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The Women Stand Ready

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The others told me it was dangerous, that this was no place for a woman. I didn't listen. I could die or I could fight. I could accept my fate as the cold steel of death's scythe sliced my soul and carried me to better place. I could let an evil man, hell-bent for the blood of my people, conquer my hope and burn it in a flaming pit of lies and uncertainty.

Or I could choose to use my hands, my feet, my head, and my heart to save myself and to shape the destiny of a generation, I could be part of the select few who had a strong enough will to stand up and ward off the devil himself.

Where are those who doubted me? I don't know for sure. Probably dead - - killed by the maniacal regime that has taken over our motherland. If not dead, it will soon be their fate, their destiny sealed by the fatal choices they made when they put their faith to an unknown cause.

The Kashariyot were the veins that kept the heart of resistance pumping during the dark times of the Holocaust. They fought for freedom in clandestine fashion. They risked life and limb. They were a system of courageous women fighters who stood up against a force much larger than themselves. These women “were secret couriers for the Jewish resistance who traveled illegally on false documents and smuggled underground papers, money, food, and news, in and out of the ghettos of Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe.”
(Eventful)

They are important because they created a framework of much-needed information and because they smuggled arms. Later they rescued Jewish people from the persecution of

the Nazis. They helped the Jewish resistance become a factor in World War II. "The leaders of the Jewish resistance, who were in the best position to evaluate the role of the Kashariyot, consistently placed them in the indispensable core of the Jewish resistance. For example, Zivia Lubetkin, who was in the central command of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, concluded that "one can not possibly describe this work of organizing the Jewish resistance, or the uprising itself, without mentioning the role of these valiant women" (Weitzman)

Eighty years , one religion, and over 1,700 land miles separate the Jewish women who were a part of the Kashariyot from their Arabian sisters who fight for freedom in the Free Syrian Army.

The Women of the Free Syrian Army are the minority, yet they are treated as one with the men. It is estimated that 5,000 revolutionary women are "now engaged in fighting and military logistics." (Sohlman). Some women do play a stereotypical role in the revolution, like serving as cooks and nurses. Others fight alongside the men for their country, with the boldness of panthers.

The chaotic state of Syria does not allow people to consult the beliefs of their cultural teachings, which is why some Muslim men are now allowing women to take up roles of traditionally male responsibility. Benifet Ikhla, a 27-year-old widow with 6 children states, "I fight for life and freedom, I fight to prove that woman and man are equal." (Gorence)

These women show that no matter what the consequences, people will stand up against injustice, regardless of age, status, or occupation. They will do whatever it takes to

help throw a fatal blow to the wobbling government. Inside of their burning hearts, these women know only one relief for their pain and that is the blood of the man who caused it.

The women of the revolution fight ethnic cleansing to protect not only their families but the faces of a generation. Om Ahmad, a 72-year-old housewife with 3 children says, “. . . I chose to pick up a weapon and fight the regime.” (Gorence) This quote, although by a member of the Free Syrian Army, could just as easily have been spoken by a member of the Kashariyot.

Both groups of women are vital to their cause and are the epitome of courageousness. Instead of turning their backs to the atrocities of genocide, both groups of women attempt to change the course of history. In the instance of the Kashariyot, they succeeded. And in Syria, time will tell.

“Strong and with resistance, the women stand ready.” (Gorence)

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