

Daphi Ezrachi's reflections after visit to Mitzpeh Avi with Bronfman Fellows, July 2011:

The visit to Avi's memorial took place in the context of the Mifgash seminar between the Israeli and American fellows. We arrived at Ein Harod early in the morning and sat together on the grass not too far from the memorial.



We started the conversation with an opening about what is the purpose of Mifgash. We talked about how the point of Mifgash and of Bronfman is to hear other people's stories and create your own story at the same time. And while you hear others stories you understand how people have many layers in their identities and how people can live in more than one world. All these thoughts connected to Avi. I started to tell them about Avi, his life and how we met. I spoke about his deep connection to both parts of his identity that led him to enlist in the army but go back and start school and be part of the American Jewish community. I talked about his integrity and how he promoted his views and beliefs in both of his worlds and how he understood complexities and looked beyond what the eye sees.

I talked about how I learned from Avi and what I take from the way he lived his life. Then we moved to the memorial where Rafi Ellenson read excerpts from the open letter Avi wrote to the Brown newspaper. After he was done, I gave out blessings and the prayer for peace. I explained a little about the family and the values that they live by and educate their kids accordingly. We finished with looking out onto the view.

I think part of why it was so powerful and meaningful was that both groups could connect to Avi's story- both Americans and Israelis from different places. Also by hearing an Israeli talk so closely about an American friend made them think about their connections and friendships. For me, it was powerful and really difficult. I felt a heavy responsibility to tell Avi's story, and make sure it is appropriate and said in way that the fellows could understand and connect.

Shabbat Shalom, Daphi