom Sisterhood, past and present, who have made and continue to make it possible for this Sisterhood to celebrate today, its' 25th Annual Donor Luncheon, and to embark on its' 51st year.

PIANO INTERLUDE

NARRATOR:

Born in Russia, Golda Meir emigrated to the United States in 1906, then to Palestine in 1921, becoming active in its labor party and in Zionist political affairs, to become the first woman Foreign Minister of Israel in 1956, a position equalled by few in modern times. Golda Meir will be remembered in history as a gallant statesman and true daughter of Israel.

CHORUS

Daughter of Israel, hold high your head;
For this land your fathers have suffered and bled.
Rescued from bondage, but destined to roam
This land six million might have called home.
Daughter of Israel, remember your creed
That land of your ancestors' seed.
Rejected, they wept for this land wrought by God
Next year in Jerusalem may we tread oh Lord.

NARRATOR

Marion Anderson, an American Negro contralto, has won acclaim in all parts of the world. Born of poor parents, her musical training was largely subsidized, and in gratitude, after her success, she established the Marion Anderson Award granting a yearly scholarship to promising singers. She received an appointment as a United States delegate to the United Nations. Her courage is evident in her autobiography, "My Lord What a Morning". This special brand of courage enabled her to face the problems and anxieties and frustrations of venturing into a field in which society had not yet accepted members of her race, to become the first Negro to sing with the Metropolitan Opera Company, never losing her benevolent outlook on life.

CHORUS

My Lord what a morning, wat a sunny sky
What a time to be living, I could sing, I could fly.
My Lord what a morning, let me live and be free
Then I'll know where to go and I'll know why I'm me.
My Lord, My Lord, bless your children I pray.
My Lord what a morning, wat a world, what a day.

NARRATOR

"I would rather light a candle than curse the darkness." These profound words reflect the genuine courage of their author, Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the great humanitarians of modern times. Her undying faith in humanity and in her country never wavered through personal disappointments and tragedies, and through a dark era in the history of the United States.

CHORUS

Light a candle in the darkness
Fill the world with hope and light.
Linger not on thoughts of sorrow,
Cherish all that's good and right.
Though dark days descend upon you
And the world seems filled with strife,
Look not back at what is lost
Look ahead with faith in life.
Light a candle in the night
Keep it ever burning bright.

NARRATOR

Blind, deaf - shut off from the world - never to watch a sunset or see her mother's face, - never to hear a melody or a baby's cry. Helen Keller lives today, the recipient of awards of great distinction from governments the world over. With the help of Anne Sullivan, companion, teacher, partially blind herself, Helen Keller broke the sight and sound barriers to attain renown for her literary accomplishments and for her aid to others physically handicapped.

My lips speak not what my soul can feel
My eyes see not what my thoughts reveal.
My ears hear not what my heart understands
Yet I am blessed with mind and with hands.
And the darkness shall become light and the
stillness music to my ear
Then I can speak with God - and see - and hear.

PIANO INTERLUDE

NARRATOR

The National Womens League of the United Synagogue of America was founded in 1918 by Mathilde Schechter, wife of Dr. Solomon Schechter, the second president of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Mrs. Schechter recognized the great need of a body of Sisterhoods to be affiliated with the Conservative Synagogues in order to bring the religious ideals of Judaism into the lives and homes of Jewish women. Because of her foresight this great organization was born, nourished and grew, so that it celebrated its Golden Jubilee last year. It continues to grow, as do its challenges.

SOLO

Take up now the constant challenge
Lift our people to the heights
Foresake ye not our ancient Torah
Guard our freedom and our rights.
As a child becomes a woman
As a seed becomes a tree
So a need becomes a purpose
And a dream reality.

NARRATOR

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name Mother of Exiles.
From her beacon hand
Glow world-wide welcome;
her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips.

"The New Colossus", written in 1883 by Emma Lazarus, American-Jewish poet, philanthropist and organizer of relief for immigrants. It cries out "Persecuted Jews! I am Miss Liberty - this is my country - I share it with you if you will enter. - Others will come!"

CHORUS

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

NARRATOR

Madame Marie Curie - a lifetime dedicated to the study of physics and chemical research, thereby discovering elements which were to open new vistas in science and medicine. Besieged with doubts and failures, her efforts never waned and her relatively small contribution made a vast impact on the betterment of mankind.

SOLO

A ray of light, a spark, a beam
How small, at first, that light may seem.
But sparks may last, then brighter burn
And light the earth and stars that turn.
If every woman every day
Lit one small light her own way
How radiant would that world glow
From each small spark a flame would grow.

NARRATOR

"Lady with the lamp" - Florence Nightingale - a lifetime of devotion to the poor and sick, and to the nursing profession. Though born of wealthy parents and raised in British society, she dedicated her life physically, financially and spiritually, to the concept that every human life is valuable.

She gives of her bread to the poor, she comforts and shelters the old
She eases the pain of the sick and her blessings return three-fold.

She stretches her hand to the needy and seeks not for glory or fame
But gives of her heart and her self - and Seduccah is her name.

PIANO INTERLUDE

NARRATOR

When the widowed Naomi, upon losing both her sons, decided to leave the land of Moab and return to Judah, she urged her daughters-in-law to also return to their own people. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye but Ruth cleaved unto her. And Naomi said, "behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god; return thou after thy sister-in-law, but Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go with her."

Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee;
for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God;
Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried;
The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

PIANO INTERLUDE

NARRATOR

A woman of valor who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.

Not every woman can attain the stature of a Ruth, a Madame Curie, an Eleanor Roosevelt or a Golda Meir. Each can, however, fulfill the role of a true "Woman of Valor" by elevating her sense of values; by dedicating her life to the enrichment and perpetuation of Judaism through education and through her personal observances; by participating in vital civic and communal affairs; through understanding of and charity for the needy; by striving to maintain a traditional Jewish home, filled with harmony and with love; by living her daily life with honor, with loyalty to her country, with pride, with hope for a good life for the future and with faith in the God of Israel. Above all, it is the solemn duty of the Jewish woman to perpetuate her precious gift of Jewish heritage by instilling in her children that hope and faith in Judaism and love of freedom which will make each woman, in every sense, a "Woman of Valor".

CHORUS

A woman of valor, who can find
Eishets chayil mi yemtza
Ve rachok mi pnanim michra.

END