

Israel: My Roots and my Wings



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My name is Deborah, and I write to find my voice. After October 7, my heart broke, but I refused to surrender to fear. Embracing my Jewish identity, I turned to storytelling, determined to defend Israel's history and values. For the love of Zion, I will never stay silent.

My name is Deborah, and I love telling stories. When the October 7 massacre happened, I was hit right in the heart. For a moment, I thought I was losing the lightness that has always guided me in my adventures. But to imagine that I could give up what is most dear to me would be to misunderstand me. So, I got up, armed with my pen, to find my voice again. This journey made me realize how proud I was to belong to the Jewish people, to carry their history and to defend their ancestral land despite adversity. This story is mine, but in many ways, it could be yours. Welcome to my Kaleidoscope.

Disbelief, fear, and astonishment. These were the first emotions that ran through me when, from France, I watched helplessly as terrorist violence unleashed itself on Israel on October 7, 2023. Disbelief, because in Israel, we never accept that terror prescribes behavior. We convince ourselves that life will go on as usual.

Finally, the shock, when we hear the head of state declare, "We are at war." We barely have time to digest the information before we must act. Any help is welcome because a fight on all fronts will begin, and the outcome is in the hands of Am Israel, both in its homeland and in the Diaspora.

I am taking part in this battle because in my country, when someone suffers, the entire people find the courage to rise, inspired by the mantra that each Jew is responsible for others.

The past year has revealed a deep malaise. Anti-Semitism is eating away at my country, France, from the inside, yet too few condemn it publicly. This puzzles me because silence reigns supreme when information is instantaneous. Fear is visible in the eyes of many Jews in France when a synagogue is set on fire or a kosher store is vandalized.

I am not afraid to name things. I believe those responsible must assume the consequences of their actions. I am not ashamed to speak when many remain silent. If not me, then who? If not now, then when?

I understand that I have a role to play. More than ever, I must express myself because I can no longer hide behind childhood innocence. Today, I am the adult who must confront the infamous realities of the modern world. So I scream, I howl my pain. I shout myself hoarse telling the world that anti-Semitism is a dead end, but my words remain inaudible.

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To go from bad to worse, the past year made me question my place in the nation. I once enjoyed a multicultural France, proud and fraternal. But on October 7, 2023, instead of unconditional solidarity, I witnessed a freezing of empathy. I hoped the entire nation would come together as we did after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Instead, I felt a painful absence of unity.

For the love of Zion, I will fight for what is dear to me. I owe much to those who surrounded me, who never doubted my difficulty at university. They ended my fears, reminding me that we are one people and share the same heart.

For the love of Zion, I will carry my message of peace and tolerance with more force than ever. True to my values, I swear that nothing will stop me. I will write so the fire of memory never goes out. With tenacity and courage, I will never stop speaking against all odds to give voice and face to those deprived of it.

It is the 7th of the month and I am in Israel. A thousand times, I have dreamed of setting foot on the soil of the Holy Land again. Though I grew up in Tel Aviv every summer, this year feels different because the whole country bears the burden of tragedy.

But in the darkness, the light. I had to be here to feel the intensity of the mourning. So here I am, facing Kikar Dizengoff, where the fountain of my childhood has become a sanctuary. At its feet, dusty stuffed animals, frozen photos, and burnt candles pile up. These memories speak for the departed who see and hear us. Sabra or not, they are proud of where they come from, and in their eternal silence, they have transmitted to me the most beautiful of messages.

My Judaism is a child of the Levant, a wanderer of the Mediterranean, fiercely Aegean and terribly Galician. He is international, a mixture of Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish. He is shapeless, deformed and multifaceted, but that is how I like him. If the fervor of life flows in his veins, then he is no longer afraid of anything or anyone. His roots are my wings. I will always be faithful to him. In a word: Israel.

Link to full story



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