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Just let it move!

Introductory

One day at the beginning of high school, I talked with my friends about travelling. Riding our bikes, we concluded that a bicycle is the best mean of transport. With our imagination we even went around the Mediterranean Sea riding our bikes. At that time we were far from taking power over our lives, but we were kids. We didn't know how to put it in realization and at that point we were just brainstorming- fantasizing and dreaming. Something that kept me apart from my peers was that I was able to differentiate between fantasy and imagination with real life. That's when I said "lets go", confident as he was, but me being serious about it. Sometimes it seems like some sort of illness, a mistake in the system, but maybe... maybe we forgot how to be kids, we outgrew the childness in us and continued with adulthood, not passing the first phases of life. Maybe... That's when people become adults and learn the rules of life in which they find fear in the existence of life. They forgot they were kids, and they could do whatever they put their minds to.

New Year's Eve, 2001, I was sitting in Guadijé's park in Barcelona, and my in the distance I was looking at the Mediterranean Sea with hypnotic calmness. The decision has been made, I want to travel around the Mediterranean Sea. Start preparing for it!

I went as a kid, being only nineteen years old. I viewed the trip to be an initial phase, a phase to becoming a man, as you needed to confront the world and yet survive. At that time I didn't know what was ahead of me. I was never sick without my parents being nearby. I was never left alone to the mercy of life. However, even though all of this I felt safe, in Gods hand. You get the feeling that fear has no sense, life becomes a game, life becomes a dance.

In the past, the whole world was explored; the highest mountains were concurred and the farthest points were visited. I knew I wasn't doing something new, but for me, it was the start of discovering the world.

Part 1



Until now I was always reserved coming into new kinds of contact. Everything was new for me and I didn't want to be a know it all, but rather absorb the new experiences. However it slowly started to bother me. Me, being a visitor, I can say that they have their culture and I have mine, but they are not two independent things. I am there, sitting with other men, while the women are working. I don't even look at them as they serve me. Every time someone asks me if I want something else, I know the men will order them to bring me something different, to make or prepare it. I'm not Davor anymore, the white European man, but I have grown into their culture and need to decide what next. I wanted to run away from it all for a while, so I went for a walk... I climbed on top of the nearby mountain, which on one side you can see the village of Euphrat and its green fields, and on the other side the never ending dessert. I started to walk towards Euphrat, with the goal of coming to the coast line, as I have never been so close to it. I went through the fields, passed the river, but it all seemed too wild, too many mosquitos and flies. As much as they bit and annoyed me, the same chaos was going through my mind. What should I do? Blind myself from the injustice and be a man who makes life harder for the women? –that is exactly what I do when I don't even look at them while they serve me as it can be perceived as an offensive act. That is something that was bothering me for a longer period of time, even before I went on this trip around the Mediterranean.

I attended a workshop about intercultural understanding in Denmark, half a year before my trip. They taught us that if we want to understand someone's culture, we need to forget all the rules and characteristics of our own, and that that was the only way to understand other cultures, yet, is it possible? Can I just erase my upbringing, society and climate I grew up in, the culture I came from? Even if it is possible, then what? I still need to tolerate the discrimination of women, punishment of kids, listening to the elder... I wasn't able to come to any conclusion.

Part 2

Exactly here, in **Badija** in the northern part of Arabia, the homeland of Bedouin, where six thousand years before Christ, in the fertile lands of Euphrata, Tigirs and the Mediterranean Sea sides of Palestine and Lebanon where the nation of Mesopotamia lived, the Bedouins became the masters of land in which no one was interested – the dessert. High temperatures, no water, hardly five centimeters of rain per year and the empty endless land called for special care and adjustment. The nomad life was the only

to survive. The Bedouins forced the camels and sheep from one poor field to another, from one well to another. The Bedouins, just like camels had to adjust. Not drinking water for days, and the moment they come across a well, they would come home and be able to drink five liters of water in one go. Generally they moved from winter to summer fields and back.

At the entrance there was a Bedouin standing and waiting for us. When we approached, he smiled and tightly shook our arm. "Ahlan w'asahlan, be my guests" all together we sat on the floor around the fire which was burning in the middle of the main tent, giving us tea. We met with Faisal and had a nice talk, as much as our Arabic language skills allowed us to. After drinking the black sweet drink, the old man invited us for dinner and to stay the night. There's just no end to his kindness. Before a long time ago, life depended on people's hospitality. Not inviting someone to stay after crossing the dessert is the same as stabbing a knife in some ones back. This rule is written in the Quran which says, that a house belongs the God and his guests.

Because of the Bedouins mobility, they developed a poor sense of ownership. Namely it is quite stupid to accumulate things as it is hard to move everything around. Modesty, simplicity and not being too attached to one place is best seen in their culture. Most of their rituals and traditions came from Islam, but in this case, hints from the Quran are not applicable, due to the nomad lifestyle. If death of a family member would suddenly happen, a simple ceremony would be held. They would be buried on the side of the road, usually with no signs or indications. Just like the dessert wind erases every trace a Bedouin leaves, although they continue their journey through the desserts.

Part 3

Our first destination was a refugee camp called Dayusch. A neighborhood cramped with houses. Where ever we would pass, tens of kids would start running after us, and people would come out of their houses to greet us. We arrived to the manager's house where he and his whole family kindly greeted us with tea. We had a conversation about the life in Bethlehem, and how frustrated people are due to the lack of freedom, feeling of detainment in their own city and inability to oppose, you could see the tiers in the wife's eyes and feel the energy as she tells us the horrifying stories.

"What can we do? " We are imprisoned in our own city, and within it, the system is slowly killing us. We have no work; we survive on humanitarian help and are slowly rotting. We have already gotten used to tanks passing in front of our windows, and if there is a night where do you not hear fire guns, you just can't fall asleep from



wondering and the fear of something big happening. Look at our kids! They are growing up next to gun fights and tanks. Their main entertainment is waiting for the tanks to arrive and throw stones at them. Damn those Israeli people, they have no feelings. Look at my son who is locked up in his room for a month! While they were throwing stones at the tanks, the Israelis starts shooting and killed his best friend in front of his eyes and since then, he cries every day and only comes out of his room when he comes shouting that there's no meaning to life and that he will blow himself up with a bomb.

"Do you really think I want my son to kill himself? That's the last thing I want on this world. I would rather kill myself if that would help with anything, but what is there to tell him? That everything will be fine, when we actually know it won't be? Do I tell him the war is over soon? The war is going on for fifty five years already; no one even remembers what peace feels like. Did anything change? Did anything change for the better? I would tell my son anything, promise him anything, but it would all be a lie. There is no future for him, or any of this peers. We simply have no future! "