

Dvar Israel 8.12- Nir

Shabbat Shalom!

In the past few weeks I have thought a lot about my own identity. My task here is to bring my Israeli identity to this community. But after a conversation with a fellow Shinshin at the conference we participated in recently, I thought about it again. I realized that my identity here is a little bit different than my identity was in Israel, before this year began.

In Israel I live in Shoham, a quiet city that mostly is pretty boring. But here I live in Downtown Toronto, which is way different - loud, exciting, moving, changing. At home I speak Hebrew all the time, but since I've been here, I've even started dreaming in English. In Israel most of my friends are around my age, but here my best friends are in Kindergarten. I also have a host family, that I'm now proud to call my second mishpacha.

Another part of my identity where I've noticed a major change is my attitude to Judaism. I come from a pretty secular family, and growing up, I almost never went to shul. But as you see, here I come to shul every week. Now I know Birkat Hamazon and many other tefilot by heart, which was not typical in my life before now. My

host family keeps Kosher and observes Shabbat, which are also new Jewish experiences for me.

And although the addition of all of these things was not easy for me at the beginning, I continue to appreciate them more and more as time goes by. Sometimes in Israel I felt forced to have all of those Jewish components in my life, but for now I'm enjoying having them as part of my "Toronto-Shinshin" identity.

Soon I will be in Israel for a short visit. It feels like I'm a Mossad agent, leaving my secret identity behind in Toronto and coming back home. Maybe it will help me get a position in the intelligence department in the IDF (haha).

I still have some unanswered questions like - How will it feel to be back home now? Will I take some parts from my current identity and bring it back home? Or will it be like flipping a switch back and forth? Are things going to be the same when I go home at the end of this year?

For now, I'm putting those questions aside and trying to enjoy the new parts of my identity as much as I can!

Toda Raba and Shabbat Shalom.