

Aliza

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“Aliza”, my mother said that one day to me, “whatever happens, remember that I love you so much. Your entire family does. Would you do that?”

“Of course Imah. I do love you all, too.”

“You know what your name means, Aliza?”

“Sure. You told me that so many times before.”

She surely did. It means joy, which could probably be one of my characteristics. I have three siblings, one sister and two brothers. We had so much fun. Actually we still have, but it’s different. It became less the past months. I asked if they are ill, but they said they are not. I do not know what is going on right now, but no one is willing to explain it to me.

“I did?”, My mother interrupted my thoughts, “I would remember, wouldn’t I? Joy. That is what your name means. Joy”

Her face, that was looking at me with so much love, lost all of its emotions. I never saw such an empty and helpless face before and I did not expect it from my mother.

“What is going on Imah?” I asked now and I tried to sound a little bit convincing.

“Everything will be alright, Aliza.”

“But it is not right now.”

“What is all that?”

In this moment she started crying. I still sat next to her. Me, an eight year old girl, in my most loved dress, my mother sewed for me. It is white, with many flowers. Smaller and bigger ones. In the lower left corner, the part which is above my left leg, are six flowers. Two bigger, three medium and one small flower. She did that for my family and as I am the youngest among us, I am the smallest, my parents are the biggest and my siblings the medium ones. They all know what is happening. I just want to understand all that fear in their faces because it makes me incredibly sad.

“You are so young, Aliza, so young.”

“You always tell me that my mind is older and more advanced in comparison to all the others in my age.”

“But it is so hard.”

“Please.”

That was the moment when all my sadness came out and I could not help but cry.

“The only important thing you have to know is, that we are not save. Nowhere.”

“Why?”

“Because we are Jews.”

“I know that, but what is wrong with our religion?”

“Nothing. There are people out there, who have problems with it. I don’t really think they know why.”

“What do they do with us?”

“Hopefully nothing. If they will find us, I do not have any idea how to save us.”

I recognize how hard it was for her to say that to me.

My father and my siblings came into our living room. They looked really shocked and helpless at the same time.

“I guess it is a good time to pray,” my father said, trying to sound calm.

My mothers eyes widened and stared at my father. He just nodded. They looked at us, while both of them tried to hold back their tears.

“May it be your will, Eternal One, our God, God of our ancestors, that wars and bloodshed be abolished from the world, and bring into the world a great and wonderful and lasting peace. And let no nation— let them learn no more the ways of war!

Let all who dwell on earth simply acknowledge the truth of truths: that we have not come into this world for the sake of quarreling and war, nor for the sake of hatred, jealousy, anger, or bloodshed; rather, we have come into this world only to know You-may You be blessed eternally!

Therefore, have mercy on us, and fulfill among us what is written in you Scripture: ‘I shall give peace upon the earth, and you shall lie down with none to make you afraid. I shall abolish from the earth the predatory beast. The sword shall never come upon your land. Justice shall roll down like the water, and righteousness like a mighty stream. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Omnipresent, as the waters fill the seas.’

As soon as we finished our prayer, people ran into the room. They shouted something I did not understand. My parents started screaming that they should leave us and take them. I wanted to do something, but I could not move. Either could I scream or cry. I just sat there, not able to do anything, watching how those strangers hit my family. They took all of us out of the house. One by one.

I cannot remember what happened after that. I just have some pieces of memories. As soon as we were outside, I saw so many people standing on the street. Some tried to run away. My brother did as well. That was the worst thing in my life because they instantly shot him. A while later I woke up in a room I did not know. There were so many other children, but none of my siblings. The room suddenly started to move. I fought my way to a hole in the wall and looked outside. So many women cried out there. That was the last time I saw my mother. She stood between all of the other women, extremely confused and crying. I screamed her name, but she was not able to hear it. I am still in this room. In this dark room, where you can hardly see anything. Questioning myself if it could be any harder. I lost my entire family. I do not know anyone here.

I closed my eyes, hoping that it was just a very bad dream.