

## ASF- Hartman Cohort Testimonials 2018

The ASF program helped me remember, that in this time of increasing polarization, there is a deep value to building a Jewish community that embraces difference. I learned, through facilitated dialogue and text study at Shalom Hartman, that a vibrant Jewish community is one that engages across difference and that provides a space for everyone to feel heard and to feel empowered. While our individual actions may or may not have a direct/immediate impact on the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, actions that marginalize our fellow Jews for the sake winning political arguments can destroy the very fabric that makes Jewish community so meaningful and valuable. One powerful moment for me was when we heard from a very brilliant Hartman Scholar who said that while a political argument at the JCC in Boca Raton will definitely not determine the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that argument will definitely determine the future of the JCC in Boca Raton. The lesson for me is that there is too much at stake if we leave behind our Jewish values when we advocate for political positions. Jewish morals and ethics provide a wonderful framework through which we can be strong advocates for the causes we believe in, while appreciating that those same Jewish morals/ethics could lead someone to take the opposing viewpoint. And that, in the course of that dialogue, Jewish community and values are strengthened. ASF engages in healthy Machloket that strengthens Jewish community, values, and ethics.

*-Justin Hefter, San Francisco*

It was enlightening and powerful to travel in Ramallah from site to site and conversation to conversation with themes that in many ways directly challenge - and at times contradict - my perspective and even professional work. Experiences like those in Ramallah and throughout the trip were only enhanced when coupled with substantive discussions with our diverse cohort of young leaders.

*-Adam Basciano, New York*

The ASF Cohort @Hartman exposed me to the most important questions and challenges facing the future of Diaspora - Israel relations. Our high-level sessions and group discussions were on a caliber I rarely experience within my own community in Chicago and should be replicated across the country. The ability to travel to the Palestinian territories and engage with multi-narratives was eye opening, emotional, and has transformed my relationship to Israel. I will always remember the participants who took the journey with me and hope to continue my relationship with ASF as I grow my involvement in the American Jewish community even further.

*-Jonathan Kamel, Chicago*

This workshop was a special opportunity to meet and dwell in community with diverse, emerging leaders of the North American Jewish community. Top Jewish thinker-activists (both SHI educators as well as my peers) endowed one another with powerful insights. I am grateful for new friends and conversation partners and experiences that challenged me, from my time in Israel and Palestine.

*-Joshua Krug, Los Angeles*

The ASF Cohort at Hartman was a powerful experience where I constantly felt both challenged and supported in enriching ways. I appreciated the opportunity to visit new locations in Jerusalem and the West Bank and unpack those experiences with peers of differing perspectives and opinions. Having the opportunity to hear from many Palestinians who also came from different backgrounds and perspectives widened my understanding of Palestinian experiences, political opinion, and hopes for the future. It was also enriching to learn from the main three communities in Jerusalem, (Charedi, Palestinian, non-Charedi Israeli), and how they are working in silos and together on building a stronger, better society.

*Michelle Freed, Washington D.C.*