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The 8th grade Israel trip in May was very meaningful to us because we had lots of fun, and we found a strong spiritual and Zionist connection. The connection roots back to Schechter Manhattan, where Tefillah every morning and Zionist history class give us the understanding of why the land of Israel is so special. Being in Israel made us feel like we were part of something bigger, where our Zionism and Judaism collide.

Going to the Kotel and praying was a very big part of our Israel trip. We all felt a huge spiritual connection, when we touched the only thing that still stands from the Beit HaMikdash. We realized how important it is to have the State of Israel, as its spiritual connection alone is astonishing.

Yom Ha'atzmaut in Jerusalem was a great experience because we were celebrating the birth of the State of Israel, in the State of Israel. We went to a carnival, where we got ice cream, cotton candy, heard people sing songs and perform dances, and more. It was a lot of fun. I felt a connection to the land of Israel on Yom Haatzmaut because we were surrounded by Israelis united as Jews.

Towards the end of the trip we went shopping on Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem. In small groups we went to different stores, ate some really good food and had a really good time. During our shopping spree we realized how close we had become with each other and the Israeli staff.

These experiences were very important to us as well as being meaningful. Every place we went in Israel had an impact on all of our lives. During the trip we made a lot of friends and made memories that will last a lifetime. The 8th grade Israel trip strengthened our bonds with each other and our spiritual connection with the Land of Israel.