



KALEIDOSCOPE

My move from Israel to the Netherlands



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Whether I stay in the Netherlands or return to Israel, I will maintain my connection to Judaism. I want to start a Jewish family, pass on to my children the Hebrew language, the Jewish tradition and values. I will teach them how to keep themselves as Jews and deal with anti-Semitism, as the Jewish people have done throughout history.



Hi! My name is Daniel Feldman, and until about a year ago, I lived in Israel after my parents moved from the (former) Soviet Union in the 2000s. My father is originally from Belarus, but before that, our family lived in Poland, where they owned a large leather factory. With the rise of antisemitism in Eastern Europe, everything was taken from them. My grandfather was a partisan who escaped from a concentration camp in Poland, and that's how he managed to survive and continue the family legacy. For my grandfather, it was always a dream to reach the Land of Israel, a dream that didn't come true due to the closed policies of the Soviet Union. Because of this, it was very important for my father to make aliyah to Israel and fulfill my grandfather's dream.

My mother's family was also Jewish, but due to antisemitism in the Soviet Union, they decided to convert to Christianity to protect themselves. What's interesting is that after my parents got married and decided to make aliyah to Israel, my mother converted back to Judaism through a long process at a synagogue in Haifa, thus returning to her Jewish roots. Over time, most of my extended family also moved to Israel, and my uncles even ended up living in the same building as us—they on the 18th floor and we on the 5th floor, so we were all closer than ever.

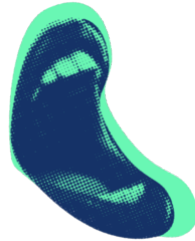
I was born in 2002, a few years after my parents got married. My first language was Russian, but when I started going to kindergarten, I quickly switched to Hebrew, and my Russian began to deteriorate over time. Nonetheless, my earliest memories are of family conversations in both languages, and the transition to Hebrew only created a kind of disconnection from the cultural roots my parents had brought with them.



Ever since I was little, I dreamed of studying abroad. When I started thinking about which European country I wanted to study in, I remembered a trip I took to the Netherlands at the age of 14 with my parents and how I fell in love with Amsterdam and the Netherlands in general. I hadn't felt that way in any other European country. The Netherlands left a deep impression on me with its open culture, breathtaking landscapes, and relaxed way of life. I felt it was a country where I could find myself and grow, both as a person and as an artist.

The move to the Netherlands began while I was already studying art at Shenkar, but I wasn't connecting with my studies. I started looking for other places to study and decided to try to get accepted into some schools in the Netherlands. Eventually, I was accepted to ArtEZ in Arnhem. After a lot of bureaucratic processes, I moved to the Netherlands. The transition wasn't easy, involving adjusting to a new culture, language, and people. However, I felt I was in the right place and could begin a new and meaningful chapter in my life.

In the past year, since moving to the Netherlands, I've undergone a significant change in how I feel about my Jewish identity. From the moment I arrived here, I started wearing a Star of David, listening exclusively to Hebrew music, and looking for people from the Jewish community I could connect with. In Israel, I never did this because I didn't feel special—after all, it's the Jewish state. But in the Netherlands, I felt different from others, and I realized how important it was to preserve my heritage and proudly display it. Even in my school projects, I try to incorporate Jewish and Israeli culture. Some of these projects included using imagery from Jewish heritage combined with modern themes, giving me the opportunity to express my identity artistically.



When the war in Israel started, it became important for me to openly show my Jewish identity. But as time went on, it became scarier to walk around with a Star of David or speak Hebrew in certain places. I was always worried that people would see my necklace in certain areas. Even at school, where I felt it was the one place I could truly be myself, I started feeling alienation. Even there, I worried about hiding my Star of David and sensed people distancing themselves from me. Dealing with these feelings wasn't easy, and it raised many questions about my place in European society and my identity as a Jew in an ever-changing reality.

After the war, I found myself changing. From someone who was very diplomatic and tried to get along with everyone, I became someone who no longer stayed silent and voiced my opinion clearly about the war. Seeing how friends changed and how people revealed their true thoughts made me realize that I needed to choose carefully whom I trust. As the descendant of a family that survived the Holocaust, I feel that history is repeating itself and that I need to be strong like my family was back then, not allowing anyone to treat me antisemitically. After the events of October 7, I've also been thinking a lot about volunteering for the army if I return to Israel, especially after being exempted at the age of 16. My moral compass has shifted a lot since I was a teenager, and I believe there's no shame in admitting that—it's never too late, no matter how old you are. This change has made me appreciate my connection to Israel in a way I hadn't experienced before and ask myself how I want to maintain that connection in the future.



Following everything I've been through, I decided to move from Arnhem to Amsterdam. Here, I feel much safer and feel closer and closer to the Jewish community in the city every day. It makes me think about how I want to preserve my Jewish tradition and how it will manifest in the future. Whether I stay in the Netherlands or return to Israel, it will be very important for me to maintain my connection to Judaism. I want to start a Jewish family, pass on the Hebrew language, Jewish tradition, and important values to my children. It's important to me to teach them how to protect themselves as Jews and deal with antisemitism, just as the Jewish people have done throughout history.