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**Women and Israel**

By Nathan Ziprin

It is a saying of the rabbis of old that God redeemed Israel from slavery because of the merits of Jewish womanhood. We do not have much historical documentation specifically as to what part they did play. The Bible does tell us that when the Israelites succeeded in crossing the Red Sea, Miriam, the sister of Moses, followed by other women with timbrels, danced and sang and played in celebration of the victory over the Egyptians.

One recalls the story of Miriam in the news from Detroit of the award during the past week at the Israel Bond Dinner of the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanities Award to Mrs. Emma Shaver. We recall that the newspapers reported that after the Six Day War, the voice of Mrs. Shaver rang forth on Mt. Scopus, singing, "Jerusalem, the Golden", the new song which celebrates the reunification of the holy city. A singer who has performed with major opera companies and symphony orchestras, Mrs. Shaver has frequently performed this role of Miriam at critical points of Israel's young history. But she has given of more than her beautiful voice. There are at least half a dozen institutions in Israel which owe their establishment to the munificence of this great lady and her late husband, Morris L. Shaver.

It was fitting that Golds Meier should come from Israel to make the award. Mrs. Meier perhaps is the outstanding testimony to the signal part played by women in the building of the new Israel.

There was another Emma whose story Israel can never forget -- Emma Lazarus. Most Americans know her as the author of the poem on the Statue of Liberty,

"Give me of your huddled masses  
Yearning to be free."

But Emma Lazarus was also the author of a trumpet call to the Jews calling for a restoration of the Jewish state. Her voice rang out even before that of Theodor Herzl:

"Let but an Ezra rise anew  
To raise the banner of the Jew."

Her story is a most interesting one. In her earlier years, she not only displayed no interest in the Jewish past, but a kind of hostility towards it. Some of her Christian friends in the literary world asked why she made no use of her rich Jewish background in a literary way. John Burroughs pointed out to her that the Jewish Bible had influenced the style of Walt Whitman, whom Miss Lazarus admired, but none of this had any effect on Miss Lazarus. Then came the Russian pogroms of 1880 and when a fine Russian Aristocratic lady wrote an article in an American magazine justifying the pogroms, then for the first time Emma Lazarus awoke to the fact that she was Jewish.

Happily in the case of Emma Shaver there was no such period of estrangement from her people. At the end of World War II, she was the first American artist to perform for the survivors of the D.P. camps. During Israel's War of Independence in 1948, she gave concerts for Israeli soldiers. She was the donor of a playground in Jerusalem, a childrens nursing center in Rishon. The Morris L. Shaver School is a memorial to her husband. Mrs. Shaver is one of the forty world Jewish leaders who helped found the Truman Center for the Advancement of Peace and she has been one of the leading supporters of the Midrasha, the college in the Negeb, established by Ben Gurion.

We salute the lady.  
(ED. NOTE: And we salute you, Nat. The eyes have it as far as best wishes for your eye operation. You'll be seeing us soon, we hope. J.T.)

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**TELL TALES**

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BY JACK TELL



**Bonnie or Michele????**

Step right up folks and see the winner of the Grandchildren's Contest.

Hear ye! Hear ye! the court is now in session. We could go on like this for an entire column, maintaining the suspension and keeping you guessing, but it wouldn't be fair. We've never kidded you before and we don't intend to start now. The fact of the matter is we had a horrible nightmare. We didn't have one winner, there were two. But our choices didn't hold. Here's what happened.

It started out as a lead pipe cinch. We glanced at all the entrants, just as we had promised, then selected the two most logical choices, our own Bonnie and Michele. Could it be fairer or more unbiased than that? Ask any grandparent.

The problem wasn't choosing Bonnie and Michele before all the others. The problem was choosing BETWEEN Bonnie and Michele. This called for deep concentration. On the one hand we have a sweet, tender, soft, lovely, seven-month bundle of joy. On the other there's elegant, charming, intelligent, pretty young miss of four. Which one should we select? How could we make a choice? The answer was simple. Call it a tie and award each a \$25 Bond. That was it, finished, settled, ended.

But was it? Somewhere the sun is shining. Somewhere birds are singing. Somewhere there are trusting souls. NOT in Las Vegas. Apparently in our community there are suspicious grandparents, who had a premonition of the fair and unbiased conclusion we were about to reach in selecting the prize-winning grandchild. Like we've been saying all along, these "Strangest Creatures on Earth" proved it. With one-track minds they rose in a body to protest a decision that hadn't even been made.

First came the bribes. One grandmother offered to purchase the Bond if it was awarded to her grandchild. A grandfather heard about the first offer and upped it to two Bonds, one for his and one for Michele. While we mentally debated this reprehensible suggestion we looked forward to the next bid. Who knows when one would reach our wavering price?

But American ingenuity didn't cease at grand parent-hood. If one method fails they try another. This time they hit us where it hurt, logic.

It was delicately pointed out that relatives of members of the Israelite should not be chosen as winners. It was a repugnant hint at the most, but was not entirely without merit. It hit us in our conscience. So we looked at the fine print in the "never stated" but usually understood rules. There it was as plain as the other faces in the contest: "Members of Israelite family not eligible." We had no other choice. That was that.

But was it? The parents of Bonnie and Michele, our own son and daughter-in-law, also anticipated our initial choice and the expected reactions from irate grandparents. Don and Rita weren't about to give up without a struggle. They were preparing counter-reactions.

First our own flesh and blood demanded to see a copy of the imaginary rules that eliminated their children from first prizes. It wasn't the principle with them. It was the \$25 Bonds. But they couldn't compromise our principles. Don and Rita weren't through, and we were kind of proud of their tenacity. Who would guess the extremity of their next step?

They commenced legal termination of our relationship. They wanted to disown us as parents and grandparents, just so Michele and Bonnie could win the \$25 Bonds. Imagine that. It was reminiscent of the child who poisoned his father and mother so he could attend the orphan's picnic.

We brought that ridiculous state of affairs to an end in a hurry. The rules stated any new status of an entrant was not retroactive to the commencement of the contest. That settled Don and Rita. Bonnie and Michele needed further persuasion.

Bonnie was mature. She could be reasoned with. Some sweet talk, a few flattering remarks and a couple of better dresses from the Small Fry Shop, and the older sister was appeased. Michele was harder to reach. Talk fell on deaf ears. A half dozen new creepers could not erase the disappointment she felt and the resentment she displayed. We had a feeling that baby was out to get us and every time we held her in our arms she proved it. From now on we wear a rubber apron.

But dreams end and life must go on. With heavy heart and the weight of the world on our shoulders, we return to the selection of the winner of the contest.

For that you'll have to wait for next week.

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