

# The Fast of Esther 1996

by *Rebecca Saxe*

*L'auteure parle des événements qui marquent le jeûne d'Esther et elle*

Have suffered. Continue to suffer. Because, far too often, our very survival has been called into question. And because even today, there are those who believe in the complete

the fact that from those two words I understood where, who, and why. And the fact that it wasn't even a complete surprise.

Dizingoff Street was the focus of a CNN special. Dizingoff Street. Where in January I walked into the Hard Rock Cafe for the first time. Where I sat and chewed gum, and traded life stories with Sara, and considered buying a new lipstick.

But no one there needed lipstick. There was enough red to go around.

In wars, in movies, we've become jaded to seeing scenes of violence, shattered glass, bodies. Even on the news, it's not real. Just a scene. "People far away about whom we know nothing," said Chamberlain.

But not Dizingoff Street. Because Dizingoff Street is real to me. I was there, shopping, chatting, drinking fruit juice, just being. And everyone who was there today was probably doing the same thing.

Everyone but one.

And that's all it takes.

Bomb after bomb after bomb.

I was hungry all day. Fainting, by the time my second flight landed. But, in a way I was thankful for the pain and the light headedness. My gnawing interior was a comfort.

Better to be hungry than....

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*Rochelle Rubenstein Kaplan, Untitled, rubber stamp print, 1995*

*explique l'importance qu'a ce jeûne à ses yeux.*

I was hungry. Sitting alone in the living room of a friend's grandparents' apartment in an old age residence in Florida. The only one fasting. I never do seem to hear about the fasts 'till the last moment, but I keep them if I can.

So I was hungry this morning. And the only one not eating. "Not eat? And just because of some woman hundreds of years ago? On a day that you're travelling?" An incomprehensible idea to this particular Jewish grandmother. She was sure I'd catch pneumonia. Or cancer. Or worse. Who knows, if one refuses to eat. And the new low-fat granola is so healthy!

But I chose to stay hungry. Not because of some woman hundreds of years ago. Because our people suffer.

obliteration of our nation from the world's memory.

"Rebecca!"

In disgrace because I hadn't eaten the wholesome granola, I was alone in the living room, while the others watched TV in the back.

"Rebecca! Another bomb!"

Another bomb. "Bomb" is one of the most horrifying words in the English language. But he didn't say "bomb." He said, "another bomb." Another and another and another.

The TV commentator noted that the Israelis know very well what to do in this kind of situation. In 15 minutes, everything was normal.

Except that bodies were being carried away.

Except that instead of studying, rabbis were in the streets collecting body parts.

"Another bomb" is infinitely more frightening than just "bomb." And