Preface

Behold, dear reader, I place before you the story “The War of Faith and Love” by the Jewess Miss Grace Aguilar who achieved renown in British literature and who demonstrated wholehearted lifelong dedication to service as a standard-bearer for the Jewish faith and to efforts to get non-Jews to better appreciate the Jewish faith and better comprehend its beauty. She was born in the British city of Hackney in 1816; she died travelling to take the waters at Langenschwalbach in Germany in 1847. She was interred in Frankfurt on the Main. May her soul be bound in the bond of eternal life. Her death aroused lamentation and wailing. All the papers in Britain and across the Atlantic mourned her as one mourneth for his only son.

When I read through her books chock-full of knowledge and the fear of the Lord and took note of their blessed character, I said to myself, why should Jews who do not speak foreign tongues be denied the inheritance that this extolled woman provided us? Therefore, I decided to translate them into Hebrew with the aid of God. And I chose this story, which is the most exalted of her books, because its foundation is in the holy mountains, since it depicts the Israelite faith in the purity of its holiness. It also depicts honest and upstanding people who forgo worldly treasure, sacrifice their lives in the sanctification of God’s name, resist a love more powerful than death and remain steadfast in their faith, even when they are negatively impacted by disaster and crisis.

When the Israelite will hear about the great troubles that entangled our sacred ancestors and left them immersed over their necks, it will awaken exalted feelings within him and make his heart beat strongly. In every place and in every situation, our ancestors’ suffering will serve as signs and wonders to prevent us from leaving the path of righteousness. If one prospers, has good luck, dwells at ease and in peace amongst the other residents of the land, interacts with Gentiles, learns from their wisdom, as well as their pleasures and their mischievousness, and loses faith, he should remember his interred ancestors and the tears, groans and hardships that they suffered, repent and be led in His way. If he comes under the authority of despots who look to destroy us, if a presumptuous and ignorant nation will make his life bitter on a daily basis and will not allow him to maintain his bond with the land of his birth that he loves with all his heart and all his soul like a merciful mother, if he suffers hunger and the native of the land of his birth pursues him, abuses him, and curses his faith throughout the day, he should remember his ancestors who endured harsh torture and terrible pain, who walked stooped over from the blows their enemies inflicted upon them and from the torment that their ostracizers visited upon them with whips and scorpions, with iron harrows that tore their flesh, and with bonfires, where they were placed and burned until their bones turned to lime. They did not despair. Instead, they placed their hope in the God of Israel and their expectation for redemption in God on High. They waited for him to send their descendants a redeemer and savior who would save them. In this way, the Israelite’s heart will not come to hate his brethren. Instead, he will eagerly wait for the Lord Who Dwells in Heaven to send him sacred assistance, for the sun of Enlightenment to rise with the sun of righteousness and healing in its wake, and for those walking in darkness and intolerance to see a great light, cease hating the Jew for his Jewishness, and permit the Jew to make a place for himself in the land of his birth, just like every citizen of the land. These goals’ promotion constitutes the objective of the story before us.

And know, honored reader, that I have not translated this story word for word or chapter for chapter. Instead, I have drawn selections from it. This is because Hebrew is not like a non-Jewish language. While non-Jewish tongues live, Hebrew is not a commonly used. I also made a lot of changes to the content of the story. I deleted and added as I saw fit, so that I would be able to write in Hebrew *melitzah* style, as the reader will be able to see for himself.

Berlin, Adar B, 5635 (1875 CE)

Isaiah Gelbhoyz

**The War of Faith and Love**

A

At the end of a hot arid summer day, evening shadows lengthened, and the sun cast its final rays onto a path upon a knolly peak in the Spanish mountains. On the mountain, large rocks evocative of giants flickered and awesome cedars stretched out their heads to the heavens. Opposite each other, two cliffs leaned their edges heavenward and drew so close that only a narrow gap separated them. In this gap, a thin veil of thorns and saltbushes grew; even a small thin figure would have been unable to pass through it. Pushing forward, huge quantities of water roared ceaselessly taking up a broken branch here and fragments of stone shattered by the water as it ran its course there. Ultimately, the waters arrived at an overgrown and abandoned grove at the edge of the forest that was pleasing to the eye. All these rocks, water, and forests enclosed a large mountain, at whose base an abundant quantity of roses and flowers blossomed, in a wall. Yet the flowers progressively disappeared as mountain’s elevation level increased. Finally, at its summit, plants stopped growing and grass ceased to exist, and it lifted its bald exposed head to the clouds above.

 Anybody who saw this abandoned path curving through this desert would believe for a moment that it would lead to a settled area rather than to the Sierra Toledo range that bisected Spain. Judging by appearances, it seemed like nobody had ever stepped foot in this wasteland. And, nonetheless, that very night a single passerby was seen on the path. He had the thin delicate body of a beloved child, his movements were graceful, and he walked lightly. His advance was carefree, and he did not turn his attention to dangers present along every step of the way that would have turned into obstacles for a man carrying a heavy burden. The large feather atop his wide hat bent down and covered his forehead. Yet he chose not to shield his seemingly blue eyes as they wandered from place to place. His curls descended like different sized waves from his head to his shoulders; the spirit of grace and favor that he exuded made him very attractive; his countenance conveyed the faith and honesty filling his heat and his heavenly pure thoughts and reflections.

 As his name attested, Arthur Stanley was an Englishman and he numbered among those who had voluntary gone into exile following the War of the Roses. He and his brother Edwin were less than fifteen when they were taken prisoner by the enemy and they languished in prison for three years. Then King Edward sent a message to them stating that he was prepared to free them and give them back control of their estate if they were ready to swear allegiance to him and to work for him. Yet they both refused his request and soured his mood. Edward’s merciful mood came to an end. He sentenced one of the brothers to death and the other to life imprisonment. The brothers cast lots. The lot fell on Edwin and he died by unjust hand. Not long thereafter, Arthur successfully escaped from prison. Looking for sanctuary, he hurried to Provence. He found refuge and a place to hide from Edward there. Yet he was not interested in wasting his best years sitting around doing nothing, and he headed off to visit the crown prince of Aragon with positive letters of reference. Burdensome wars were then raging across Spain and had turned it into desolate wilderness. It was the right time to get up, show everyone his strength of hand and greatness of mind, and fulfill his desires. Even if Spaniards are conceited by nature, wear pride and arrogance like a uniform, and look upon every foreigner with pride and arrogancy of heart, the kindheartedness that always accompanies haughtiness lead them to look down from the height of their station to see the contrite and humble spirit , resuscitate the heart of the despondent and embrace with open arms the wanderer from his homeland, who is alone in the world and whose heart sincerely desires the peace and prosperity of their land.

 It did not take long before Arthur numbered among the land’s knights and commanders, and everybody knew that he supported the King of Sicily with all his might. Nonetheless, he never lost his love of England and he vowed to improve its reputation in foreign lands. Five years had passed since he had arrived in Spain and he was now twenty-five years old. Nonetheless, everybody who saw him thought he was only seventeen, because his body was full of vigor. Sometimes he would rejoice and be happy with a cheerful heart, and sometimes when he acted kindly the feelings of his pure heart would spill out onto his lips for all to see. Nonetheless, for the last fifteen months, his kindheartedness had been turned to heartache, and depression had plagued him. Even if his friends and comrades did not know what was in his heart, his soul knew well that it yearned for something that was enveloped in darkness.

 When King Ferdinand’s voice was heard calling to his captains to arise and take up their shields; when tempest and storm raged, in the day of battle and war, in the day of mass killing when chariots were fire of steel, and in the day of preparation when the horses would run and the chariots would rattle, his spirit regained its stability. Yet when the storm of war quieted and the sword returned to its sheath, Arthur’s depression returned. He chose not to occupy the jovial man’s seat, he did not join the assembly of those who made merry, and with bitter heart he remained alone like a tamarisk in the desert. Knowing exactly what he wanted and in pain, he wandered the length and width of the country, but he did not know where to find it. Finally, he happened upon it. Unconcerned with where his feet were taking him, he passed all the obstacles that would block a wanderer’s path. Behold a huge giant-like rock stood before his eyes, and an inner voice said to him, “You made it here and you will go no farther! You cannot find a way out of your situation.” All around him, huge mountains raised their heads to the stars and sky above. The wanderer’s path was so twisting that when he turned around to see how he succeeded in making it to the peak of the summit he could not figure out where he had come from. Just as he could not return, he could not advance, because the sun was either setting or the tall mountain walls concealed it. Darkness and gloom were suddenly all around. Yet, when he exerted himself, he could still make out the black stone wall whose peak rose to the sky. He also saw a narrow path; he gathered unto himself his spirit to climb up onto it and he worked up his courage to run along it. He folded his cloak, balled it up, and placed it on his shoulders; he waved his sword upwards and he rose to ascend onto the path. Nettles and thorns obstructed his feet and crooked oaks blocked his hands. If his sight failed him for a moment or if he departed from the path by even a hair, he would have been hurled down forcefully and he would have broken his neck. Yet when his state of danger gradually increased, his mighty spirit returned to him and he tread forcefully. With great effort and by the sweat of his brow, Arthur summited the steep mountain peak situated high above an awe-inspiring abyss. Clouds, fog, darkness, and slippery conditions lined the downward slope. It was a calamity, a snare, an unfathomably deep trap put in place when Nature pulverized the mountain in its day of wrath as God had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Fear momentarily overwhelmed Arthur and he grabbed hold of a dry branch for support. The branch failed to hold. It drew back and Stanley almost met his death. At the last moment, he let go of his support; like on heavenly angels’ wings, he determinedly descended the mountain. Heavy exertion and great effort fatigued Stanley, and he collapsed and fell on the grass unable to move or look around. Yet the view had radically transformed itself. A lovely hill covered in wild grass, wheat and grains sloped down into a small valley where cypress, plane, larch, chestnut and oak trees grew and shaded a plain where a small house stood on the left under the canopy of the surrounding trees, not far from where spring waters bubbled out towards furrows of flowers and a bed of spices, and supplied this place with a degree of beauty that transformed it into a divine garden. Arthur decided to visit the happy person who resided there. He ran across the field and his trot disturbed a number of frightened goats’ serene tranquility. Besides the goats, not a living soul was seen on the ground and no birds were visible in the sky. Arthur decided to walk around and take a look at the divine location before knocking on the door of the house to ask for a place to rest his weary feet. A narrow path lead to a wooded area where a small building whose purpose was not easy to divine stood. The building was square, and, even if carpenters had not adorned it with wooden statuary and knops, it was tastefully and wisely constructed. If it had not lacked a tower and a bell, it would have been easy to think it was a small Christian chapel. Arthur stood before it absorbed in thought when a voice singing in the window, a woman’s voice, extremely pleasing and nice, was heard emanating from the building. The song was a song of praise, but the words that the visitor heard were incomprehensible to him, because they were sung in an unfamiliar language. Arthur stood with a sense of sanctity and looked in the direction from which the song was emanating. It opened with wailing, lamentation, and a sense that you are destined for a harvest, moved towards hope that filled the despondent man’s heart with the breath of life, and then shifted towards the sound of happy and joyous song signaling belief and faith in God. The song came to an end, and Arthur continued to stand facing the building, silent and astonished. Within him, Arthur’s feelings were in an uproar. They rose and fell, and he could not move from his spot. When his head rested on his shoulders like crimson wool turned to stone, a door in the wall that he had failed to notice opened and a figure of a woman stood before his eyes.

B

 When Arthur saw the figure, he forgot all the travail and hardship that he had encountered before arriving in this valley. The figure was truly beautiful and wholly magnificent, and holy splendor further enhanced her image and imbued her with a benevolent spirit akin to those of the saintly of the land. It was a truly lovely young woman wearing pale blue silk clothing; her cassia garments hung loosely to her feet. A woven gold jacket descended from her shoulders to her waist with beauty and grace, and her raven-black hair encompassed her rose-colored face. Astonished by what he saw, Arthur stood like a daydreamer. As she walked, the young woman failed to notice the visitor and she turned and changed direction. That movement awoke Arthur from his brief slumber. “Miriam!” he screamed loudly and ran towards her. She was terrified, and, if he had not caught her in his arms, she would have fallen to the ground. She tried to break free of his grasp, but, when her eyes met his, a sigh escaped her lips, and she rested her head on his shoulder and cried. It took a long time before the lovers loosened their embrace. Arthur reminded Miriam of their first days together, how his desire to earn her love led him to improve his behavior, and how happy he was when Miriam told him directly that she loved him. He also complained about how bitter fate had separated them for so long. Miriam listened to everything that he said and proffered no response either good or bad. Arthur responded saying:

 “Right now, I am recalling what you said right before you parted from me and how I could not understand it. I remember how your words were all too strong against me: That my heart should not expect and be certain in your love for me, because it was a criminal transgression for you to love me.”

 “What I said to you was true,” responded Miriam, “unconsciously and in a storm of emotion, I forgot that we would meet our end if we continued to pursue our love.”

When Arthur heard what she said, he begged her to explain what she meant, because her words were like a sealed book to him. After they last spoke fifteen months ago, the king ordered Arthur to quickly join up with the army that he was amassing to wage war against the enemy. Arthur hurried to comply and headed out with the Spanish armies to meet the clash of arms. When he returned from the battlefield, Miriam had disappeared, and he had no idea what happened to her. Don Albert, with whom Miriam had long dwelled, said that she had returned to live in her father’s home, as in her youth. Yet he proved unwilling to tell him its location. All of his efforts to try and find it were for naught. Arthur did not know what this was and why this was, and why he proved unable to find out where her father was so that he could ask him and plead with him to give him his daughter’s hand in marriage.

 Arthur’s heart growled as he tried to get Miriam to tell him what she meant, and his voice hewed out flames of fire. Yet Miriam tried to get him to leave her immediately and to forget this forsaken valley, because her life and her father’s life would hang in doubt if anybody learned about this place. “A secret is concealed here,” Arthur said to himself, because Miriam did not calm down until Arthur swore that he would not reveal where his feet had taken him that night. Yet what was this terrible thing that he knew nothing about? Why did Miriam consider it a great sin to love him? He kept asking her to explain what she was talking about, but she was at one with herself, and who can turn her. His soul was faint within him, his thoughts confused, and doubt ate at him.

 “Are you in a relationship with somebody else now?” he asked with regret.

 “Arthur, that is not it. I will not be somebody else’s wife and there is nobody who has asked for my hand. Oh, my heart, my heart!”

 “Why do you think that your pure love is sinful? Why would you send me away if there is not another man keeping us apart?”

 “There is no ‘man’ keeping us apart, but God forbids our love, making us vow […]

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… the wall, and they created a reservoir within the city walls to prevent the Spaniards from entering the city. Yet their efforts were fruitless. While it was still day, the Duke of Medina Sidonia arrived with an extremely large army to assist Stanley’s force, and the Ishmaelites fled from Granada, the last city remaining from their great Spanish kingdom.

Stanley hurried like on the wings of eagles to Seville to convey the results of the war to the king; Ferdinand quickly sent him to see the queen in Saragossa to give her the good news and to request that she come to his camp to travel together with him at head of his armies to the crown city Granada.

The queen heard Arthur’s news and she was very happy. Nonetheless, it was not lost on Stanley that his arrival in Saragossa had saddened the lady; it seemed to Arthur that the lady wanted to reveal a secret to him, but that she could not, because she was surrounded by ministers and noblewomen. And it was as he had imagined it. Before the sun rose, Isabella called Arthur to her palace and communicated to him what Miriam felt in her heart.

“What a fool I have been!” Arthur said with terrible sadness. “To think that this would not be my end. I knew Miriam’s heart. Her religion and her faith are engraved upon the tablet of her heart with a diamond point. She would forsake all worldly treasure and risk her life before denying them. My lady, I hope that you did not make her sufferings worse, and you did not hand her over to the inquisitional authorities.

“I have done no such thing,” responded Isabella. “I felt sorry for the wretched woman when she bowed to me on bended knee and spilled tears in large measure in the hope that I would not deny her the final request.”

“Final request?”

“Yes, she asked for permission to return to where her family resided, and she swore that she would never leave her father’s home until the day she died.”

“God will bless you for your benevolence,” Arthur declared.

“It is my belief that she will not break her vow,” the queen added.

“Even though she is Jewess, I set her free yesterday. She wore a novice’s clothing and Denis accompanied her to the Castilian border. I do not know anything more than that; I also do not want to know the location of her home.

Arthur remained silent momentarily. Afterwards he went down on bended knee and asked the queen for three days to go and see Miriam for the last time, since they would never see each other again. Isabella granted Arthur’s request. Ten minutes later Arthur was seen quickly leaving the city on a galloping horse.

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 The morning stars shone; the sun began to send its first rays towards the Valley of Cedars that was still enveloped in fog. This pleasant location remained abandoned and gayful voices were no longer heard. Only two servants, Reuben and Samuel, dwelled there, working there and keeping it up. Frequently, when holidays arrived, coreligionists would come stay with them to celebrate the holiday; Julien Morales had been with them for two months, because he had become tired and worn out from toil and life’s hardship and he yearned to spend the final years of his life in the place that made his childhood so pleasant. Bitter fate greatly saddened his spirit, and, when he heard that the queen had placed Miriam under her benevolent wing again, he gave up on her. This was because he believed that the queen would only want to protect this Jewess if she betrayed her covenant with her God. Therefore, the old man worked to purge the memory of his beloved and precious Miriam, who was so dear to him, from his heart.

 On the day marking eleven months since Ferdinand Morales’ death, Julien got up in the morning and went to pray in the small synagogue. Afterwards, he went to visit his relatives’ graves, and, as he approached the cemetery, he saw that somebody was lying there spread out on the ground. Julien ran to the person and saw that it was someone in novice’s clothing. It was Miriam!

 Father Denis had brought Miriam to the Castilian border. Before they parted ways, Miriam promised that she would advance slowly until she arrived at the location where her ancestors lived. Yet when Denis headed off, the passion to return and see her childhood home lit a fire in her heart; she gathered her strength and began to run. A trickling rain fell and drops of precipitation dampened her weak body. Miriam was terrified that a passerby would recognize her, and she got off the main road and distanced herself from people’s homes. She walked along a narrow path in the woods. Night arrived and a strong wind blew, but Miriam did not stop to rest until she arrived at the tall stone wall. When she opened the gate and passed the chicken coops and their crooked slats, the sun began to shine in the Valley of Cedars with its splendid brightness. The storm calmed and the skies became as clear as sapphire. The Valley of Cedars looked like paradise to her. From afar she saw the white stones, gravestones in the cemetery; it seemed to her as if her father, her mother, and all of her relatives were greeting her warmly. Unconsciously, before knocking on the door of her father’s home, she headed towards the cemetery. When she made it to the cemetery, she started to read the inscriptions on the gravestones, and she was astonished to see Ferdinand Morales’s name inscribed there.

 Miriam did not know that her husband’s corpse was lying in the Valley of Cedars, since none of her coreligionists had come near it from the time of his death, except for her uncle Julien Morales. Miriam remembered when she was a child and Ferdinand entertained her every day; she also remembered being extremely poor and having people coming to her—something that would not have happened if her husband had still been alive. Miriam’s sorrow was great and awesome. Could anybody comprehend it? She fell down by her husband’s grave. Julien picked her up and took her in his arms. She embraced her uncle, and the elderly man took her to the house. He prepared medicine for her, but his work was for naught. She kept getting weaker and her strength ebbed away. Miriam’s earthly activities were coming to an end. Despite all the troubles that she encountered, she remained loyal to her faith and to her God throughout them.

 Sukkot arrived again. Miriam employed her weakened hands to once again beautify the beams of the Sukkah with attractive garlands of flowers and fine roses and decorate the table with figs, grapes and pomegranates. She lit two silver candelabras that filled the lovely Sukkah with light and honor, sat on a large chair with her elderly uncle, and drank her fill of joy and happiness. The sun sent its final rays through the branches covering the Sukkah and illuminated Miriam’s sick face; she remembered the sanctity of the holiday God commanded Israel to keep from generation to generation, as well as the beloved relatives who celebrated the holiday with her and were now lying beneath clods of earth. Suddenly she rose from her chair and called out:

“Here it comes!” Out of great fear, her whole body trembled.

“Who is coming? I do not see anything,” Julien responded.

“You still do not hear it? Surely it is the sound of his footsteps,” she called out with a troubled heart. At that very moment the branches covering the sukkah ceased rustling and Arthur Stanley entered the structure.

“Marie! This is your end! Woe is me!” Arthur called out loudly and prostrated himself at Miriam’s feet.

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 It took about thirty minutes for Miriam to recover from her shock. Afterwards, she called out Julien’s name, took his hand, and said: “Extend your hand to this man who loved your niece Miriam with an exalted love. And Arthur do not despise my coreligionist without whom I would now be lying in an inquisitorial prison and you would have hanged from a tree in Segovia.”

 Arthur shook Julien’s hand. Afterwards, Miriam asked her uncle to open the door and lend her a hand, because she was still weak.

 “I still have something that I would like to say to you. The breeze is fresh. The day approaches and it will revive my tired spirit. Look please. My holy ancestors reside opposite us. They will come and hearten me; Arthur, you will remember me at just such a moment.”

 “How could I forget you Marie?” replied Stanley. “When all your actions testified against you and when all the priests and monks excommunicated you, I did not stop believing in your purity of heart and innocence. Even if you weighed down my spirit, I forgave you.

 I knew well that you had forgiven me. Therefore, I will now tell you something that I kept from you out of fear that I would bring countless suffering upon my unfortunate people. Arthur, you should know that I was not betrothed to a Christian. Ferdinand Morales was a Jew, a man of my faith and my race. When I was still a little three-year-old girl, my father selected me to be his wife and I knew nothing about it. When the time came and Morales came to get formally engaged, my father was sick, and I could not disobey him without bringing him to death’s door. Ferdinand was my cousin and an Israelite like me!

 “May God almighty bless you for telling me this!” Stanley called. He wanted to kiss Miriam on the forehead, but he became startled and suddenly jumped up—Miriam’s body was ice cold.

 “All God’s deeds are good,” called Miriam in an extremely weak voice. I needed to tell you that, so that you did not think me an adulteress. Tell Isabella that in the final moments before my death I recalled her and blessed her. I knew that she loved me in her heart, but that darkness covered the earth. Uncle, am I correct to believe that the time for the evening prayer has arrived?

 Miriam’s lips moved and her voice was not heard, and her prayer rose to heaven with holy emotion: “Though makest the day to fade into night and Thou hast set a boundary between day and night. Thou art the Lord of all the heavenly hosts.” Behold Miriam’s sun also set, and her soul returned to God’s dwelling place from which it had been taken…

 Night arrived and covered everything beneath the heavens with a shroud of darkness. Miriam had died. Julien stood by her head and cried profusely. Arthur remained on bended knee and the lamp illuminated Miriam’s white face.

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 Julien and Arthur stood by Miriam’s grave in the Valley of Cedars, and they prepared to go to the tall rock. Again, the door opened untouched, and Arthur turned to Julien. He hugged and kissed the old man, and the old man fell into the Brit’s arms and kissed him with his lips. For a minute, Julien looked at the spot where Stanley had just been, and the door closed. A few minutes later, the whole plain was completely deserted.

END

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A Hebrew Periodical for Jews

*The Lebanon*

Published Every Week (Eleventh Year)

To inform and apprise every Jew of everything that he needs to know as a Jew and as a member of human society

By Dr. Meyer Lehmann together with Jehiel Brill, may his rock protect him and extend his life

 I have chosen the way of faithfulness (Psalm 119)

 This journal’s good name has already spread due to its holy objective and quality. It works to protect God’s torah and faith, and more than 200 rabbis and great scholars of our time support it. Its contents always include the following: hard-hitting political history tastefully and intelligently presented; letters written by the best authors supplying information about events taking place in their countries of residence; various news stories pertaining to the Jewish Diaspora drawn from foreign language papers and from the paper published by the Alliance Israélite Universelle society; various notices and useful announcements will be place at the end of *The Lebanon* every week; pleasurable and ethical stories, scholarship, and science.

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