

War as an Israeli abroad

Shabbat Shalom Everyone,

Good to see you all of you,

This Dvar Israel, my words of Israel, is very important to me.

I would like to dedicate this Dvar to two of my family members, Amir Eyal, who I lost two weeks ago. And to Elon Ohel, who was kidnapped to Gaza from the music festival.

It's hard for me to start and describe what I'm feeling right now and how I've been since this whole nightmare started so I want to start at the beginning.

It was Friday evening, I was sitting with friends on the couch laughing and talking, when out of the blue, one of them said there's bombs dropping in Israel. Of course I was upset to hear that but then again, my initial reaction was "it will pass in a couple of days, we are used to that."

Never once in my life have I imagined going to sleep and waking up to this reality. Terrorists infiltrate Israel, bases are overtaken, soldiers, babies, elderly and young adults are taken to Gaza, when one of them is someone I know.

I remember calling my mom and asking if everyone's doing fine and she said no.

This pain in the chest that I suddenly felt, the realization that everyone knows someone who has been hurt, and now I do too.

And since then I just kept talking to my mom, making sure I'm up to date on everything that is going on, praying she won't tell me we lost more. Until five days ago I got a package from her.

In the package that my mother sent me from Israel, I received a letter. She wrote to me "Show them the Israeli Noa". She explained, show them the difficulties, the pain, the sadness, show them we're coping in our best way and despite everything show optimism and hope.

So today I choose to show these sides, even if it's not always easy and beautiful, or if it's less exciting, it is part of the Israeli that I am.

Being a Shinshin abroad means missing my family in Israel, talking with friends on FaceTime when it's night there and day here, seeing cars on the road on Yom Kippur and sometimes feeling a little disconnected.

But being an Israeli abroad during a war is something I never thought I'd experience.

I did not imagine how difficult it would be, to be here in Canada and not in Israel.

For me, being a Shinshinit during a war, means a lot of sleepless nights, because I'm constantly watching the news, it means talking to my cousins who are in the army, just a moment before they turn off the phone for a few days. It means missing my father, who is now serving in the IDF and honestly crying a lot to my mom on the phone because it's so hard to keep it all together.

I felt so helpless, for not being able to support my family and friends, for smiling and saying I'm ok even when I'm not, of feeling so alone and scared even though I'm safe, that if I Wasn't here, my name could be on the list instead of someone else.

And so what helps me lately is to go back to work, tell grade 8 my cousin's story, share my pain and worry with my community here at Holy Blossom, and absorb a lot of love and support from whoever gives it. And the truth is, many give.

I didn't realize how important the support of the Jewish communities in the Diaspora is, I didn't realize how much power and influence they have on the State of Israel, how generous people are.

It amazes me to see everyone coming together for the same purpose, contributing in whatever way they can.

It's empowering to know that people care, even of people they never met, never even heard of, they still care.

And I think it's important for Israel to know the support of the Jewish communities abroad.

I thank everyone who listened to me, venting and sharing my thoughts. I truly hope that we will all see better days.

I believe in my country to fight, I believe in the Toronto Jewish community to support and show their love. And what's left now is to remember the people we lost, to support each other and love. Thank You and Shabbat Shalom.