

Aliyah to Israel Becoming the 'Thing to Do' For Jews

If I have to look for an exact date or event that enhanced my connection to Israel, I cannot find it. I think I was connected even before my birth.

Still, I can tell the moment when I became totally conscious of it: I was a little child, my whole family stood up around the table after our Pesach Seder and as we do every single year, we sang the Hatikva. Even though I could not understand a word, I suddenly started crying and wishing for the famous verse "Next year in Yerushalayim" to be fulfilled.

I was born and raised in Ceuta, a tiny Spanish enclave on the Northern Coast of Morocco. Though we had a very little Jewish community, both my family and the community leaders always tried to convey a strong Jewish identity and love for the Land of Israel.

I was always involved in local and national Jewish movements and later on, I started to become involved in Hasbara (Public diplomacy in Israel, Hebrew: הסברה hasbará, "explaining") and Pro-Israel groups in Spain.

I was proud of my origins when talking and sharing games with my non-Jewish friends. Even at University, where I witnessed some anti-Israeli episodes, I was never afraid of showing my love for Israel.

I realized that it was exactly the best way to do Israel Advocacy: one-to-one, chatting with neutrality and making the other party feel that if you, his Jewish friend, are as "normal" as he is, so are too, Israel and the Jewish people.

Still, although very involved in the Spanish Jewish scene and despite working in my dream job as a fashion public relations

consultant, I felt that something was missing. After a summer volunteering program and vacations in Israel, I decided that I had to take a step forward and give living in Israel try.

In February 2011, I enrolled into the MASA Program Career Israel. Since the very first day, I had the feeling that I had arrived home. I'm proud to say I made Aliyah in April 2012 and, despite all the "challenges" an Ole Hadash (new immigrant) has to go through, every day I find a reason that reminds me: There's no other place like Israel and her people!

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