



A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Michael & Susan Ackerman

This is a recent letter written by Michael Ackerman (father of Orayta student, Danny Ackerman) to our Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi David Aaron.



Dear Rabbi Aaron,

Thank you for your kind and loving words, they are a source of inspiration for me & Susan.

It is great to have Danny home for these few days. It's just he and I here in Florida - Susan, Brooke, Royi & Lauren Ariel are in New York. They have heavy mid term exams, papers, and Royi also has a full time work schedule, etc. Danny will get to see his friends and participate in the current High School theater production which he has a big passion for. When he called me before he left, said he's looking forward to Shabbat dinner with me.

I have to tell you that his growth at Orayta has been exponential. Uncovering what was always there but until now he had no way to access, has been such a deeply rewarding experience for Susan and I to watch unfold and enjoy. For us, seeing him mature to this next level has been like watching a video of him taking his first steps as a baby, through the early years of learning. Learning brings a soul satisfaction that unfortunately wears off as we get older and 'wiser' but in Daniel we see his happiness as he begins to master the tools he has been given to help him continue striving, learning, growing.

He is mastering and refining his character through the learning and we are experiencing the thankfulness that he shows to us. His appreciation for the gifts in his life - family, friends, even strangers on a plane - are captured by the broader scope of the vision you, Rav Binny, the Orayta teachers and program have provided. The love and appreciation he has developed for Torah, what it means to be a Jew by connection with people from diverse backgrounds, to the Israeli people and to a growing awareness and appreciation of Eretz Israel.

He's shown more than an acknowledgement for the depth of the learning being presented, I would call it joyfulness. Maybe not all, but most of the time

His appreciation for his teachers, embracing study for Gemara, Chumash, deep Kabbalistic ideas.

His learning with his Orayta Fellow, Baruch Ze'ev cannot be understated. It has been *the* vital link between 'his everyday life' and 'world view' that informed him. The growth through Torah that he is gaining a lifelong love for through the Orayta program is being imprinted by the time spent with Rav Baruch Ze'ev.

Daniel has always been a special loving person, but the way he is showing up in the world now, realizing he can take his life in ways he did not think or even know were available to him, is a joy to experience. We know our son and he would not have participated in another learning venue that required a ten month commitment. One month maybe – ten, never.

Through his learning he has come to realize that the person he is becoming will not only be a gift to himself, but to the Jewish people and the world. He is 'present' in the process, and has given himself over to it and is happy in his choices.

We are thankful to Hashem that you and all the Rabbanim have made this possible for Daniel.

Shabbat shalom,

With love,
Michael and Susan