



KALEIDOSCOPE

Carrying the Light: My Jewish Story



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Gender: **Femile**

Country of residence: **Sweden**

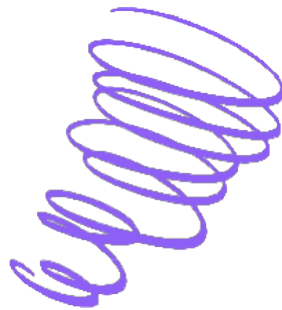
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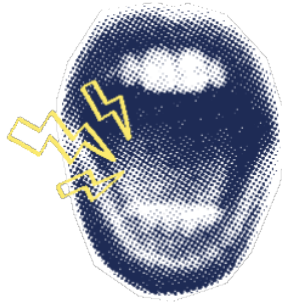
My name is Michaela, I am 21 years old, and my story is strongly influenced by my Jewish roots and my family's unique journey through the generations. I grew up in Sweden, but I have always had a deep and natural connection to Israel – a country that is my second home, where I feel whole. By sharing my story, I want to provide insight into what Judaism means to me, my family's history, and my own journey to preserve our heritage.



My family is an example of survival, and it shapes me every day. On my mother's side, we come from Hungary and Poland, and our family is one of many that endured unimaginable trials during the Holocaust. My great-grandmother Gizella and great-grandfather Elias survived Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they lost all their loved ones. When they arrived in Sweden on the white buses, they were deeply traumatized, but they decided to give life a new chance together. It is almost incomprehensible to me how they could survive this and still choose love again, and that in a completely new country, they found the strength to start a family. Together, they had two children, one of whom was my grandmother Eva, who married my grandfather Torvald, a Swedish Jew with Russian roots. Their love story and strength have shaped me. My grandmother Eva, whom I never met, is a reminder that we are connected to our history even through those we never knew – their memories and struggles live within us.



Being Jewish is much more than just a part of my identity; it is an approach to life, to my relationships, and to how I relate to the world around me. My identity is shaped by traditions and holidays, like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, where we reflect on life, our actions, and our responsibility toward one another. What means the most to me is the community and strength we find in our history and in each other. Judaism gives me context, something that reminds me that I belong to something greater than myself – to a family, a culture, and a history.



Being Jewish is more than just a religious identity for me. It is my history and my future, something that I carry with me in everything I do. I feel that I have been given the chance to live a Jewish life thanks to the generations before me who survived, fought, and gave me the opportunity to carry their legacy forward. This heritage gives me a sense of responsibility to honor their memory through my own life.



Israel is my security and the place where I feel at home. My relationship with Israel is deeply personal and natural. Even though I grew up in Sweden, I have always had a strong attraction to it. Having so many loved ones living there means I always have one foot in two worlds. The current war has affected me deeply and is constantly present in my everyday life. The pain I felt after October 7th has left deep marks on me, both mentally and physically, and it is something I will live with for the rest of my life. Living with the knowledge that my loved ones in Israel constantly live in uncertainty has affected my everyday life here in Sweden as well.

My future lies in Israel. There, I want to build a future where I can live my Jewish life fully, without constantly having to explain or defend who I am. I look forward to one day starting a family that can grow up surrounded by the traditions and values I have received. Israel is the place where I can feel free, loved, and accepted for who I am, and where I feel I have a context that is my own. I hope that one day I can bring my family there, and that we can all live close to one another and create a life together there. It is a dream that is deeply rooted in me and grows stronger with each passing year.

