



[Farhana Rahman](#) with [David Wiseman](#) and [Yoni Cantor Wiseman](#).

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My Loves, I have safely landed back in NY just a little while ago.

I wanted to compose and post a farewell message while in Ben Gurion, but my emotions went haywire, and I had to focus on breathing. My emotions got the best of me again in my stopover, as I saw the big screen which showed the gate number for the flight to Tel Aviv.

As I am typing this, my heart is still pounding quite hard, and there is still that yearning to go back. But I am calming myself down, telling myself to use this chance to save up \$\$\$ for the next visit.

I could already tell that this will be a long post. Any and all typos can be credited to AutoCorrect, because I am typing from my phone. So here it goes...

My second trip to Israel was just as magical as the first, in an entirely different way. Get ready for the shocker.

When Muslim me visited Israel this time around, the country and her people did indeed forcibly steal precious things away from me:

- 1) My Heart
- 2) My Soul
- 3) My Loyalty
- 4) My Dedication
- 5) My Essence of Being

Sounds a little much, right? Well, Muslim me went to the heart of Israel, and exploded- with emotions. And with sentiment.

Because everyone loved me. Everyone went out of their way to love me. No one could dare say that my online friends in Israel aren't real friends. Because yes they are. It's insulting for me to even refer to them as my friends. It is also insulting for me to refer to them as my family. They are a part of me. My lifeblood. They collectively transformed me into a much better version of myself.

The few smiley pics I shared on FB during my visit were barely the tip of the iceberg. I set my phone aside most of the time in this trip. Because I wanted to completely take in the love, and keep it all to myself.

And it's not like I could have even taken pics of all the highlights even if I tried. Wouldn't have captured the sentiment. No way to capture the joy of the family time spent with [Yossi](#), [Karen](#), and their family. No way to capture the coziness of snuggling with [Shari](#) and her perfect MJ. No way to capture the intensity of the heart-to-hearts that were shared with [Hillels](#) parents by their kitchen table. No way to capture the joy and innocence of the mindless fun that was had with [Yoni](#), [David](#), and their divas. So I set my phone aside, and took it all in. The memories are all locked, and sacredly being cherished within me.

Many wonderful people traveled far and wide to see me. I didn't want to bother anyone by asking for their time in my last-minute trip, but that didn't stop them. They put their workloads and beautiful

families aside, and came to see me and spend time with me in all crazy hours. I ended up falling for each of them even more than before, because they were all genuinely delighted over the fact that I was there. Probably even more delighted than I was.

I got great convos, laughs, and snuggles from friends like Sarah, Mel, Jo, Vered, Avi, Shelley, Miriam, Natan, and many more. There were also some lighter friendships which instantly intensified after meeting with the lovely faces behind their Twitter handles. And a few new relationships were sparked in the midst of ZCast efforts as well.

I don't use the term "friendship" lightly. I know I am saying it a lot here. I am far from popular, that's for sure. But here's how the culture in Israel works: If people know you, they love you. Well, you obviously have to be a good person. But anyway, everyone lifts everyone else up. You know those stereotypes of Jews only helping Jews and that's why they are all successful and blah blah? Well I am solid proof that they wholeheartedly help people outside of the tribe as well.

And why don't we all take a lesson from them? Jews weren't the only oppressed people that faced injustices in different points in time. Everyone was. And still is. Let's all help build each other up as they do! Want to know how to start? One thing I picked up on in all my meetings in Israel is that at some point in convos, everyone tells everyone, "Tell me how I can help you." This is regardless of career, financial, or social status. The pauper can help the prince in some way shape or form. And there is no shame in saying where you need help. It's not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of being human and trying to make it out there! Ask for help! Offer help! Give people the honor of helping you! Just be mindful, realistic, and respectful in doing so.

Everyone of all ages in Israel gave me exceptional, world class treatment. I got sloppy little kisses from infants, handmade presents from small children, endless praise from teenagers, saw the childish side of young adults, got treated to wonderful local eats by people my parents age, and listened to words of wisdom and got major hugs from people that were much older. Why am I saying this? To let you know that the people of Israel of all generations love, and love to be loved. And believe me... I didn't only see a small handful of people in one town.

Don't listen to what the media, or what low res overly shared graphics say against Israel or the IDF (may God bless them.) Take everything you hear as inspiration to try to figure out what the real story is for yourself by getting straight to the source. Believe me, the people of Israel are always open to talk about these things in depth from their firsthand accounts. I am not up for any debate on this- so don't even try cause I will ignore. Don't blindly go by the ridiculous headlines and stories by the media. Same applies to all other conflicts in the Mideast, incidents that spawn #WhateverLivesMatter, and all that jazz.

Take what you hear with a grain of salt, and do your own digging by going straight to the source. And also pay attention to the other side of the story. Apply this with any issue you hear about in mainstream media. Your efforts will unearth all that isn't covered by mainstream media. And that is a LOT. Again, do not start a debate on this here on my thread, cause ain't nobody got time for that, especially not me.

Israel is a tiny magical land that has everything. What do you want? Snow capped mountains? Check. Waterfalls? Check. Big cities? Ancient sites? Ruins preceding biblical times? Historical landmarks? Nightlife? Booming enterprises? Organic farms? Vineyards? Wildlife? Ginormous shopping complexes? International restaurants? Scenic views of skies, greenery, and deserts? Acclaimed universities? Concerts? Beaches? Check, check, check, check, check... it's all there. And Orthodox Muslims enjoy them all just fine alongside the Jews. **THE ONLY DRAMA THAT HAPPENS THERE IS CAUSED BY EXTREMISTS.** And when it happens, it happens. When it doesn't, it doesn't. It's NOT a freaking constant war zone throughout Israel!

It's almost crazy how many Muslim women I saw driving, shopping independently, studying, working, and enjoying life in Israel. Freedoms they couldn't even dream of elsewhere in the Mideast. And yes,

many of them were all burka'ed out to the nines. Also, it's way safer to walk outside late at night in most parts of Israel, than in NY. Because the people are civil and good. If you reply with anything contradictory, I'll simply ignore cause that won't be worth my time.

Anyway, I went to businesses run by Jews, and got great customer service. I went to businesses run by Muslims. Also got great service. Customers were mixed everywhere, and everyone got along just fine. Interestingly enough, in both cases, the shop owners/staff weren't able to figure out whether I was a Muslim or Jew. I took that as a compliment.

I didn't think it would be possible for me to love Israel and her people more than before. But yep. This trip did it. Does that make me a Zionist? Probably. You will be surprised how many other Zionist Muslims I came across there. So bring it on haters, bring it on. I will stand at the front line for the chosen people. And after the smoke clears, we will cuddle and play board games together while enjoying bourekas and lemonade with mint.