

Shabbat Shalom to all! So good to see you.

I was thinking about what to say in this family service and honestly I had no clue. Through this past month we've gone through this tornado of emotions, thinking "what's going on", what's about to happen, who is safe and who is not. And at some point I just felt nothing, that I have nothing to do, that the world is slowly getting used to Israel being at war, and nothing can change the fact that we already lost our loved ones. When I think about writing dvars I usually go with whatever I feel at the moment, but this time it's so much different and more foggy that I'm just going to talk about my week.

This week I went to the city of Montreal, for a conference of the Jewish Agency. My friends and I decided it would be fun to stay for a few more days, and that's how I found myself planning a two-day vacation in Montreal. It was clear to me from the beginning that we would go to visit McGill University.

Years ago my grandfather went on behalf of the Jewish Agency to study at the university and do his PhD in social work. My grandparents lived in Montreal for several years, my uncle was born in Montreal, and you still hear the stories about this time in their lives at my home. My grandmother died when I was five years old, and although I didn't know him for a long time, I always had the thought and feeling that I knew him well.

That as a young kid, I saw the good qualities in him, the best things. And somehow even though we didn't spend much time together, my grandfather became my personal hero. For the serious and educated man he was, for the traditions he left in my family - making a bag of sandwiches for every trip or flight we have, and especially for the fact that he always chose to dare and dream big. My grandparents traveled and lived all over the world, met people with whom my grandmother is still in contact to this day.

And probably my whole family has this urge to see the world and travel, discover more about the Jewish communities and learn as much as possible. So when I walked with my friends on the campus of McGill University, I was extremely excited. Being here in Canada, exactly where my grandfather was years ago felt unreal. I ran all over campus

looking for the school for social work, just to take a picture for grandma, just to feel a little closer to my grandpa. And that was an amazing closure for me. After years of not knowing him, I suddenly felt that I had discovered another piece of the puzzle.

Lately I lay in my bed at night and I sometimes feel this way about the hostages and murdered in the war. Every time I see another video, another picture, another letter that one of them wrote to his family, I discover another piece of the puzzle, of their story.

People we'll never get to know their story, their personalities, people will no longer be able to explore connections with them. But it makes me think how important it is to hear these personal stories, to put every piece of the puzzle together and to remember every person who is not with us.

So just like I went to McGill and felt close to my grandfather, I think we should all think of ways to remember and feel more connected to the people we lost.

Thank you and Shabbat shalom!