



Bioethics Excursion to Israel, 23 February to 3 March, 2013

Background

Modern medicine oscillates between primary health care and technology, between health service and luxury treatments, and is in the grip of challenges caused by high specialization and stringent economical considerations. Moreover, technological advances nowadays allow interventions into the body which were unthinkable until recently and their use changes perceptions of being human and hence social and cultural practices. Ambiguities that come along with this development are the subject of bioethics, a field that has evolved together with biomedicine and biotechnology and is a highly relevant educational issue.

Why Israel?

Bioethical debates, particularly those in Central Europe, often refer to moral values of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Travelling in Israel, a cradle of this and many other traditions but also a modern nation with high standards of research and medicine, offers the chance to deal with a multitude of views, values and realities and to broaden one's own horizons essentially.

A former teaching experience

In March 2012, a group of students from different backgrounds (medicine, molecular biology, philosophy and archaeology) and seniors from medicine, bioethics and philosophy came to Israel for 12 days (Galilee, Judean desert and Jerusalem) and could meet colleagues at Sefat Academic College, at Hadassah Medical Center at Ein Kerem and at the Jerusalem Forum of Bioethics, experience some of Jerusalem's multiculturalism and visit Yad Vashem. In preparing for the event and during our 'field' seminars we dealt with questions of dying and death beyond different cultural backgrounds and in this context with bioethical questions and philosophical concepts regarding brain death but also concepts of soul, resurrection and afterlife. A particular highlight of this journey also was that Israeli colleagues joined us for several days stimulating the exchange of ideas. A news report (in German) can be found at: <https://www.i-med.ac.at/mypoint/news/655975.html>.

The 2013 excursion

In February 2013, a group of medical students from the Medical University of Innsbruck will travel to Israel for 8 days. This time, we'll first stay for three nights in Ein Kerem (at the guesthouse Beth Hagath). During this stay, meetings with colleagues from Israel are scheduled and of course we'll dedicate as much time as possible to spend in Jerusalem. We then will go to the desert and spend 4 nights there (camping). Walking in these powerful surroundings and experiencing its scantiness and beauty will help us to slow down and to change perspectives. During our 'field seminars' we are going to deal with bioethics issues regarding beginning and end of life issues that we already dealt with in a preparatory seminar during the winter term.

Organizational issues

Date: Saturday, 23 February – Sunday, 3 March 2013. Ein Kerem until 26 February; desert from 26 February – 2 March; return to Ein Kerem on 2 March; return to Tel Aviv Ben Gurion on 3 March. Accommodation: Beth Hagath, Ein Kerem; camp in Judean desert.

Contact

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¹ Ethucation is the Austrian Unit of the International Network, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics (Haifa) headed by Prof. Amnon Carmi. This network aims to promote bioethics education in medical schools and other educational organizations worldwide.