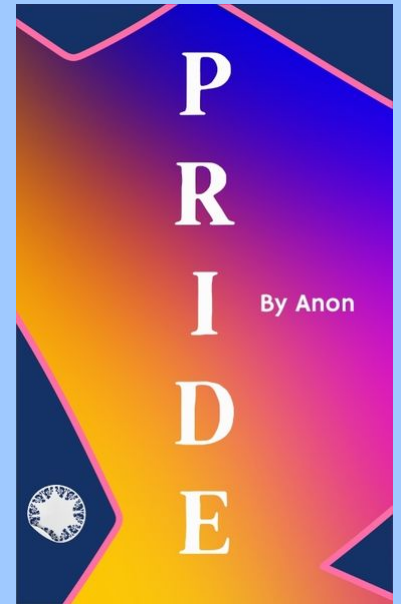




KALEIDOSCOPE

Pride



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Writing language: **English**

I attended a non-Jewish high school, where I was the only orthodox Jew in my class. I distinctly remember people telling me in year 7 how I was the first Jew they had ever met. Then people started to question why I did certain things, keeping kosher and attending shul.



One time,
In year 7,
Or maybe year 8,
Someone told me,
That the rules of Kashrut were 'weird,'
I didn't know,
Whether to be offended,
Or laugh,
So I laughed,
And then I went home,
And I thought,
Keeping kosher,
Means separation,
Between milk and meat,
And your parents freaking out,
If you ever mixed the two,
So yeah,
Keeping kosher,
Totally weird,
But then I thought,
If keeping kosher is 'weird',
Then so is Shabbat dinner,

And I love Shabbat dinner,

So I'll take being 'weird,'

And savour it,

With pride.

Another time,

I was attending a Jewish summer camp,

And I let it slip,

That I didn't keep shabbat,

Voices in my head circled like vultures,

Crying shame,

Deep into the pit of my stomach,

I left the conversation,

Barely hiding my embarrassment,

But a few months later,

That same friend was still talking to me,

And I thought,

Maybe this made our friendship better?

I no longer had to hide,

Behind the long skirts,

And high necklines,

I could wear my skinny jeans,

And a magen David necklace,

In the same outfit,

So I'll take my religious observance,

And wear it,

With pride.

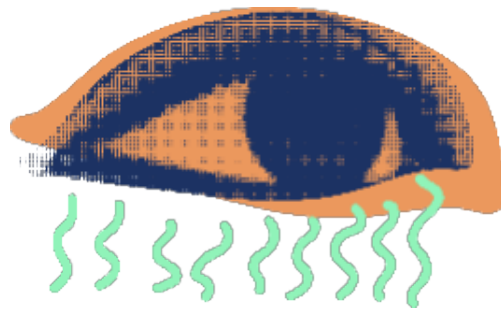
October 7th,

The day that hasn't ended,

Forever imprinted,
In the background of my mind,
The people I thought were unshakeable,
Shook,
The leaders of Hamas,
Plastered over TikTok,
Praised beyond belief,
The hostages,
Belittled,
As if they're the unlucky pawns,
In a deadly game of chess,
But then I thought,
How it suited Hamas,
To have us divided,
Over the existence of a tiny,
Peace-loving country,
So we could willingly forget,
How they have taken,
The civilians of Gaza,
Hostage,
Since 2006,
So if that's what it means to be a 'Zionist,'

I'll be one,

With pride.



For me, writing 'pride' was about reflecting on my experience as a Jewish teenager in secondary school, as I am going to graduate this year. I attended a non-Jewish high school, where I was the only orthodox Jew in my class for quite a while. I distinctly remember people telling me in year 7 how I was the first Jew they had ever met. Then people started to question why I did certain things, keeping kosher and attending shul, and this in turn led me to question these things for the first time. I went to a Jewish primary school, so my peers in high school were also the first non-Jews I really interacted with. So I started asking my parents these questions and whilst they could answer them, they decided to sign me up to Bnei Akiva summer camp where I could be with other Jewish kids, some of whom also went to non-Jewish schools. It was there than I learned that being Jewish is cool, especially given we make up 0.2% of the global population. I also started to realize as I got older and started to really think about how I plan to practice Judaism as I get older and how religious I want to be, that part of Judaism is the sense of community. Not the kind of community where everyone must behave the same way or anything like that, but the community aspect of Judaism, is really about never being alone. This became even more clear to me post-October 7th which has not been an easy time for any Jewish student. But the main reason it became so clear to me after October 7th was because there were some people at my school who actually made an Instagram account dedicated to humiliating Zionist (aka Jewish) students. I remember not wanting to go into school and I think it was my mum who said to me that I had a choice, I could let this define me or I could just keep being myself and keep working hard and getting good grades, and that would show them when I did well and they got expelled (both of which eventually happened). So in conclusion, my high school experience taught me that having pride in being Jewish isn't about doing anything big or crazy but it's about being your authentic self. So that's what inspired 'pride'!

