

Shabbat Shalom everyone!

It was only 4 months ago that I arrived in Toronto, an excited girl waiting to experience the craziest year of her life.

And in the four months I've been here in Toronto, I feel like it's been a year. Every day here is like full of a week's worth of experiences, and the connections I've made up until now, I've never made so quickly.

I celebrated holidays alone far from my family, I learned prayers that I hum for fun, I learned to do laundry, and to get up in the morning for work even when I don't want to. I learned what it's like to live a mature life, that you choose who you want to surround you and how to manage them alone.

And within a process of 4 months, a war started. Something I never thought would happen to me in my Shnat Shirot, I didn't even think about it. I remember before we got accepted to the program they asked us, "what would make you leave?" I didn't even think about the option of war.

In four days I'll be on a flight to Israel. With great joy and also with a little fear.

I know the country I left, but I'm not so sure I know the country I'm returning to. The only thing I am sure of is that a home remains a home, and my family is there as it was before. Right now, the only thing I want is to see my family, be grounded again, and get some new perspectives about life in Israel.

Because as we all say, Israel after October 7th, Israel is really not the same.

These past two months for me, were full of thoughts and questions, about the State of Israel, about my role here in the Jewish community in Toronto, while at war. And it made me wonder a lot about the day after.

What will happen after this war is over?

And I'm not in a hurry to think about it, and I'm also trying to concentrate as much as possible on the current and difficult reality.

But it's hard to forget that before the war Israel was in chaos, people were protesting all the time, and my friends and I also went out to protest what was important to us.

It is hard to understand that every generation in Israel has experienced war in its life.

And now it's my generation's turn.

It's hard for me to understand that only 5 months ago we graduated high school, and that kids I danced with at prom, are now fighting in the army.

It's hard to understand that it's our friends who are falling in battle.

And because of all of that, I can't help but wonder if in the day after, we will learn from our mistakes. Will we be strong enough to demand change, and not only demand but also do.

Will we act to change the reality in Israel because we don't want it to be our future?

I want to believe that now that my generation has experienced pain, and we have seen how horrible reality can be, we will choose differently.

We will act differently.

So in four days when I'll be on my way to Israel, I will still think about all these questions and thoughts. And maybe I'll even ask some out loud. But for now I choose to stick to a little optimism and a lot, a lot of excitement to return home.

Thank you!

Shabbat Shalom to all.