



Bioethics Excursion to Israel, 17 – 25 March, 2014

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.

The 2012 and 2013 teaching experiences

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 news report (in German) can be found at: <https://www.i-med.ac.at/mypoint/news/655975.html>. The 2nd bioethics excursion was held from 23 February to 3 March 2013, a student group came to Jerusalem and the Judean desert for a second bioethics excursion.

The 2014 excursion

The 3rd bioethics excursion to Israel is again offered to students of Medical University of Innsbruck, University of Innsbruck and Management Center Innsbruck. During a 3 day stay in Ein Kerem (guesthouse Beth Hagath), meetings and seminars with colleagues from Israel are planned as well as exploring Jerusalem's multiculturalism. We then will go to Judean 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. 'Field seminars' will deal with bioethics issues regarding beginning and end of life (following a preparatory seminar during the winter term 2013/14). On a last day in town we'll have time to experience Jerusalem's abundance. A detailed programme will be available in January 2014.

Organizational issues

Flight Innsbruck – Tel Aviv; Date: Monday, 17 – Tuesday, 25 March 2014. Ein Kerem until 20 March; desert from 20 – 23 March; return to Ein Kerem on 23 March; 1 day in Jerusalem (farewell evening); return to Tel Aviv Ben Gurion on 25 March. Accomodation: Beth Hagath, Ein Kerem; camp in Judean desert.

Contact

For issues regarding bioethics and contents: Prof.Dr. Gabriele Werner-Felmayer, Division of Biological Chemistry, Biocenter and Bioethics Network Ethucation¹ at Medical University of Innsbruck, Innrain 80-82, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria; phone: +43-512-9003-70341; e-mail: gabriele.werner-felmayer@i-med.ac.at

For issues of travelling and intercultural dialogue: Israel Ariel, Ein Kerem 27 G area, Jerusalem 95744, Mobile phone: +972 54 2355660

¹ Ethucation is the Austrian Unit of the International Network, UNESCO Chair in Bioethics (Haifa), <http://www.unesco-chair-bioethics.org/UI/A01.aspx>. This network aims to promote bioethics education in medical schools and other educational organizations worldwide.