

Beyond Borders

Photographs by Israeli and Palestinian teenagers

Beyond Borders

From 1995 through 1999, one hundred teenagers comprised of Palestinians, Israelis, religious and secular, Muslims, Jews and Christians congregated for a series of long term, weekly encounters with the notion of examining themselves and "the other" through photography and creative writing.

Together, through the fragile reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the intricate social divisions within the individual societies, these teenagers were guided through the maze of confrontation, recognition and self-expression.

Slide lectures exposed the students to prominent historical photographers and their visual interpretations of the world.

Ongoing critiques served as an open forum for discussions about the art of photography as well as each other's daily lives and their personal and collective identities. Frequent facilitation exercises (conducted by Israeli and Palestinian psychologists) touched upon the delicate questions of stereotypes, perception, truth and personal identity.

In addition, for the duration of these courses (approximately 8 to 12 months each) students were required to keep a sort of diary, writings which were occasionally shared in class. A two day field trip to Jerusalem, a Jewish settlement in the west bank, a refugee camp in Ramallah and the holocaust museum, Yad Va Shem, allowed the participants first hand contact with "the other side".

To say that this was strictly a co-existence project between Palestinians and Israelis would be an oversimplification.

At its core it is something much more complex. The inclusion of religious settlers from Tkoa and Efrat, together with secular Israelis, affluent Palestinians and those from refugee camps as well as Arab Israelis, Christians and Muslims, Ethiopians and Russians created quite an unusual mosaic. In such a unique environment the focus was not exclusively on the conflict itself but also on the more camouflaged discord within these societies. Overall, the intention was not about conversion from one ideological/political camp to another but about learning how to listen without judgement, to respect and to accept that each person has a point of view and each point of view is legitimate. One doesn't need to agree with the opposing perspective in order for it to be a valid one.

In essence photography acted as a tool to facilitate a difficult collaboration and to induce social change.

The results of this remarkable effort, after years of work, both intellectual and emotional, culminated in an international exhibition which travelled for more than 10 years, conveying the students uncensored, collective and individual struggles with their identities and everyday realities as well as their aspirations for the future. They have proven that the problems of their peoples are always understood as political ones but, in fact, they have shown us, through the wonder of photography that they are human ones.

Hally Pancer - project creator/director
2000

Statement

We are a group of teenagers, Palestinian and Israeli, Jews, Christians and Muslims, religious and secular, all coming together from the cities, villages, refugee camps and settlements.

The question is why?

Why should people from different backgrounds, in the middle of such tension even try?

When we met for the first time, we were innocent. We thought it would be so easy.

It wasn't.

Reality isn't easy. It isn't simple and it isn't innocent.

We are different.

And yet, we kept on meeting, talking, trying to relate, to understand.

Sometimes, when we couldn't agree or understand - we still had respect.

That's what it comes down to. And through that reality we learned to see the other person as "a person".

Between meetings there was an explosion in the market place 15 minutes away from us. It was so close and so difficult because it's hard to speak of peace and hope when there is death and smoke, when people on both sides are blinded by hate.

And still we tried to talk, to understand and to respect.

That's what it's all about.

These pictures are us. Our lives. Our world.

A reality, a truth not found in the media, the newspapers or the TV.

The students of Beyond Borders

2000

Title

The world I was born into no longer exists but I have been fortunate to be present at the birth of a new one. A legacy that future generations will have it insure. In moving away from the violence, intolerance and injustice that has plagued the region in the last century, we can meet the challenges of the present and the possibilities of the future. The youth of today must be provided with opportunities and equipment to express themselves freely and to be heard.

In cultivating a spirit of equality for our youth we can unlock a world of humility, understanding and acceptance. This world would be one without apprehension, frustration or prejudice. It would breed a new generation leading us into the 21st century, fighting for changes, inspiring a better future where every one's differences would be respected rather than scorned, where the collective challenge would be prosperity, humility, generosity and the right of every human being to live side by side in peace.

These young photographers were receptive, despite their legitimate apprehensions, when they took this journey, a journey from their world into the world of "the other" which led them to into the realm of self-discovery. They did not fall prey to cowardice or indifference. For months, they detached themselves from obstacles past and present, personal and collective, giving us, the adults a lesson in humanity and optimism. The pictures and their text articulate, with beauty and insight, the reality in which they live, their internal and external consciousness, evidence of hatred and fear surpassed.

Shimon Peres
2000

PLATES

The intensity, the power of the union, the closeness to god, to the primacy, the isolation of nature, the insignificance of the self challenged by the intensity, the power of the union, the closeness...

Adi Lemberger, 16
Efrat settlement, west bank



Oh my heart,

if I knew what destiny would bring, I would tear my heart from my insides and replace it with a stone.

I was born in Jerusalem, the city of love and hatred, of peace and war.

I have strolled and paced through her roads, inhaled her perfume, visited her holy places and,

as an arab Muslim, I have savored the arab soul of Jerusalem. I have felt her pain,

seen her tears and heard her cries following her rape; an attempt to take her pure arab soul. A little while ago,

during the month of Ramadan, I visited the temple mount and on my way I saw a line of worshippers walking quickly,

fearing the soldiers might catch them for sneaking past the blockades.

Among the crowd I saw an old man with a shriveled face and a hunched back, leaning on the cane he held in his wrinkled, shaking hands.

He walked fast to make it to the prayer that may be his last, as if he was competing with death.

All this struggling for thousands of people so that they too, might reach the temple mount to fulfill the aims of their profound faith. I raise my hands to the heavens and ask for a little bit of sanity in life.

No more breaking of the wings. I look into your eyes and demand a little bit of joy and serenity.

Some consideration for every man and being.

As long as I still have pure faith ,I ask myself and you, over and over,

"Till when? Till when? When will you cease to see our prayer, our religion as a violent and terroristic thing? Till when?"

Nasrin Alayan, 18

Biet Safafa, Jerusalem



"Show me your ID."
I show it.

"How old are you?"
17

"Where are you from?"
I'm from Arafat el Manshia.

Today you call it Kiriath Gat. That's where my parents were born.
But, the village was destroyed in 1948. Today I live in a refugee camp.
I did go to visit Arafat el Manshia once but it had vanished from the face of the earth.
That's how it is, the reality of the occupation destroys all traces and signs of the Palestinian existence.
I took a handful from the earth my parents possessed to cherish in my heart.

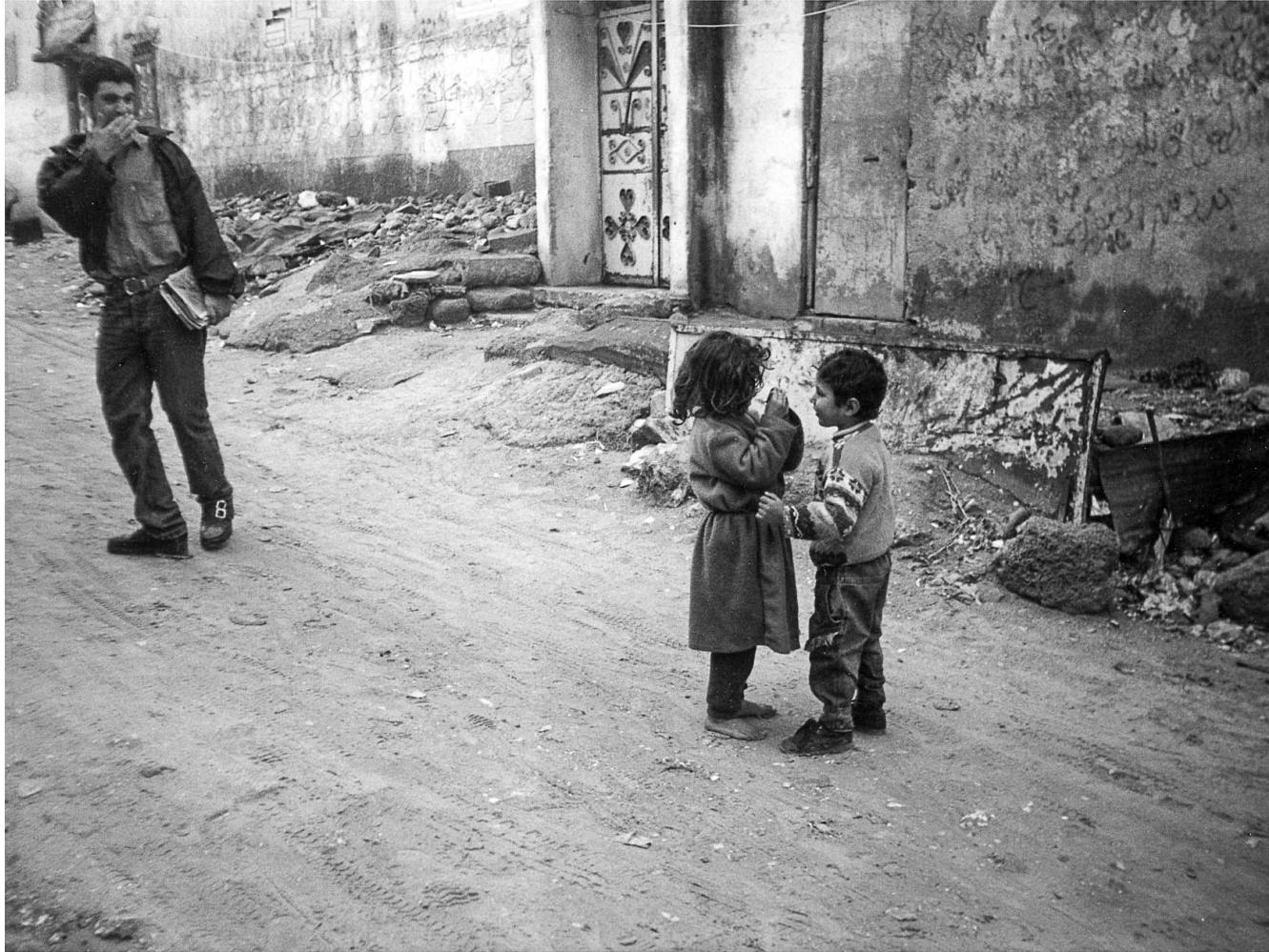
"Stand up against the wall. Raise your hands and your right foot."

Mahmoud Rajab Jwabra, 18
Arob Camp, Hebron



The last holiday was the first time I felt the happiness of the feast, the happiness I had longed for so long. During the antifada we passed many holidays without the true holiday spirit. I didn't feel the freedom and my heart filled with fear and horror at the occupation army, which went out of its way, it seemed, to take away our holiday spirits. Then, tears fell upon my face and upon the faces of my friends. Every holiday we would loose more of our friends. When we would ask about someone, the answer was that he'd been arrested or deported or wounded. When the sad news reached us it was like a scent of parfume turning to tear gas and for music we hear the sound of bullits aimed at me and all Palestinians. Every holiday we remember our friends and brothers the "Shohada" as well as the prisoners. We stand flustered and confused asking "What fault is it of these children? Why can't they be happy like the other children of the world?" Every holiday our hope is renewed that a new dawn will come bringing with it the hope for the end of bloodshed. This last holiday this hope became a reality and I began to feel the joy and happiness that every holiday would be joyful and we would be compensated for the sad days we passed. I hope that our hopes will be completed when all of our people are released from prison and that smiles will fill the faces of Palestinians once again.

Rami Abu Sultan, 16
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza





Noy Gur, 17
Tel Aviv



Mordechai Zeller, 17 Efrat settlement, west bank

With every day that passes the dream of Peace fades away.

Maybe it's time to stop, take a break from all the battle and bloodshed.

We're tired of hearing that each day a different friend is killed and another family whose loved one has gone away, joins the family of grief. All because the "important big people" are having trouble getting along.

Maybe we should send you the dove with the olive branch, because the problem lies with you "the important big people", not us.

The dove of peace has already visited our group, maybe not in the way we had planned but nevertheless amongst us we are friends, no matter race, religion or color. I ask myself now are we really more mature, then those "big important people" that can do anything?

But the only thing I can say for sure is that I care more then ever before, and today when I hear of riots in the land, something changed in me.

I have friends there, people I know, people I care for.

I ask both sides - before you do anything harmful ask you - please - think of each other as human beings, no longer as enemies.

Ruti Gamish, 15
Jerusalem



Ahmed Aza, 17
Bethlehem

From the moment I was born, I've taken steps in the world around me.
Yet there is still more to overcome, beyond that which I've already overcome.
There is still more to do,
beyond that which I've already done,
there is still more to see,
beyond that which I've already seen in the infinite cycle.
It's a cycle of bumps that I live through. It's a cycle full of tension and slander.
It's the cycle of life the infinite cycle.
I live in a never ending cycle of tension and slander between Arabs and Jews, between Jews and Jews.
I live in a small country where people battle, fade in the conflict, so at times I want to shout "Stop the world I want to get off!" But I can't stop
the crazy world we roam in, if I could stop this world, people would listen, and I would tell them, that in the world we live in, we must take
baby steps to succeed and even though we might not overcome at least we would know that we tried.

Michal Vorka, 17
Jerusalem



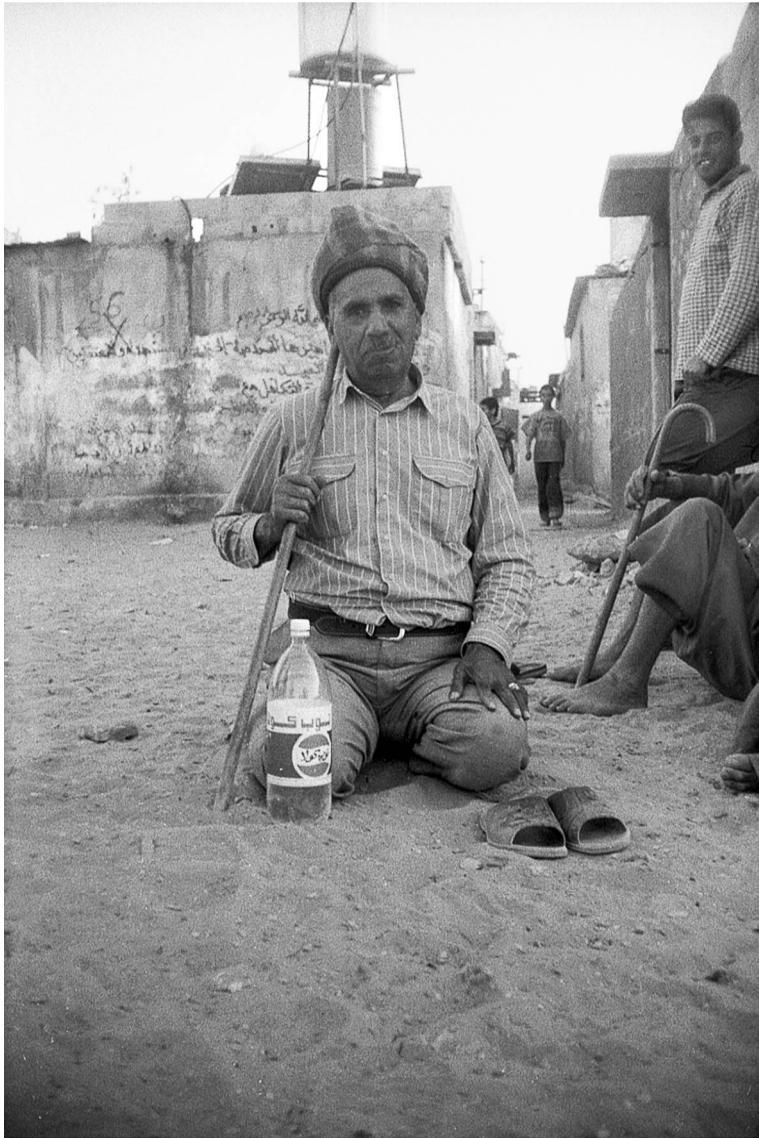
Ahed El-Azza, 16
Gaza



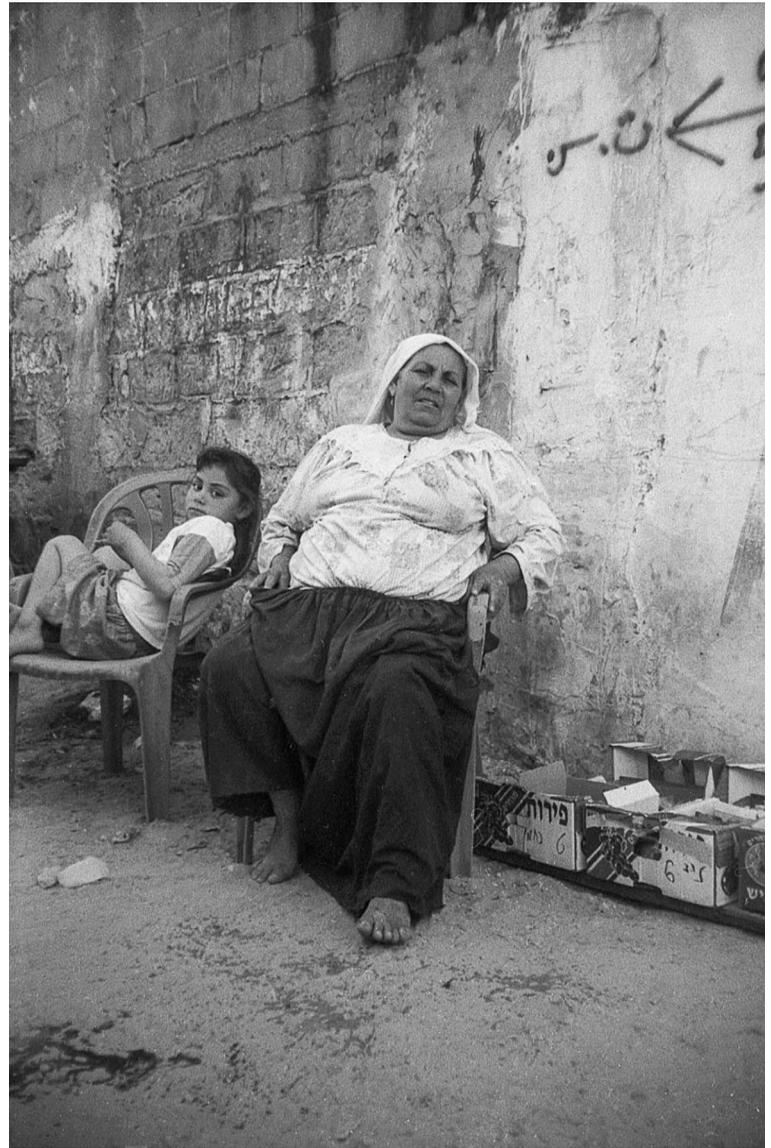
Noy Gur, 17 Tel Aviv

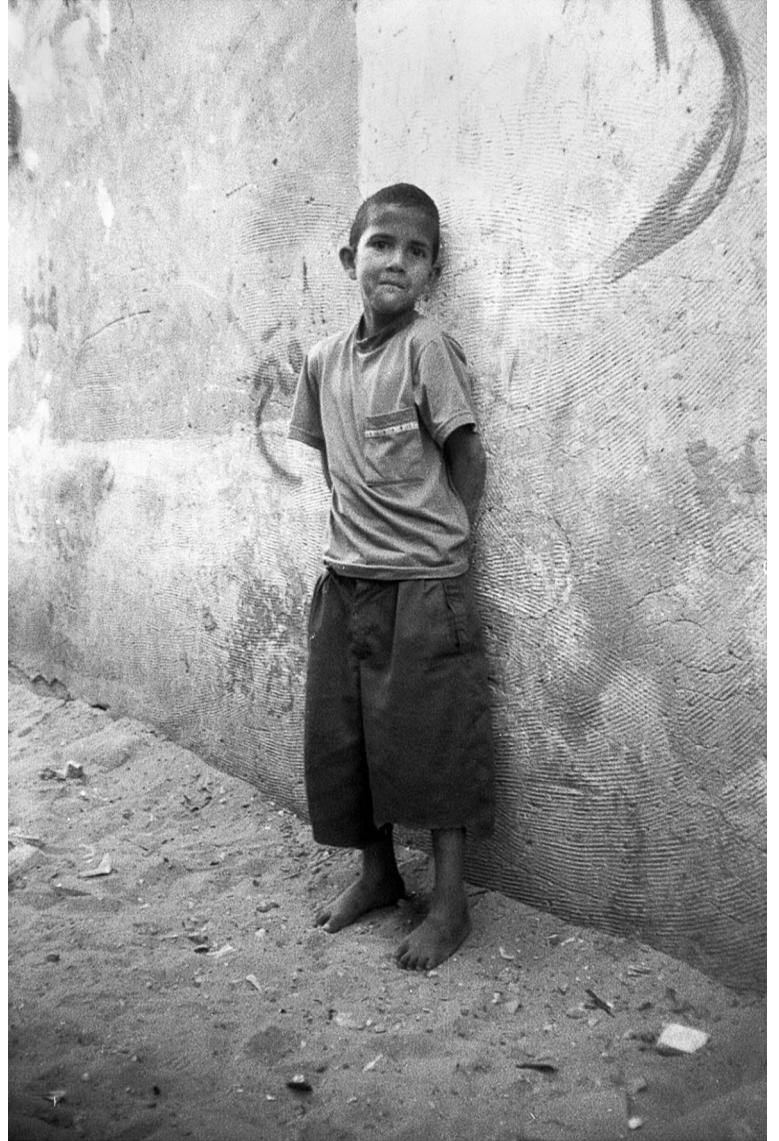
These meetings were like a fantasy of peace on the ground of reality. They brought together Palestinian and Israeli youths and me, a young Palestinian from the Gaza strip. These meetings were a crack through which I had the opportunity to meet other Israelis and Palestinian and visit the parts of Palestine they claim are Israeli - the land forbidden to most of us. i In this way we had the chance to fulfill a dream and take part in these meetings after crossing the Israeli military barriers and after waiting long, boring hours for the security check, nevertheless we were told the Israeli people were "peace loving". Another very important thing that I could do, as a result of these meeting was to expose the many difficult problems of the Palestinian people before the Israelis and through violent discussions and a series of meetings, the results were positive and some understood our predicament. I clarified to all, what the Israeli army had left behind it - from the destruction of the houses to the uprooting of trees and the bullet holes in the bodies of young Palestinians.

Ahed El-Azza, 16
Gaza



Ahed El-Azza, 16
Gaza





It's not that I don't believe in God.

I do, really. I don't think there is anyone who doesn't believe at all.

Not even those who really insist that they don't. But, sometimes, it's very hard for me to understand him.

God, that is. It's hard for me to understand why my friend throws up every morning because of her chemotherapy or why, on new years eve, instead of preparing for the holiday, my family sits in Kiryat Shaul (military cemetery) and why the world is so full of wars and hunger and suffering.

For religious people it's much easier. They have one answer for everything. Even the worst disasters.

God works in mysterious ways." they say. For me, it's not enough.

To tell you the truth, i don't think it does him justice.

I don't believe he sits up there in the sky watching people die of hunger in Rwanda, getting killed in Bosnia or exploding bombs in dizingoff centre saying "that's exactly what I meant".

I can understand the desperate need for an explanation though.

I look for one myself. I guess that when something bad happens to you and you know why, it's easier to pick up the pieces and move on, hoping not to make the same mistake twice.

But when you do everything by the book and still your child dies in the war, or your father gets cancer, it tears you apart. Suddenly you realize that no matter what you do, you can't guarantee the well being and happiness of those you love and if you can't do that, what's the point?

Dana Friedman, 15

Tel Aviv





Tehila Saar, 17
Tel Aviv



Mahmoud Rajab Jwubra, 18
Arob Camp, Hebron

The Arabs are just like me and I have lived with them from childhood,
my friends are Arab and with them I do exactly the same things that I do with my Jewish friends.
Yet, I do understand all those people that live outside Jaffa and why they think what they think.
The press is filled with the negative side of the Arabs, although from time to time they rightfully show this - let`s say after a terrorist attack.
But I don't recall, not even once that I read the paper or turned on the television and heard something good, something positive the press
was saying about Arabs.
I think that whoever doesn't live in Jaffa will never understand it, but I lead my daily existence with them just like with the Jews.

Yifat Lugosi, 15
Jaffa



The Lost Homeland

The homeland is my dream, since always.

My body shivers, despite its weakness.

Waiting for the future, a hopeful life and therefore I am optimistic, despite the pain.

My hurt is the darkness of night through all of time.

And my smile the dawn that takes the grief away.

Jumping, playing, getting close, moving farther away. Men here are always in a hurry, searching for their peace.

And thousands of children suffering, here in the rubble.

Our world is slipping through our fingers. Regretfully we are left, only with hope.

Ahmed Aza, 17

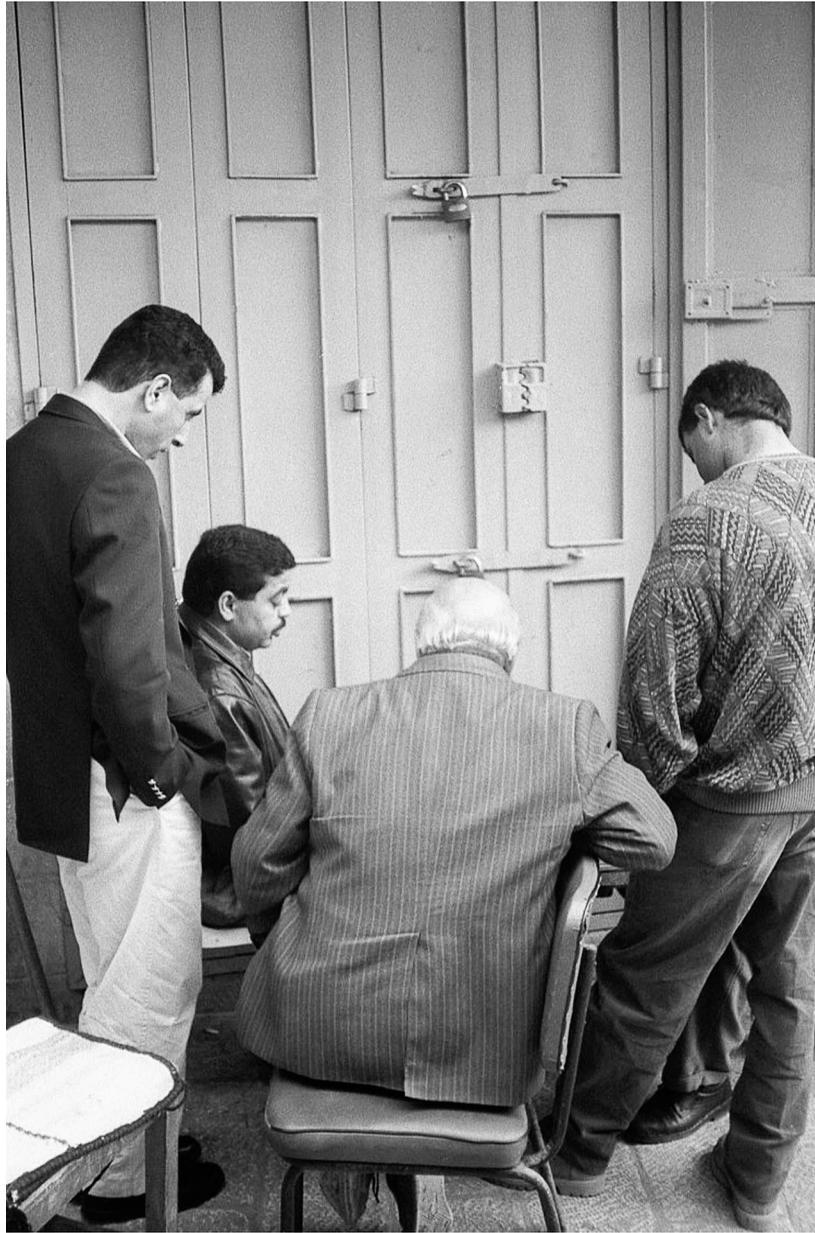
Behlehem



Bassel Abu Zyda, 17
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza



Bassel Abu Zyda, 17 Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza



Idan Goldberger, 16 Tel Aviv

And then, when he served me the three bullets with pride - "Here, see what I've got"
I was a bit astonished and I pitied him a little that his pride relied on those bullets.
That these bullets were the cards he had to exchange with his friends,
that instead of playing with a ball filled with air, he was playing with bullets filled with gun powder.
This is the reality he lives in.
For me this means death but for him it's a game.

Avital Cohen, 16
Jerusalem



We are two brothers, born to the same father.
We have many great disagreements between us.
Parts of my brother would like to reach the solution by force.
Parts of me want to do the same But my head knows and my heart feels that this way we'll never reach a just solution.
Inside my head and my heart there are parts that want different solutions.
Inside my heart there are mixed emotions. All the parts know that a solution must be reached
The question is in which way.
Now my brother and I are in the middle of an attempt,
An attempt to solve, a solution that half of my body thinks is the best one under the current circumstances
And parts of my body thinks it would be largest disaster that my body could bring upon itself.

Alon Waltman, 16
Efrat settlement, west bank





Asaf Zamir, 16
Tel Aviv



Nasrin Alayan, 18
Beit Safafa, Jerusalem



Sabreen Alayan, 16
Biet Safafa, Jerusalem



Asaf Zamir, 16
Tel Aviv



Ayala Moshe, 16
Jerusalem



Mahmoud Rajab Jwubra, 18
Arob Camp, Hebron

Jabalya refugee camp in the north of Gaza is one of the largest refugee camps in the strip and the west bank. Its population is 70,000, mostly Palestinian refugees who left their villages and towns in the war of 1948. The name of the camp comes from the name of a nearby village and is one of the most overpopulated in the area. Since 1948 it has been the responsibility of UNRWA. It has primary and secondary schools supervised by UNRWA and one high school under the responsibility of the Palestinian National authority. Jabalya is very well known all over the world because the intifada began in its streets back in 1987, the whole world heard about this camp and its fight against the occupation army. Jabalya suffers from many problems and from a lack of basic requirements. There is no sewage, water system or electricity and other needs. Its inhabitants suffer from unemployment because of continued closures and restraints imposed on workers from working in Israel. The economic situation is very difficult because of this. Most of the inhabitants of the camp support the peace process even though they have suffered greatly from the Israeli occupation.

Bassel Abu Zyda, 15
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza



Bassel Abu Zyda , 17
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza

I would like to put down some of my thoughts that have been with me since childhood.

I am an Arab who guards his tradition and cannot break through the barriers of our culture - religion, and traditional values.

I am a young man of nineteen, from a humble family accepted by the society I live in.

I am proud of my father that I regard as one of the rare men, there aren't many like him. In the eyes of society he has not fulfilled his role as a father - he is unemployed - as a result of the political and economic conditions in general and the occupation in particular.

He has no work permit and cannot even go pray on Friday - in El Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem, a valued Muslim tradition - the blockade makes it impossible.

So ever since I was young I took his place, and being twelve at the time required no permit. I have accepted this situation and abandoned my future and schooling. Now I am working very hard in order to provide for all my family's needs and especially for my younger brother who wants to continue with school to compensate for what I have lost.

I am part of this society and I have my place under the sun. This place is the world and so I have the right to say what I think and determine my fate.

That is why I'm here.

Samer Lihalih, 19
Bethlehem, Palestine



Who am I?

What a difficult question, a question so unclear that I try to avoid it.

Who gives me the power, will and inspiration to continue with my policy that I believe is right?

What pushes me to defend my nationality, my people and the whole Arab world?

Who am I? Am I the idealist person who want to achieve his aims in life or the passionate person who wants to hide in his own unique world?

Perhaps I am the person that is afraid of his painful reality. Sometimes I ask myself why I was born the way I am and not as someone else.

A person whose life is complete, beautiful and pure. I try not to hang on by the roots of life but I can't.

God created me in a dark reality but I don't regret it, not even for a moment.

I am "me" and no one else. I'll challenge and scream, scream from my soul for freedom because I understand that my fight for more pushes me to continue until I reach my goal; to answer the question: "Who am I?"

Suliman Boulos, 16

Neve Shalom



Sometimes I stop and look back.

I see myself when I was little looking forward.

To see what lies ahead, slowly crawling on the path of life, learning from my parents, trying not to cry.

I see myself growing, looking upward to see what's above me, still locked within the walls of innocence, but already the difficulties are beginning. I attempt to walk straight, I study from the books, trying to understand.

Now, I'm looking back to see what I've gone through, now the walls are coming down, the door to freedom has opened, life is beginning, now I'm learning from God, trying to.

Shivi Froman, 16

Tkoa settlement, west bank





Farah Musleh, 18
Gaza



Mahmoud Abed Al Nabi, 17
Jerusalem

My home was always the warmth of my family and friends, the love and intimacy that live in the house.
I never thought in terms of state and country.

The people around me created the greenhouse that made me feel safe,
and this greenhouse seemed to me always as distinct and strong, and I thought that where ever I am,
the people I love would make home. I didn't always understand or appreciate the importance of my country and my home,
I took them for granted.

When I first met people from the group whose need and desire for a country, for independence, for a place of their own was so strong I
realized that the things that I always taken for granted are important.

I understood their need for a state of their own, but still I felt that I didn't belong.

Then I traveled to Poland, to the concentration camps and the ghettos and to the towns where Jewish communities had lived.

The evil and cruelty there which are so incomprehensible, the memories of people terrified and remnants of these communities made me
understand how fragile the family and the home are.

For in such a short moment in time so many people lost their families, their friends - they had lost the home they known for generations.

The feeling was so frustrating and confusing, that I felt a strong need to hold on and safeguard all that I have - the family, the home and the
country. For the first time I felt belong to Israel and that the fact that I live there surrounded by family and friends is not evident as I had
once thought.

I finally understood the need of others for a place of their own, an identity of their own.

Tehila Saar, 17

Tel Aviv



Don't blame me 'coz I can't control myself, Don't blame me 'coz I don't know who I am?
Sometimes I feel that I am a soul that is motionless and unconscious and that is moving around
through the oceans of the world with their waves, I don't know calm. I am a ship without a sailor,
thrown away by the waves towards the rocks that are around here and there.
I feel the need to live and feel the need to have fun in my life, more and more.
And I turn around on the unknown routes of happiness without a goal.
But without a name without a clue - Who am i?

Every morning I begin life's trip from the beginning, the circumstances around me encourage me to challenge
life and to open a new page away from the pain and hatred.
Today, tomorrow and each morning, I'll announce that I challenge life, that I don't care that nothing
matters to me anymore except total respect from both sides.
In the middle of the night I wake up with a scary feeling inside me, I wake up from my dreams,
and recognize that today is still today and that I have to work hard to reach my goal.
But my question stays without a name, without a clue - Who am I?

Tamara El Assad, 15
Ramallah





Suliman Jayussi, 16 Ramallah



Shiran Hamadi, 16 Jaffa

My Field

I live in a large field.

In the field there are two kinds of flowers And each flower has a unique brother.

There is a flower of peace, there is a flower of happiness, and there is a flower of grief...

Everyday I water these flowers, they grow and became beautiful.

One day as I was going to water the flowers I discovered that next to the flower of peace grew the flower of sadness.

A large plant, ominous and full of thorns. The flower of peace had withered but the root was still there.

I will grow the flower so that it becomes big and beautiful and in the end the ominous plant will be vanquished and the flower of peace will dominate my field.

Shimrit Trabelsi, 16

Jerusalem





Na'ama Shapira, 16 Efrat settlement, west bank



Sabreen Alayan, 17
Biet Safafa, Jerusalem



Rula Assaly, 16 Jerusalem



Ranan Alayan, 16 Beit Safafa, Jerusalem



Dana Friedman, 16 Tel Aviv



Sabreen Alayan, 16
Jerusalem



Rami Abu Sultan, 15
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza



Adi Aluf, 15
Petah Tikva



Rami Abul Sultan, 15
Gaza



Nahida Odeh, 16
Ramallah



Avital Cohen, 16 Jerusalem



Ranan Alayan, 16 Biet Safafa, Jerusalem

Who Am I?

-My Name: Mustafa
-My City: Jerusalem
-My Village: Beit Tzafafa
-My Home: ?
-My Religion: Islam
-My Nationality: ?
-My Roots: Palestine
-My Country: Israel
-The Israeli: Palestine conflict my daily life

All of this passes through my mind as a 17 year old boy trying to define himself.

My friends are Jews from the Israeli school I have attended since fourth grade.

I appreciate and like them very much.

Maybe they are the ones who strengthen my conflict but they are also the ones that allow me to understand we can get along together.

All my trying to say is that it doesn't matter who you are, what you are, and where you have come from, the main thing is that we are all human beings.

Mustafa Haseen, 17
Bet Tzafafa, Jerusalem





Tarek Issa, 19 Bethlehem



Modechai Zeller, 17 Efrat settlement, west bank

My cousin is a lieutenant colonel. He serves in Hebron and every time he is late coming home my family loses a year of their life. I can't help but question the famous saying "It's good to die for our country".

Asaf Zamir 16
Tel Aviv



Adi Aluf, 16 Petah Tikva

I still remember the moments of happiness in my family.
I still remember the pictures I drew as a child of my future,
I still remember the games that I played with the neighborhood children.
But also, I still remember the tears of my aunt, Those were there after the death of her son,
The eight years old martyr, Who looked through the school's window To see the occupation bullets of fire scattering all over.

I still think until now, why is there no peace?
Peace, that will give us the right to be like all people, Living in freedom not dreaming there fate.
I still look down at the people that claim to have tasted sorrow and exile now giving another people a taste of the same,
Not even taking into account, That these people had nothing to do with what they went through.
I hope that my words will be heard all over the world, Maybe this way they will start thinking in earnest of the fate of a people who haven't
as yet had the chance to build their own independent state on their land. The most basic that there is.

Tarek Issa, 19
Bethlehem





Tarek Issa, 19
Bethlehem



Tarek Abu Zyda, 17
Ramallah



Nahida Odeh, 16
Ramallah



Na'ama Shapira, 17 Efrat settlement, west bank

Faith, that which unifies all human beings Faith in God, a super power, prophet or statue,
Who`s every word is holy.
We fight and sacrifice in the name of that faith.
but the victims are not "two yearlings without blemish but soldiers/children aged 18, without blemish
"What is more important, faith in God or War in the name of God?

Idan Goldberger, 15
Tel Aviv



Every palestinian home suffered strongly during the intifada, We did to.
the israeli military destroyed my houseand arrested my brother.
during the demolition my family was arrested. the soldiers surprised us telling us to evacuate the house immediately.
We asked for some time to take our belongings but were refused and the demolition began.
The damage was great both the building and to the belongings of the house.The red cross assist us by putting
us up in tents for a long period of time, where we suffered during the long cold winter.
We were forbidden to rebuild the house for a period of five years.I would like to speak frankly and say that
I was saddened by this demolition, the manner we were treated by the Israeli army made my hatred stronger.
Yet I still want peace so that both our peoples can live in serenity and security.Peace to you.

Rami Abu Sultan, 16
Jabalya refugee camp, Gaza





Ayala Moshe, 16
Jerusalem

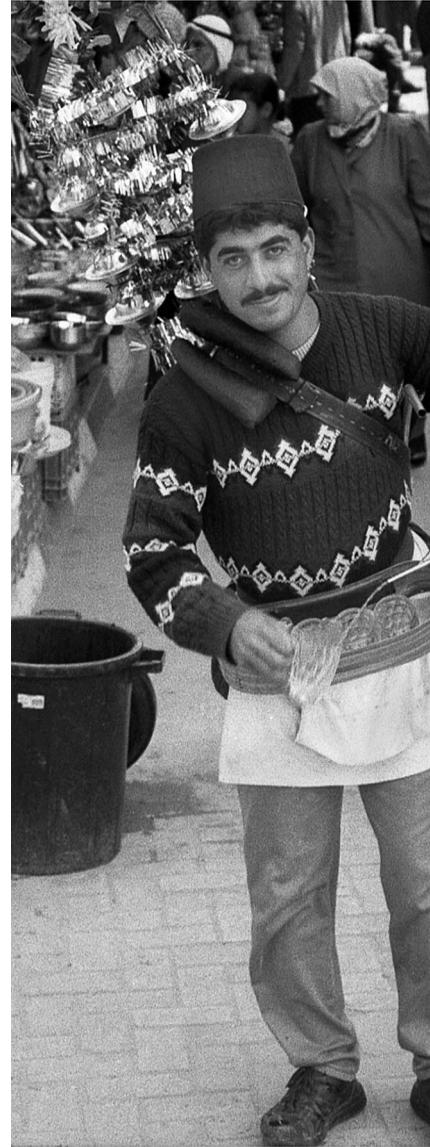
Ever since the Israeli occupation we have suffered from a lack of freedom and restriction in thought. so what the Arab - Palestinian is deprived of all freedom because of the dictatorship, the discrimination, the humiliation and the murder of innocent children, as well as their imprisonment of all who attempt to regain their personal freedom and their peoples freedom.

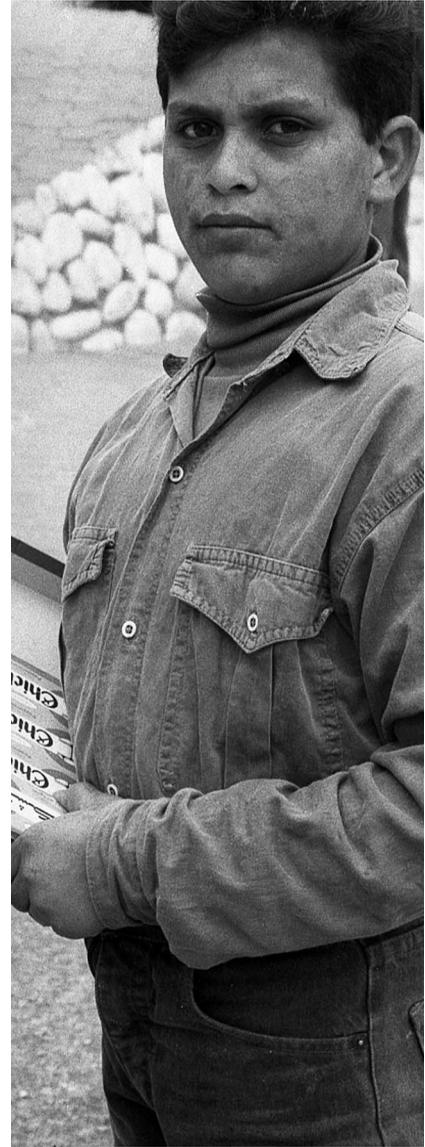
Compared with people living in other countries, the Palestinians suffer from poverty and a lack of social conditions. the face of the Palestinians shows the freedom that has been taken away from them for many years and the whole world must join together in order to bring freedom to all and to put the smile back on the face of every child, elder or man in this world.

Layla Eljilda, 18
Gaza



Layla Eljilda 18
Gaza







Nahida Odeh, 16 Ramallah



Dana Friedman, 16
Tel Aviv

The Church - the magic of it, the astounding uniqueness, the mystery, but I do not belong there.
The Mosque - the profanity, the humility, the potency, but I do not belong there.
The Kotel - the closeness to God, the tremendous strength, the perfect union.
There I do belong.

Ayala Moshe, 16
Jerusalem



Mahmoud Abed Al Nabi, 17
Jerusalem

I was baptized in the Church of the Revelation on the top of mount Tavor,
where Jesus revealed himself more than a thousand years ago.

When I entered the church I was very excited because of the many friends, neighbours and relatives who came to share my joy.

My heart beat strongly when I perceived the priest and his assistants bringing water towards a large bowl.

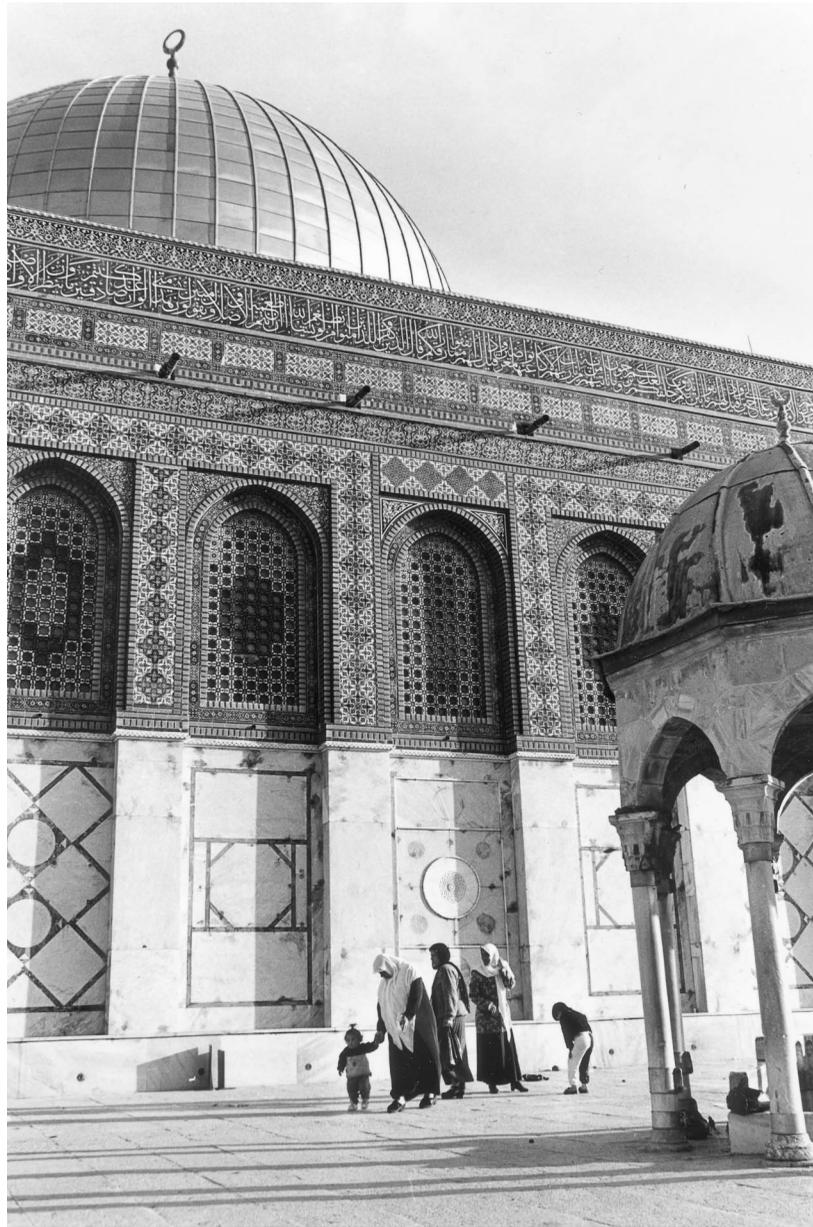
I was standing there at his request. The priest baptized me with the holy water and out olive oil upon my forehead.

Then I wore the white dress symbolizing purity and Chastity, and was asked to walk around the church three times.

Ruba Manassa, 15

Lod





Nasrin Alayan, 18 Biet Safafa, Jerusalem



Shimrit Trabelsi, 16 Jerusalem



Alon Waltman, 17
Tkoa settlement, west bank



Asaf Zamir, 16
Tel Aviv

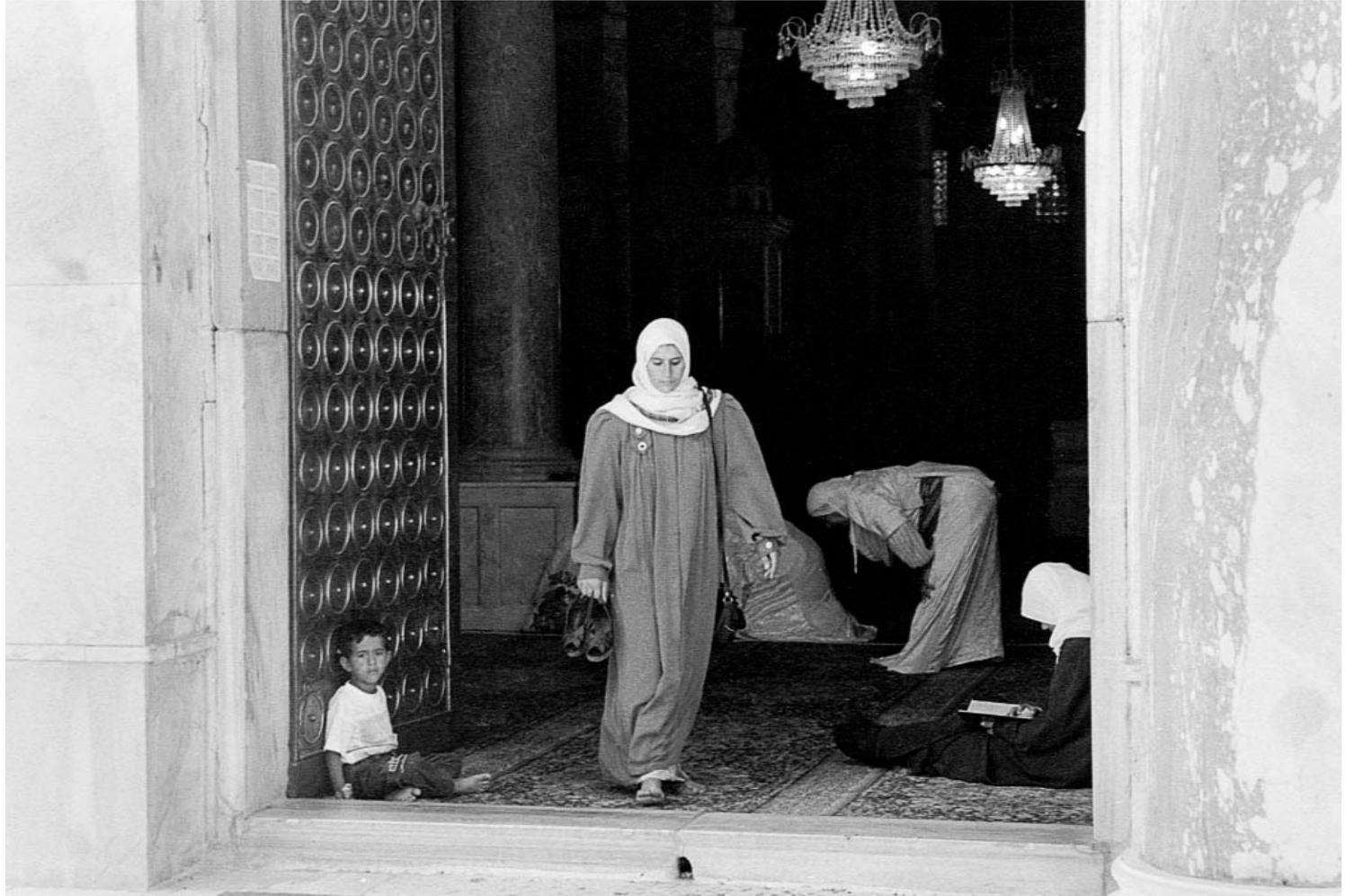


Alon Waltman, 17 Efrat settlement, west bank



Mother, if you knew what goes on in my soul from the weakness and in my heart from the sadness.
I ask myself why can't I have the right to visit you in your merriment?
I ask myself why can't you embrace me and fill me with your warmth?
I ask myself why can't I just turn to you and tell you of my distress.
Oh mother, if only you knew what I am going through.
If only you knew all the anger and rage from this predicament affecting so many of our students.
We, who can't return to our families, our friends and our childhood.
Those who can't come home when we're needed or simply, homesick. It's the political situation that I blame,
and the non-existence of safe passage from Gaza to the west bank.
The students are all victims and me in particular.
Why must I fight to get my ID?
I am not only struggling with my studies but with this political reality, without destiny.
Do all university students feel as I do?
Do some of you understand what I mean?

Farah Musleh, 18
Gaza



Who am I?

I'm a star looking for her light beam,
I'm a drop that can not find the sea,
I'm a pearl looking for her sand,
I'm a flower longing to see the spring,
I'm a word that want to be understood,
I'm a that would to be happy in her nest,
I'm a youth that want to fulfill her dreams,
I'm a women that wants to live her life,
I'm a Palestinian that wan peace upon her land,
I'm a soul that wants to know her will,
I'm me and I want to be, no one but me.

Rula Assaly, 15
Jerusalem



Thanks



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