

ME'EVER SUMMER JOURNEY

Memories and Philosophy



JUNE 26- JULY 25 2021



ABOUT THE JOURNEY



In our journey across the country, we spoke to local leaders, learned to be independent, trained with elite IDF units, and created our own social action projects.

The trip is built upon 4 separate weeks, with every week leading to the other: We begin with team building week, laying out the foundations of Israel, and creating a strong team that feels comfortable to experience the journey together.

We continue with military week, focusing on building a strong mentality and understanding the meaning of sacrifice. At Mission impossible week, we build independence and a comfortable feeling in Israel.

Finishing with Identity week- focusing on what we have built and talking about its meaning for the future.



OUR ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

From the most southern point in Israel to the most Northern point, we touched every spot possible in Israel. But a true Israel experience can't just be seen as an outsider and tourist trying to discover what Israel has to offer, but as Jews in our homeland asking how deep and what meaning we find in every place we go. That's why we call this a 'Journey,' not a trip aimed to show Israel, but an internal process within the land, making us ask - who do I want to be? What does it mean to be a Jew? what is my independent responsibility?



OUR PHILOSOPHY



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

JARED KIMIABAKHSH



Hello there, I am unsurprisingly feeling great! A trip like this is once in a lifetime, something that doesn't come around often. Sure, there's birthright and BBYO, but Me'ever is different, Me'ever connected me with Israel an extreme amount. Coming into this trip, I felt anxious and worried about this program. My mom kept pushing me to do this program, and eventually, I caved. I'm glad I had agreed to join this program. We saw the country of Israel physically which blew my mind to how beautiful one nation could be. However, I was shown the culture of Israel, the history of Israel. It really changed my perspective on our homeland. I came into this program Zionist, but not listing to be active in the Jewish community. Leaving this trip, I can't help but feel an obligation to support this country. But through this growth and understanding of the state of Israel I was capable of maturing as a person. I have always been a shy person, and yet now I'm leaving this program, not yet an adult, but a more mature person. "Why does this matter?" One may ask, and to that I respond by saying how my connection with Israel matured me

emotionally. It may have only been a month, and may have felt shorter, but I've mentally matured by years. And each day that passed, I shuffled out of bed with reluctance and angst. All those worries would melt away when I saw the sunrise though. Israel is a place built on depth and leadership, tough leaders and vulnerable people. A place in which the weak become strong after instilling their hearts and souls into what they're passionate about. Excluding the spirituality, the culture of Israel is undeniably one I strive to demonstrate with other countries. As I've been shown by others, society holds the value of the lives of soldiers very highly. A kidnapped soldier's life is worth one thousand terrorists. Every Israeli life matters, and even though those who deny the honesty and strength of Israel believe this nation is evil, they are also uneducated to the many goods that Israel has done for its people, and even nations that seek to destroy it. That passion constantly inspires me to do more for the world, forces me to get up in the morning and press on into the day knowing that I'm standing with so many people who will support me if I need it. So thank you Israel, thank you for inspiring me and many many others.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

RONIT NOLTE



Eight point seven million people live in Israel as of July 2021. It may just seem like a number but what I've learned from this trip is that when you look deeper you can see so much more to the picture. Every single eight point seven million of these people see Israel as more than just a country. They see it as more than just their home. They see it as their world. The Jewish nation has risked so much for this small piece of land simply because it's more than just a land to them. And now to me too. Before coming to Israel on this trip I simply saw Israel as a vacation spot and the land of the Jewish people but never really understood the magnitude of its importance. In addition, I never understood the literal millions of lives that were lost with the dream of coming to this country. To this world, where it's safe to be a Jew and where you can say you live in the homeland of the Jewish people. After spending hours upon hours not only learning about the history but seeing it, touching it, commemorating it I feel more connected to this beautiful piece of land than ever.

There have been so many moments

in this trip that have taught me so many skills and that have changed my overall view on Israel. Last week we visited Mount Hertzal. What I saw there opened my eyes to the void Israel fills in the Jewish nation's hearts. There were thousands of graves filled with soldiers who sacrificed themselves for the land of Israel. A land in which it's inhabitants could literally not live without. We spent hours there and in my mind the hours turned into minutes. I felt so connected to the land beneath me and to the people around me who had fallen for that land that tears started to swell in my eyes. Throughout the cemetery there were grassy squares of land placed in rows. My hands intertwined with the grass as we talked about how they were not only plots of land but places designated to more bodies of people that would soon give their lives to this country and the integrity of the Jewish people just like those that came before them. At that moment I started to think to myself how I too would be willing to give my life for Israel.

My philosophy after this trip is that yes Israel may be a beautiful country, vacation spot, and home, but to millions of Jews, now including me, it's a crucial part of my identity and my world. I will forever be a part of Israel and Israel will forever be a part of me.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

SERENA MAFAR



I have always had a connection to Israel and understood the basics of Israel's history. After this journey I have more of an understanding of the importance of Israel being an independent country. The state of Israel is significant to all people, specifically to the Jewish people. Israel is the homeland to the Jewish people. Even though Israel is surrounded by its enemies, it is the one country where Jews can feel safe knowing that every Israeli has served their country. The people on your left and right are people who are ready to protect you, your family and friends regardless of your religion or race. When I experience going to the museums of the Jewish people and Israeli history I realize the importance of the country because of how much the people have been through, whether it was conflict in the Middle East or Jews being slaves in Egypt or the Holocaust. The people living in this country constantly have to be on their feet ready to go into war. All Israelis have to make a commitment to serve their country and even Jews who are not from Israel come to join the army. We have to protect the land that we have because

we, the Jewish people, don't have one hundred percent of it. Israel is a very wanted land to all people and religions. Jews have lived on this land for over two thousand years. Regardless of how much Israelis strive to be strong and fearless, there is anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism all over the world but as I expressed before Israel is the land of the Jews so it is important to continue to support and stand up for its existence so that Jews can always feel safe going to Israel, to see it as their homeland. This way of living in Israel makes the Israelis and Jewish people, going to the army makes them tough, and fearless which is why it is also seen as the "start up nation". They do not take anyone's distraction of what they need to succeed. which is what makes them more and more successful. Israel has to be strong, it has to exist not only because it belongs to the Jewish people but because it is a safe Jewish homeland.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

ESTHER MELLUL



This trip has taught me what it means to be a young Jewish woman who now feels connected to her land and her ancestors. Before coming on this trip I had never recognized the fact that my ancestors **dreamt** of coming to this land and I took it for granted. I took it for granted that I've been to Israel five times already and some of my friends had never had the privilege to visit their home. In the beginning of Identity week, we were asked to think of how old we were. Furthermore, when were we created. Meaning the first time our Judaism took place for us. Many Israelis said the day Israel gained independence as a Jewish state, a few people said the time of the Holocaust because it was the first event that they are directly related to the generation of the Jews that were affected. I went a bit further back and said I was 4,000 years old. 4,000 years old because that was when G-d spoke to Avraham and said: "לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית אביך" "אל הארץ אשר אראך"
"Go from your land, and from where

you were born, and from where your parents lived and go to the land that I will show you" This is why I chose 4,000 years ago. Avraham was first instructed to leave his home and find the Jewish land. Over this trip I've felt like I belong here. Like this is my home. At the Mt Herzl memorial walk I remembered we sat down on grass that was there for the sole purpose of burying future soldiers. We talked about how that made us feel. A year ago, if Asher would've asked me how I felt, I'd have said that I was devastated that we have saved grass for the soldiers that we already know will die. That it's depressing that our nation has wars where so many people die. Now I think it's beautiful. I walked around the graves and it brought tears to my eyes reading all the beautiful things these Jewish people died for. They were heroes. And they were my people. They died for our country. They had the privilege to fight for our country. And someday I hope I will do the same. This trip has made me realize what I take for granted and how distant I am from my people. I want to go to the army. I want to make aliyah. I want to feel reconnected. With my land and people.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

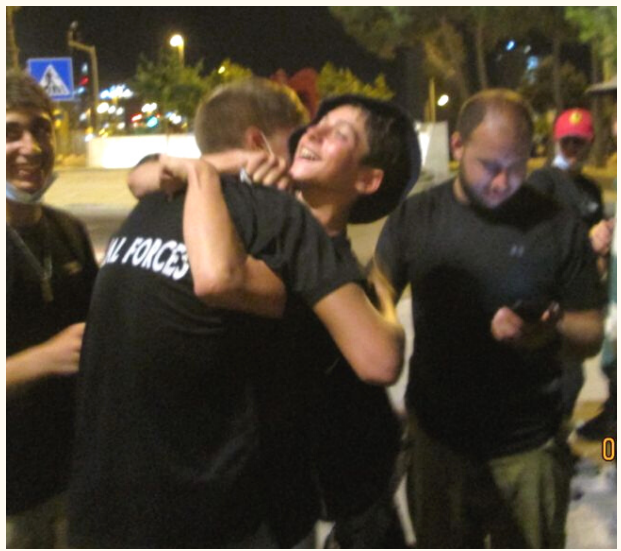
WILL SHAPIRO



Something that I have heard across the course of this journey from many people is that Israel is a start up nation, but what exactly does that mean, and why is this true? To me, it means that Israel is able to have influence on the world stage even though it is in a position where it would seem to struggle and fall to its enemies instead of holding strong against them and making their presence on the world stage apparent. This is because Israel is a nation that seemingly had no chance to shine in terms of its geographic location. Not only is Israel located in the desert, where it is hard to create flourishing cities and communities, but it is completely surrounded by its enemies. The people who settled the land of Israel knew that they would have to protect themselves at all costs in order to prevent the Arabs from demolishing the Jewish homeland, in and in terms of its challenging surroundings. Israel had to be strong in order for them to not be prone to Arab attacks. They were, but if they were not a well rounded and financially stable country, then the Arabs would have been able

to make a dent. With all of these challenges to face, why did the settlers of Israel continue to settle in Israel instead of looking to settle elsewhere? The reason why was because the Jewish people were determined to create a Jewish homeland where they could escape the diaspora and not be victims of anti Semitic attacks, and Israel, which was for two millennia the center of Judaism, was therefore the only adequate place to settle. Today, Israel is not only once again the center of Judaism, but it is also renowned for its technological advancements, militaristic abilities, and economy. But how is Israel a start up nation? The reason why Israel is a start up nation is because Israel itself is a startup idea. It's modern existence derives from a group of people discussing a potential homeland for the Jewish people. That was the first step of a startup, creating an idea and having a vision. Then, the people had to cultivate the land and adapt to their surroundings, putting the start up idea into effect. Finally, Israel overcame war and hardships and eventually flourished as a nation, making Israel a successful start up. That is what a startup is: turning an

idea into reality by taking initiative. In the case of Israel, those who had the idea of settling Israel had to factor in one more step in the process of creating a startup, which was solving a problem with their idea. It is because of the determination and strength of the Jewish people who established Israel that future generations of Israel were able to think limitlessly and establish start ups of their own. Overall, what makes Israel such a successful nation is the fact that people have the desire to create and achieve their dreams, and that is the reason why startups are created, truly making Israel a start up nation.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

JABE MAFFAR



“I won’t be surprised if you all get very emotional,” Asher told me.

Emotional? Why would a hike leading to a wall make me emotional?

July 8th, after a long day at special forces training, we completely changed our mindsets from a tough “gun holding” mentality to an “Ok... I’m hiking to the heart of the holy land” mentality.

I didn’t believe Asher when he told me I’d get emotional. I wanted to be. I wanted to feel the passion of hiking in the same path my ancestors walked through years and years ago. But I didn’t believe it. I didn’t believe I was connected enough to feel it. Israel up to this point in my life had always been a story. Always in a book or always something and somewhere I’ve only heard about. I find that connecting to a place you’ve heard about is very different to physically experiencing it and feeling it.

A long stretcher walk/hike passed and we arrived at Mt. Hertzl. Everyone was hugging each other,

dancing, and celebrating their arrival in Jerusalem. I suddenly felt an insane amount of pride and love for the place I was in. More and more tears were streaming down my face as I walked along the steps of the memorial site.

It was my first time in Israel. My first time in Jerusalem. And as a Jewish person, I feel like I was born connected but it’s nothing like I imagined it would be. I got to the point where I was wailing on the steps of Mt. Hertzl, just before kissing the floor beneath me.

Feeling the land of Israel on my feet, and constantly exploring my identity. Sleeping on the sand, the ground, and the leaves all became second nature to me. How did I become connected? How did I flare up the passion and my connection? I became a part of the land. When you allow it to take over you, all the thousands of years of history become an inseparable part of you, as it did to me. This land is irreplaceable, this connection could not have happened in any other place in the world.

If you were born Jewish, you were born connected. However, it’s your choice and a privilege to ignite it in you.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

ANABELLA JACOBOWICZ



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THE PHILOSOPHY OF

SEBASTIAN BIGAR



This trip has truly made me fully aware of what it means to be a Jew and to be connected to my identity, and my heritage. We are so lucky to have been able to enjoy this land and turn it from a mostly barren desert into a global center with some of the world's most advanced technology and medicine.

Throughout my experience, I realized just how different- yet connected the Jewish people are. My hope for the future of Zionism is that Jews across the world, especially in America become more emboldened in their Judaism and identity, and will be always proud of it. I also hope that the Jewish state is able to correct many of the lies that are commonly propagated about the plight of the Palestinian people and realize the extent of how much Israel tries to aid human suffering, while still ensuring total security for It's citizens.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF

ELISSA MASLAVI



Zionism

Self loving Jews around the world all believe that they are true Zionists, and with all their hearts love the land of Israel. I for one am a Jewish American who spent her whole life truly believing that she loved the land. After spending 4 weeks in Israel with Me'ever, I realized that I spent my whole life lying to myself. Going back if someone were to ask me what Israel meant to me, my honest answer would be it's a beautiful place. It's a land with many holy sights for the Jewish people, as well as an amazing vacation spot. The weather in the country is always beautiful and I have family here that I would love to visit more often. In the end I would come to the conclusion that all these other religions have countries of their own, so for me it just made sense that the Jews had a country as well. The problem with this is the land of Israel is so much more than what I used to believe, it's the land that Moses guided the Jews to out of Israel, it's the land where Abraham was born, it's where the kotel was built and destroyed not once but

twice. Fire was set to the holy temple but it didn't completely collapse like it should have, one wall stayed standing, the western wall. Deep down if this story was to happen in any other land I don't believe there would be any remains of the temple, but here the western wall is, standing in the holy land. This land will be the land of the Jews after time, and time again, no matter who tries to destroy us. An example could be from the 6 day war when huge armies attempted to take the land right after the Holocaust. A bunch of holocaust survivors were able to beat off huge armies, and if that's possible I truly believe that the Jews, along with the land of Israel will be here to stay.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

SPENCER ARZANIPOUR



Coming on this trip was forgetting a lot of things about Judaism. Coming to Israel I was remembering everything and I was soaking up all the knowledge and storing it in my head because I've realized what it means to be a proud Jew. After our first stretcher walk I had this thought. Many soldiers in the IDF have done this and I had this real experience of a real soldier. Connecting to G-d was a real experience, putting on tefillin at the Kotel was a huge experience for me and changed me because at home I don't really get to put it on and sometimes I forget how to put it on, so when I put it on at the Kotel I feel more connected than ever and it has inspired me to put tefillin every day when I'm home.

Listening to Asher's talks about Zionism has inspired me to spread Judaism around my school and to people in my everyday life. Becoming a Zionist just doesn't happen in a snap, it comes with being responsible and being putting effort into learning and leading people.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

SHIRA HIRSCH



I have always seen Israel as my once a year vacation spot. Never as a place to call home. Although all my family lives in the state of Israel, and me being thousands of miles away, the feeling of disconnection not only to my family, but to the nation I was taught to protect and love. Coming into this trip, I had the mindset that I only came to have fun. I never fully understood the history behind Israel and how much blood, sweat, and tears were put into conquering the land and fighting for the Israeli people, until I experienced the blood, sweat, and tears myself. Towards the middle of the trip I had a discussion with one of the Israelis, Agam. Agam was a very big part in helping me find where I stood in Judaism and helped me realize the beautiful connection I had with the holy land. July 8th was the day that really impacted my vision on where I stood with Israel. We had started the day off with an intense special forces course. These first hours of my day helped me realize the importance of

the IDF and how crucial it is to protect the land that many people fought and died for. After this, we continued our day by repelling down a cave followed by a talk. The talk's main focus was how the Jewish people have stopped being sheeps that are led to slaughter and started being wolves and maccabees. This specific line has been stuck with me throughout the rest of my trip and most definitely the rest of my life. We finished our day with a painful stretcher walk up to Mount Hertzal. In this case pain was the one thing we were allowed to feel. Walking up and remembering all the lives lost whilst feeling the stretcher on my back was one of the most monumental moments for me. I had had a realization that I wasn't walking up to Mount Hertzal, but I was walking up to what I now call my home, Israel.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

ALI HEFETZ



Shalom l'chaim.

”חורשת האקליפטוס, הגשר, הסירה
ורیح המלוח על המים.”

We finally were standing directly next to the building that was barely visible from the bottom of Jerusalem. Crying in Jerusalem and at the **כותל** while hugging each other, singing, and even kissing the floor beneath us. My mind was completely clear. I felt home. In this moment, I saw how connected the Jewish people are, how beautiful this land is, and what an opportunity it is to be here, in Israel. Seeing the Jewish people so together made me feel connected to every single person surrounding me and every place I had visited in the past weeks. I looked at the notes jammed into the walls and women crying around me and felt proud to be a part of this nation. “When we move here we will live in Jerusalem”. Israel has changed my life.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

AYELET HACOHEN



Through this journey I got to see a lot of the people that live in this country, my country, the country I feel more and more connected to every time I'm spending time in it. I got to hear about the Jewish people that live here and the ones that don't. On one hand, I was raised to believe that everyone should live their life in freedom, everyone should be allowed to live wherever they want. But on the other hand, this journey also made me feel like I should notice my Judaism more, to try to connect with it more. It made me realize that this country really should be the Jewish country -something that wasn't that clear to me until now. Israel has many problems, there is no doubt about that, and despite these problems I still believe that it is the best country to live in. I feel like now I know better why it is so much different than other countries, and it is because it was made by Jewish people. I never really cared about

my Judaism and I Always ignored it but now I truly believe in the connection between Israel and Judaism.

I'm so glad, grateful and proud to live in Israel and now also being Jewish, I feel like now I'm so much connected to the things I've learned about the history of this country and the Jewish people.

There is a reason why this country is so young and yet so smart and so advanced, and this reason is immediately connected to the fact that the Jewish people built it.

There is a sentence from an old song that always repeats in my head when I'm surrounding the country and it is "מה טוב לנדוד אך טוב יותר לחזור" - it is good to wonder but it's better to return .

I love this country although there are so many things that I don't agree with that's going on inside it, I feel a very strong bond to it. And I know no matter what I'll do and where I'm going to be I will return to it, and protect and develop it in any way I can, because it really is an amazing country with amazing people.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

DAVID



ואז אחרי הרבה זמן שישבתי בחוץ פתאום נזכרתי ברגע שהיה לי אחרי מסע אלונקות אל הקברים בתל חי ונזכרתי במשפט של יוסף טרומפלדור- "צריך גלגל אני גלגל" וזה בעצם לחיות בתודעה של שליחות וברגע שנזכרתי בזה הבנתי שאני פה באמת לכל דבר שצריך אותי- וברגע שהבנתי את זה הצטרפתי לחברה והרגשתי גם הרבה יותר משמעות למה שאני עושה. חשבתי לסכם את החודש הזה, אבל זה כמעט בלתי אפשרי- אז אני פשוט אומר שזכיתי באחד החודשים המטורפים בחיים שלי מבחינת עשייה, מבחינת אנשים ומבחינת המקומות שהייתי בהם ומבחינת עוד יותר מידי דברים. אז אני אסיים כאן במילה אחת. תודה.

הגעתי למסע הזה קצת מפוחד ולא יודע למה אני מגיע וקיוויתי לטוב, מסתבר שזכיתי באחת החוויות היותר חזקות שעברתי- עברתי פה תהליך, תהליך של למידה, תהליך של הקשבה, תהליך של להיות נאמן לעצמי, תהליך של התבגרות, תהליך של התגבשות. אני מרגיש אדם יותר בוגר וגדול מהאדם שהגעתי לכאן, גם מבחינה אישית וגם מרגיש לי שקבוצתית התקדמנו הרבה, אבל נוצרו פה חברויות אמיתיות ויש פה אנשים שתוך שניה נכנסו לי ללב ולא יצאו. ביום רביעי האחרון של המסע התחברנו בהר הרצל ויד ושם- היה לי מאוד משמעותי, אחד הרגעים הזכורים לי ביותר היה כשעמדנו ליד הקבר של אליהו פרץ הי"ד וראיתי אבן על הקבר שלו שכתוב עליה ככה- "אנשים טובים קשה למצוא אבל עוד יותר קשה לשכוח" המשפט הזה נכנס לי עמוק ללב ומרגיש לי שמצאתי פה הרבה אנשים טובים אפילו שקשה למצוא ואני לא אשכח אף אחד מהם. עוד רגע מאוד חזק שהיה לי היה ביום רביעי בשבוע צבא היה לנו משימה של בניית שולחנות עצמאית שהביאו לנו כלים ואמרו לנו- בהצלחה. ובהתחלה רציתי לעזור ואז הרגשתי שאני לא נחוץ והמדריכים באו אלי ואמרו לי מה הלז מה קורה? ופשוט הרגשתי שאני לא רוצה וממש זרקתי על זה.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

SHIRA ZIMRAN



הסיכויים במשך כל השנים האלה. אני חזרתי בתשובה כשהייתי בחברה נורא רחוקה מהיהדות ובאיזשהו מקום זה מה שגרם לי לחזור בתשובה, כי חיפשתי את העומק הזה, את הבסיס היציב, ולא מצאתי בשום מקום אחר כי בסוף כמה שנמציא לעצמנו עולם ערכים מדהים, באמת! כל עוד זה לא מחובר ליהדות, שלנו זה נמצא באוויר, כי זה מי שאנחנו, ברגע שנולדנו יהודים אין דרך לברוח מזה היהדות היא השורש שלנו הבסיס שלנו וברגע שאתה מנסה לברוח מזה אתה לא יכול להיות באמת אתה. לחיות בעולם הזה בלי להיות מחובר למי שאתה זה כמו לשחק מלחמה עם קלפים של טאקי. למה אני כותבת את כל זה עכשיו? כי בשנים האחרונות מאז שחזרתי בתשובה חייתי בחברה דתית והכל היה סבבה כולם דתיים כי ההורים שלהם דתיים וככה נוח, וקצת שכחתי את התשוקה הזאת שהייתה לי ליהדות ופה במסע הזה נפגשתי שוב עם המקום הזה, עם המקום שהחיבור ליהדות כבר לא כל כך מובן מאליו, גם מהבחינה ששוב אני נמצאת בחברה שמאוד מזכירה לי את החברה שגדלתי בה אבל בעיקר כי פתאום בחודש אחד נחשפתי באינטנסיביות מטורפת לכל ההיסטוריה

במסע הזה כל הנושא של האמונה, יהודית, עם ישראל, ארץ ישראל וציונות התחדד לי מאוד. אנחנו מנסים לברוח מזה, להתחכם כדי למצוא אמת שיותר נוחה לנו. אני שומעת על כל כך הרבה אנשים שמטיילים בכל העולם כדי למצוא את עצמם וזה תמיד נשמע לי כל כך רגיל, כי כולם עושים את זה אבל פתאום חשבתי, זה לא הזוי? איך יכול להיות שלפני שבן אדם מחפש את עצמו בעצמו, בעצם היותו יהודי, הוא מחפש את עצמו אצל אחרים, בהודו, בדרום אמריקה, הכל רק לא לחפור בשורש שלך בחיבור *שלך* איך מסבירים את ההרגשה הזאת שאנחנו עומדים מול קיר שנבנה לפני יותר מאלף שנה ועולות לנו דמעות צמרמורות בכל הגוף? איך מסבירים את ההרגשה הזאת שאני נמצאת בהלוויה של חייל שאני בכלל לא מכירה ובוכה כאילו שהוא היה אח שלי? איך כל הקסם הזה שנקרא עם ישראל קורה? אני לא יודעת להסביר את זה, אפילו לעצמי, אבל אני חושבת שזה כל הקסם, שאנחנו פשוט מרגישים את זה, רגש שהמוח לא יכול להבין אבל הוא פשוט שם והוא כל כך חזק ועוצמתי. זה רגש שנובע מעומק הנשמה היהודית שלנו, שיש לכולנו, גם אם קצת שכחנו. הרגש הזה זה תשוקה, זה הלהבה הזאת שבוערת בכולנו ושומרת על העם שלנו כנגד כל

שלנו ולקסם הזה שנקרא ארץ ישראל ועם ישראל. זכיתי לעבור חוויה של פעם בחיים, לפגוש אנשים חדשים תרבויות אחרות ויותר מזה לפגוש את עצמי ולראות אנשים אחרים פוגשים את עצמם כל אחד בדרך השונה שלו, אבל ביחד. אני זוכרת את המסע אלונקות הראשון שלנו, הכרנו רק פחות משבוע אבל ברגע האינטנסיבי הזה פתאום הפכנו להיות אחד, כמה שזה היה רגע קשה פיזית ומנטלית לכל אחד מאתנו בנפרד חווינו את זה ביחד. אני זוכרת איך התרגשתי להרגיש את החיבור שלנו כאחים, שעד לפני שבוע לא הכרנו. לראות את הניצוץ הזה בעיניים שלהם, הניצוץ של הנשמה היהודית שפורץ מעומק הלב ובלי שום סיבה, שהמוח יכול להבין, גורם להם להתחבר אלי, אלינו, לאדמה הזאת, לארץ ישראל.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

NOAM ZELTSER



להיות בן אדם טוב, פשוט להיות טוב ולהפיץ את האור של היהדות לעולם. יש משפט שאני נורא מתחבר אליו: "צריך לגלגל אני גלגל" ובמהלך המסע הזה אתה מבין את זה, העם שלנו הוא פשוט משפחה, הוא דבר שלא קיים בשום מקום, וכן אי אפשר להסביר את זה- כולם פה אחד בשביל השני, זאת אהבה שלא קיימת בשום מקום. אני לא מכיר דבר כזה שישאירו מישהו לבד בלי עזרה, בלי תמיכה. זה צריך להמשיך לעד ולעולמי עולמים כל אחד שנולד בתור יהודי צריך להיכנס לזה להבין במה הוא זכה, להעריך את זה ולרגע אחד לא להתבייש במי שהוא ובמה שהוא. "כי לא בחרתי להיות יהודי- זכיתי בזה."

הדרך אל הערכה אחרי מסע אינטנסיבי ומלמד שכנראה שצריך המון זמן בשביל להבין עד הסוף לפרטים הקטנים את החוויה הזאת, אפשר להפיק הרבה דברים. זה ללא ספק הכניס מלא עוצמות לראות את האחים שלי שלא גרים בארץ שלנו, את כל הציונות שיש בהם שממש תוססת בהם. אתה מתסכל על העיינים שלהם וזה פשוט צורח- החיבור לאדמה הזאת, למקום הזה שנקרא ארץ ישראל. אז במסע שעלינו לירושלים היינו עם חבר'ה שמעולם לא היו בירושלים! מעולם לא היו בכותל! ובשבילי זה עוד ביקור קטן בכותל עם קצת הליכה לפני, אבל מבלי להרגיש, מבלי לרצות, ברגע שהגענו להר הרצל הייתי עם צמרמורת מלאת עוצמה. לאט לאט אסימונים ירדו- זה לא מובן מאליו בכלל שאנחנו כאן! לא מובן מאליו שאנחנו דורכים על האדמה הזאת! אנשים לפנינו נלחמו כאן, הקריבו את החיים שלהם, איבדו משפחות- ובשביל מה? בשביל שנהיה כאן.

כל החיים אני מסתובב בתודעה של- אני יהודי, אבל מה מיוחד פה? הרי אני לא מרגיש את זה ביום יום אז אני צריך לפעול ולעשות דברים? לאט לאט כשאתה מתבגר וחווה דברים, לומד על השואה, על העם המיוחד שלנו. פתאום אני מבין מה אני, איזה זכות נפלה בחלקי. אני צריך לייצג את העם שלי, לפעול וליזום לטובת העם היהודי.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

AGAM NACHMANI



אותה ואת האנשים שנלחמו כדי שאשב
כאן ובשביל שתהיה לי מדינה תהיה לי
הזכות להיות בן אדם טוב יותר. אני
יודעת עכשיו שזה לא סתם, זה הרבה
יותר גדול משהמוח האנושי יכול לעכל.
"שבכל דור ודור עומדים עלינו לכלותינו"
והנה אנחנו עדיין כאן.

מה זה להיות יהודיה בשבילי?
המסע הזה היה מלווה בהרבה תהיות
ומחשבות ולקחתי להמשך החיים הרבה
תובנות, אחת מהן הייתה מסקנה שחיכיתי
הרבה זמן להגיע אליה, דת, משמעותה חוקה
ובחודש הזה יצא לי להבין שההסתכלות
שהייתה לי כל הזמן על היהדות כחוקה הייתה
שגויה, כי כבר הרבה שנים זה יותר מחוקה,
הבנתי שזו תרבות ומשימה שהוטלה עליי
מהשנייה שנולדתי שחלקה העיקרי הוא
שליחות אבל חלק נוסף בה הוא לסבול חוסר
הבנה ושנאה מאנשים שהדבר היחיד שעשית
להם זה שנולדת יהודי. אני אוהבת להיות
חלק מהעם ומהתרבות זה מיוחד בעיני
וההיסטוריה מרגשת אותי אבל עם זאת
המפגש עם אנשים בגיל שלי שגרים בצד
השני של העולם שהקשר שלנו הוא של אלפי
שנים אחורה גרם לי להרגיש שאני לא
משתדלת מספיק לשמר את התרבות וזה
הציף בי הרבה שאלות מהי בכלל התרבות
היהודית? איזה חלקים ממנה אני רוצה
לשמר? האם יש לי בכלל את הזכות להשמיט
חלקים ממנה? לקטוע את המסורת בת אלפי
דורות כי היא לא מוצאת חן בעיני? ואין לי
תשובות לכל השאלות אבל השאלות האלה
ממשיכות לרוץ אצלי בראש ואני מלאה
בציפייה שימשיכו לרוץ, אני חושבת שאם
לפני כל דבר גדול שאעשה בחיים אחשוב על
המסורת היהודית והאם זה מכבד



THE PHILOSOPHY OF

NOAM AIZENBERG



השאלה למה, למה אני כאן, למה אני מרגישה את החיבור הזה שבלתי ניתן להסביר אותו במילים לארץ, לאדמה, לכל פיסה ופינה של ישראל, רוב האנשים יענו "כי נולדת כאן, כי אין לך ברירה" ולי, לי לא הייתה תשובה אבל חבורת הנערים המיוחדים האלו שהגיעה לכאן שינתה לי את כל צורת המחשבה על השאלה הזאת, כי רוב הסיכויים שאת הלמה לא אקבל לעולם, אבל כרגע, שנייה לפני סיום המסע הבנתי שהלמה צריך להשתנות באיך, איך אני מפיצה את התחושות והאהבה, כי עם כל העצב שבדבר יש אנשים שחסר להם מהן בצורה שאני אפילו לא יכולה לדמיין. אני שמחה להודיע שמהמסע המופלא הזה יצאתי עם יותר שאלות מתשובות, על עצמי, על הזהות שלי, ועל מה שאני מסוגלת לעשות עבור המדינה שלי והעם שלי.

במהלך המסע שמענו הרבה פעמים את המשפט "לכל מקום שאליו אני הולך, אני הולך לארץ ישראל", בנוגע אליי אני בטוחה ב100% ואם לא יותר שהמשפט הזה הוא החץ והכיוון המובילים אותי בחיי, אני מקווה שגם לחברים שרכשתי במהלך החודש המשפט הפך לדרך חיים ולכל מקום שאליו ילכו בחייהם, הם ילכו לארץ ישראל.

"עד החודש הזה אף פעם לא ראיתי את ישראל כבית"
זה משפט שנחרט לי על הלב, ולא בדרך הטובה, יותר כמו צביטה או שריטה. הרי ישראל מאז ומתמיד הייתה הבית שלי ואני לא מסוגלת לראות את עצמי בשום מקום אחר, והחודש הזה הבהיר לי את העובדה הזאת ועכשיו אני בטוחה בישראליות שלי יותר מאשר אי פעם, אני אוהבת את העובדה הזו ומעריכה אותה, מעריכה את העובדה שאני חלק מעיר, מקהילה, ומארץ, אני מקווה שהצלחתי להעביר להם לפחות שביב קטן של אהבה וקרבה לארץ, אחרי חודש קשה אינטנסיבי, ומפרך אך מלא בחוויות, תהיות, מחשבות ומסקנות הבנתי שאני גאה מעצם היותי יהודייה ושמחובתי ללמוד יותר ולמצוא את הדרך הנכונה והאמיתית עבורי ליהדות, כי כרגע מעצם היותי חיה כאן ומסתובבת בחופשיות ובלי פחד אני מגשימה חלום של מיליוני אנשים שלא זכו לכך. תמיד אמרתי שהחלום שלי הוא להיות משמעותית לאנשים אחרים ולגרום לשינוי מחשבתי עמוק בחברה אני מקווה ורוצה להאמין שזאת רק ההתחלה ושבתקופת הזמן הזו עזרתי להם להבין שהיהדות וישראל הן גאווה ובית עבורם, וגם אם פיזית הם נמצאים אלפי קילומטרים מישראל הם שייכים לכאן בלב ובנפש, גם אם הם רוצים וגם אם לא אנחנו קשורים בקשר עמוק ושורשי שמחבר ביננו. בשנה האחרונה נברתי וחשבתי המון על

