



## Israel at Heart Ethiopian Program Scholarship Student 2015/2016



Ahuva Tsegaye

Psychology

Ahuva Tsegaye becomes emotional when telling her personal story, which is all about overcoming obstacles and gratitude.

Her family came to Israel in 1991 during Operation Solomon. They had a large farm in Dokwa, and ate what they grew and raised. *“My father was a shepherd and a farmer,” she says. “My grandmother was a healer and people came from everywhere to see her. It was like Abraham’s tent in our house, with people always coming to stay.”*

Ahuva, whose Amharic name is Mchote, meaning pleasure, is the youngest of 11 siblings, including two half-brothers and one adopted brother. Her eldest brother came to Israel in Operation Moses, another one came alone in 1989, and the rest of the family followed in 1991. Ahuva was born on the family’s way to Addis Ababa, in the city of Gondar.

Her grandmother also came to Israel with them, and lived with them until she passed away in 1999. *“She was a great figure in our life,” says Ahuva. “She still has a strong influence on us – we quote her all the time, and whenever there is a big decision to be made, we think about what my grandmother would tell us to do. She insisted that all of us go to school, which was not so obvious back then.”*



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Upon arriving in Israel, Ahuva's family lived first in Jerusalem, then Haifa, and then Kfar Hahores in the North. From there, they could see the city of Migdal Haemek, where they eventually moved and where they still live today. Her mother is a homemaker, and her father works for the city as a street cleaner and is now semi-retired.

After graduating from Ort Rogozin high school, Ahuva was drafted into the IDF, where she served for six and a half years. She was the only member of her family to become an officer. She served in an air traffic control unit in the air force as an instructional officer. In this role she managed the long term planning for the unit, developed training courses, and guided the course commanders. She was released with the rank of Captain.

Ahuva did not take any time off between the army and studying. She wants to become an organizational consultant, for which a psychology degree is necessary. *"In 10 years' time I want to be a well-known independent organizational consultant. It's a very competitive field, and there are a lot of very good consultants, so it's hard to stand out. I want to stand out,"* she says.

Ahuva had heard from her brother and other family members that IDC was an extraordinary place to study. *"They told me about the networking opportunities and the amazing student experience here,"* she says. *"IDC has the best professors in the country and the most opportunities to connect with people who are in the field. It's also very fun here – I know I can't get this experience anywhere else."*

Ahuva has learned that nothing can stand in the way of her will. *"There is nothing that I can't accomplish. This is not just a cliché – I have had experiences, both at school and in the army, when people told me that I could not accomplish certain things, and I defied them. Those experiences taught me that there is nothing I can't do, it's just a matter of how much I want it."*

In her free time, Ahuva likes to read and dance salsa.

When speaking about her scholarship, Ahuva's eyes well up with tears. *"I am so thankful,"* she says. *"My mother told me that she wishes that she could help us more; I know that all of the parents in my community wish that they could give us more, but coming here in your 50s with no profession and no Hebrew, it's very hard. I could have gone to study somewhere less prestigious, but this scholarship has given me the amazing opportunity to truly maximize my potential."*