



# THE JEWISH EXPERIMENT

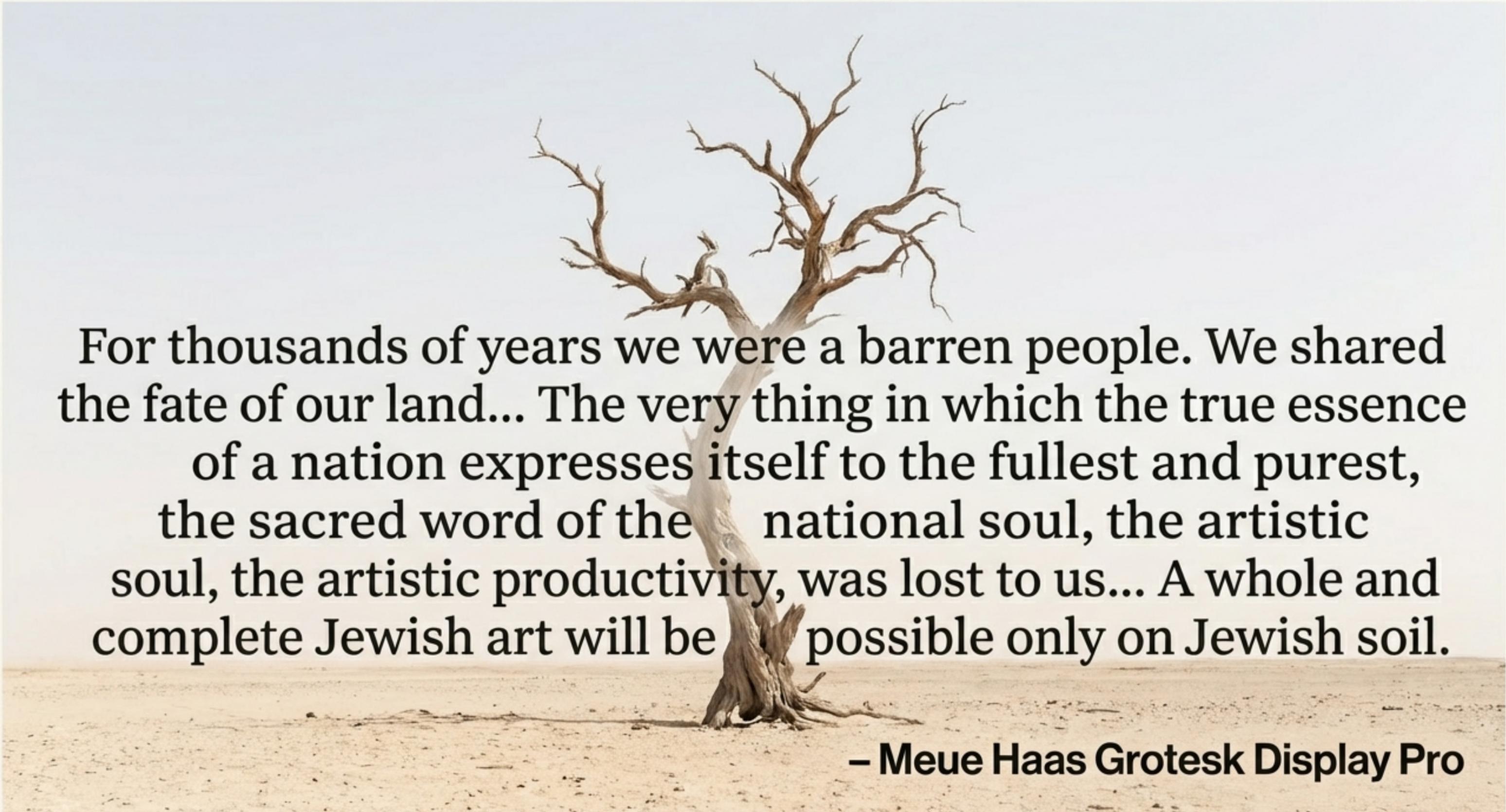
# We are in a transition.

From “the Jewish Experiment” as a memory of atrocities imposed on Jewish bodies by the Nazis...



...to “the Jewish Experiment” as a recognition of the rapidly changing nature of Jewish life, where each of us is free to live our lives as experiments and experiences.



A photograph of a dead, gnarled tree with a thick, twisted trunk and sparse, bare branches. The tree stands in a flat, sandy desert landscape under a clear, light blue sky. The ground is a mix of light brown sand and small rocks. The overall mood is one of desolation and hardship.

For thousands of years we were a barren people. We shared the fate of our land... The very thing in which the true essence of a nation expresses itself to the fullest and purest, the sacred word of the national soul, the artistic soul, the artistic productivity, was lost to us... A whole and complete Jewish art will be possible only on Jewish soil.

**– Meue Haas Grotesk Display Pro**



# A Modern Mandate: To Build a Life as a Work of Art.

“Remember that there is meaning beyond absurdity. Know that every deed counts, that every word is power...Above all, remember that you must build your life as if it were a work of art.”

– Abraham Heschel

“At the very center of both Judaism and experimental artmaking is a generative tension between modernity and tradition; between a commitment to the lineage that formed us, and the desire to see and represent the world anew.”

– Maia Ipp

A hand holding a clear glass prism in front of a window, creating a rainbow spectrum of light on the wall. The text is overlaid on the image.

**How do we navigate this new experiment?**  
**How do we merge our historical experience with a world of new technology and visual language?**



# The Practice: Visual Midrash (מדרש חזותי)

An art form that experiments with the interaction between the visual and the written record of the Jewish historical experience.

Core Question: What happens when biblical text and interpretation techniques merge with contemporary visuals?

# Art that Reflects the Jewish Experience



The 1984 Seminar in Jewish Art defined it not by a particular style, but as an open definition that includes the various historical experiences of the Jewish people, such as migrations and expulsions.

*“Jewish art is in a state of continuous evolution. It is not a unified corpus, but a diversified body.”* – Vivian B. Mann

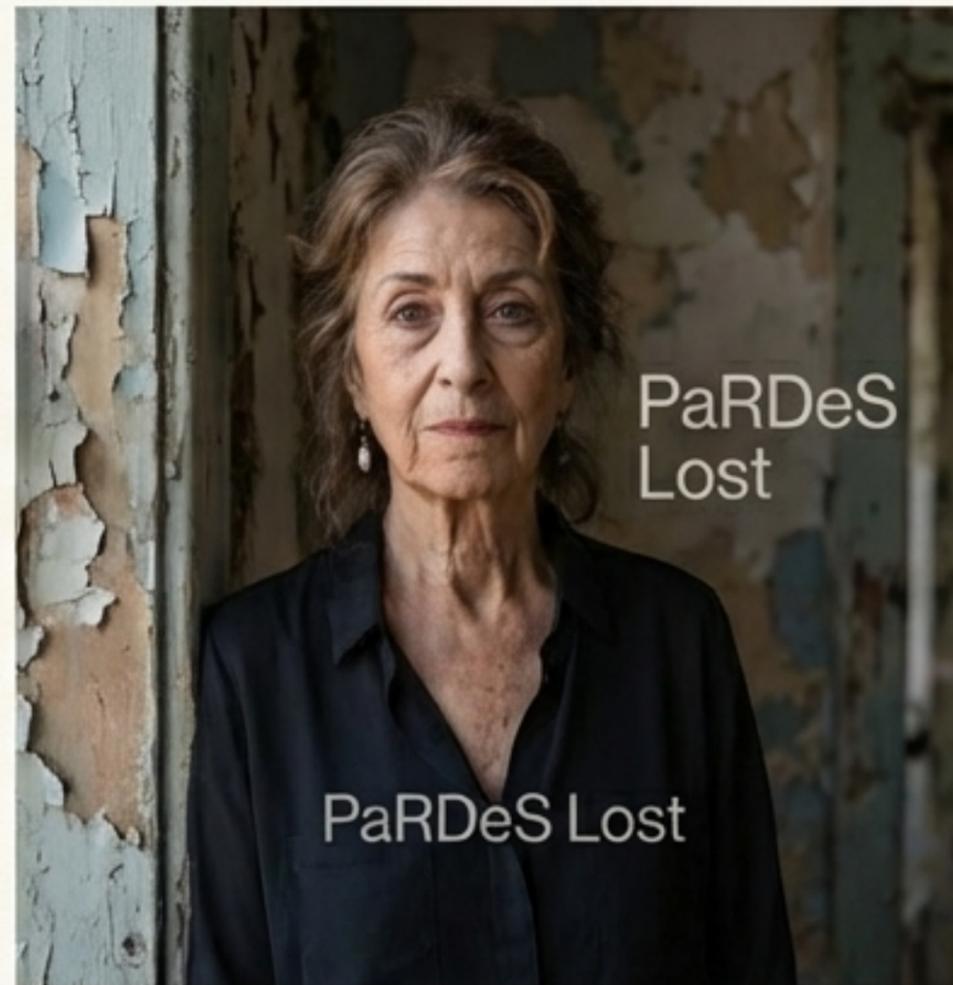
# Visual Midrash in Practice: A Triptych



Suggests the liturgical phrase, “and you shall eat enough to be satisfied and you shall bless.”



Gives new meaning to the *Mishebairach* prayer for healing.



References both the woman in the image and the connection of “paradise” with the traditional PaRDeS method of text interpretation.

# The Modern Tool: Seeing Through a 'Jewish Lens'

Photography is a uniquely modern form of Visual Midrash. It allows us to explore the spiritual richness accessible to us, created in the "Tzelem" (image) of the creator, through "Tzelum" (photography).



# Photography as Spiritual Practice.

“Recognize that as you are creating a photograph, God is creating through you. Both the subject of your photo and the photograph itself are facets of Hamakom.”

“With eyes of wonder you can discover the miraculous in the mundane. Stop long enough to uncover veiled aspects of Hamakom... and frame them through your lens.”

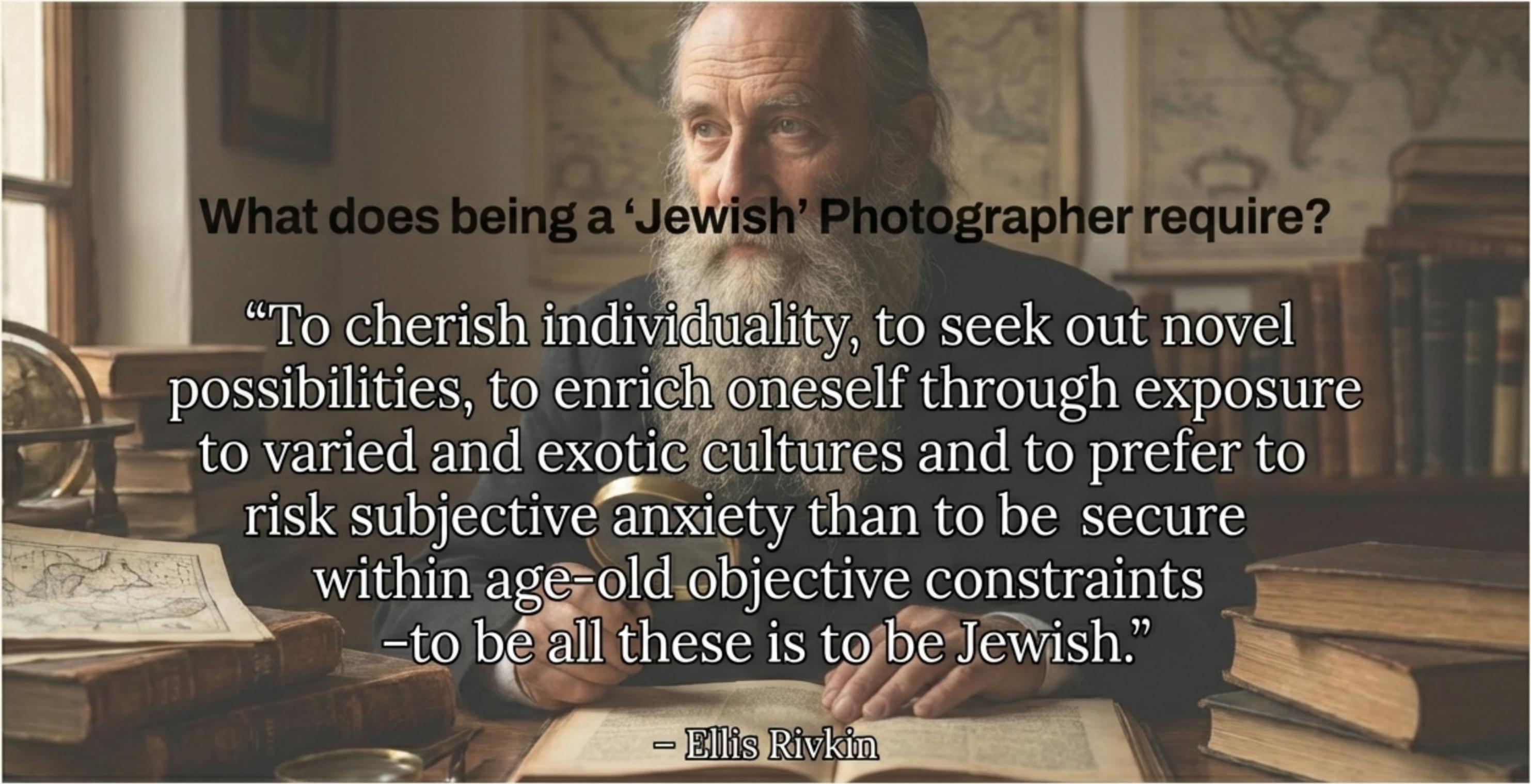




# How to Begin.

To find God, you have to stop seeking. Don't search for God in some far-off place or hope to meet God in some future encounter.

You need to simply open your eyes in wonder in whatever place you are and you will be positioned to photograph God here and now.



**What does being a 'Jewish' Photographer require?**

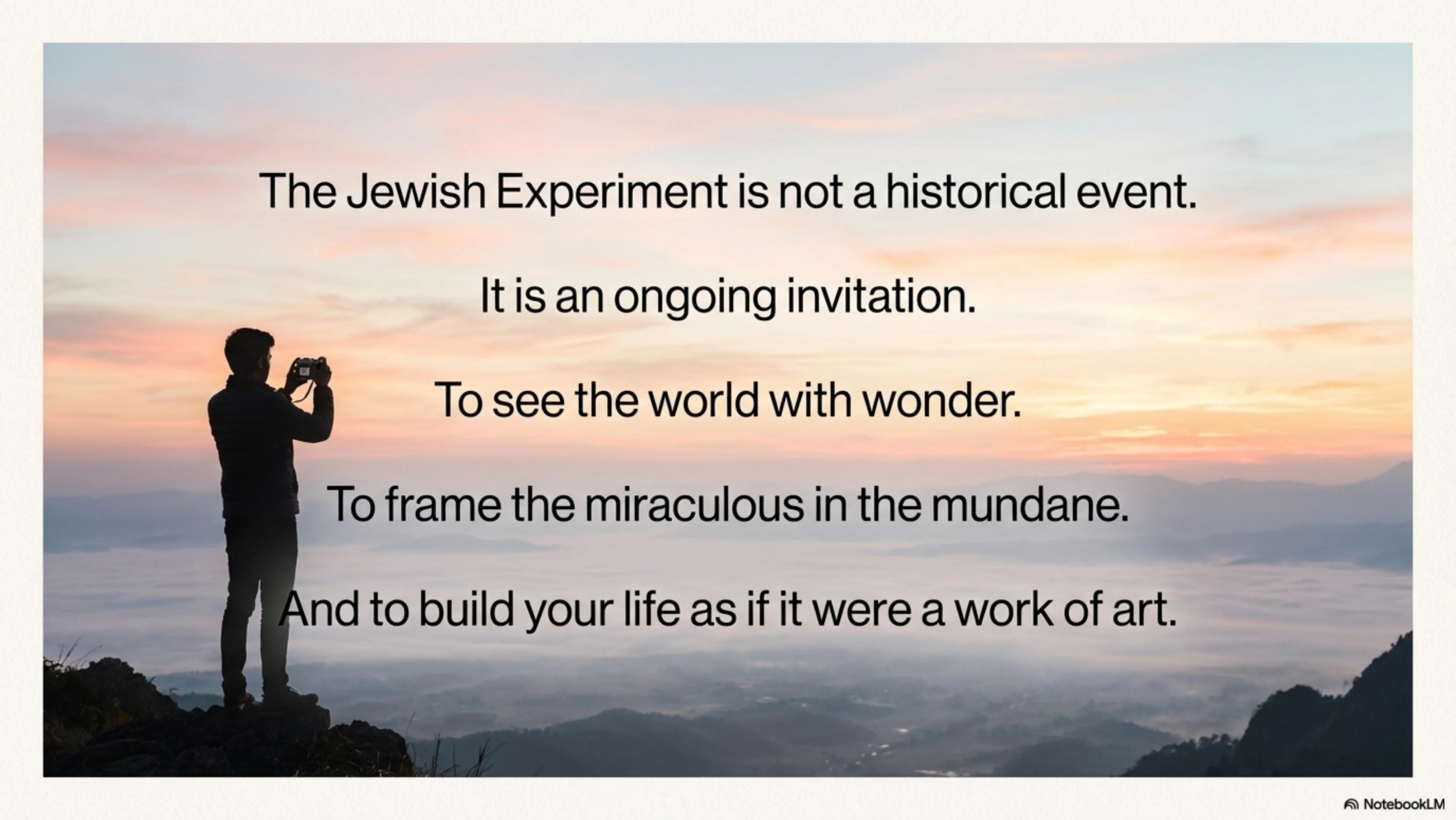
**“To cherish individuality, to seek out novel possibilities, to enrich oneself through exposure to varied and exotic cultures and to prefer to risk subjective anxiety than to be secure within age-old objective constraints –to be all these is to be Jewish.”**

**– Ellis Rivkin**

# **You don't have to be Jewish...** **...to be a 'Jewish Photographer.'**



The ethos is not about religious identity, but about a way of seeing and being in the world.  
It's about enlarging public acceptance and finding the universal in the specific.



The Jewish Experiment is not a historical event.

It is an ongoing invitation.

To see the world with wonder.

To frame the miraculous in the mundane.

And to build your life as if it were a work of art.