



Dvora Wajsmann

Dvora Wajsmann is a distinguished writer in Israel who contributes articles and studies to the English language Jewish press in many countries. She and her family were olim, settlers in modern Israel. The problems of migrating to a new land are many and, with young children, intensified. In her ethical will, she speaks eloquently and poetically of her deep love for Israel and of her everlasting joy at her family's becoming part of the Land and its people.

As I write this, I am sitting on my Jerusalem balcony, looking through a tracery of pine trees at the view along Rehov Ruppin. I can see the Knesset, the Israel Museum, and the Shrine of the Book—that architectural marvel resembling a woman's tilted breast, that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I am at an age where I should write a will, but the disposition of my material possessions would take just a few lines. They do not amount to much . . . had we stayed in Australia where you—my four children—were born, they would be much more. I hope you won't blame me for this.

For now you are Israelis, and I have different things to leave you. I hope you will understand that they are more valuable than money in the bank, stocks and bonds, and plots of land, for no one can ever take them away from you.

I am leaving you the fragrance of a Jerusalem morning . . . unforgettable perfume of thyme, sage, and rosemary that wafts down from the Judean hills. The heartbreaking sunsets that give way to Jerusalem at night . . . splashes of gold on black velvet darkness. The feel of Jerusalem stone, ancient and mellow, in the buildings that surround you. The piquant taste of humus, tehina, felafel—foods we never knew about before we came here to live.

I am leaving you an extended family—the whole house of Israel. They are your people. They will celebrate with you in joy, grieve with you in sorrow. You will argue with them, criticize them, and sometimes reject them (that's the way it is with families!). But underneath you will be proud of them and love them. More important, when you need them—they will be there!

I am leaving you the faith of your forefathers. Here, no one will ever laugh at your beliefs, call you "jew" as an insult. You, my sons, can wear *kippot* and *tzitzit* if you so wish; you, my daughters, can modestly cover your hair after marriage if that is what you decide. No one will ridicule you. You can be as religious or as secular as you wish, knowing it is based on your own convictions, and not because of what the "goyim" might say. You have your heritage . . . written with the blood of your people through countless generations. Guard it well and cherish it—it is priceless!

I am leaving you pride. Hold your head high. This is your country, your birthright. Try to do your share to enhance its image. It may call for sacrifice, but it will be worth it. Your children, their children, and all who come after, will thank you for it.

I am leaving you memories. Some are sad . . . the early struggles to adapt to a new country, a new language, a new culture. But remember, too, the triumphs . . . the feeling of achievement when you were accepted, when "they" became "us." That is worth more than silver trophies and gold medals. You did it alone—you "made" it.

And so, my children, I have only one last bequest. I leave you my love and my blessing. I hope you will never again need to say: "Next year in Jerusalem." You are already there—how rich you are!