I am the product of two different worlds. Two different identities coming together by both forced and chosen migration to create one.

My grandparents, Albert and Janet, were born and raised in Morocco. As Jews in Morocco, they were a part of a vibrant Jewish community but struggled to fit in to the greater Moroccan community as anti-Semitism was on the rise. My grandparents continued to face no choice but to leave Morocco, along with the rest of their families and most Jews. In 1940, there were around 250 thousand Jews in Morocco, today, there are under 2,000.

Albert and Janet decided to flee to the newly created state of Israel, considered one of the few safe places for Jews at the time, with others in their family going to France or America. They met each other on the boat on the way to Israel, and quickly fell in love and created a life together in Jerusalem. There, Albert worked as a pharmacist and they were finally part of a welcoming community.

This is where my mother was born and raised. Growing up surrounded by conflict and war, and grappling with her own identity in a young country still trying to figure out its own identity. Israel was founded primarily by European Jews, so when Jews from North Africa and the Middle East, who were darker in skin color, came later, they were viewed as different by the European Jews.

On the other side of the world, was the Fine family, who escaped European antisemitism in Poland well before WWII, and immigrated to Pittsburgh. This is where my father grew up. He attended a Jewish school, and in college was drawn to visit Israel.

The two families, from opposite sides of the world, crossed paths when my father David spent a year in Israel. There he met my mother Rachel, and knew he would spend the rest of his life with her. Although there was friction between the two drastically different families and their cultures, they began to love and embrace their differences and learn about their contrasting yet overlapping cultures. They eventually moved to America together and settled in Boston.

This marriage was the marriage of two people with distinctly different Jewish identities and cultures, who not only acted differently but also looked different. Together, they created a blend of identities, finding a balance between their Moroccan and Polish ancestors. This is an identity that has been handed off to me to grapple with. As I have spent my time growing up in both America and Israel, I have come to embrace my two different backgrounds.