



## A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Rosie and Mark Friedman

Visiting with our son at Orayta, a *yeshiva* which is imbued with the *kedusha* of the *Ir HaAtika* of *Yerushalayim* was an inspiring experience. In a sense, we were taken back in time through the 3800 year history of the Jewish nation. The *tiyul* by bus through the Jordan Valley and into *Beit She'an* was fascinating and informative, and gave the parents an opportunity to fraternize with their sons' friends, fellows, *madrichim* and *rebbeim*.

We were impressed to see the multifaceted methods of learning in place at Orayta. Students had the opportunity to attend *shiur* in either *Gemara* or *Chumash*, and to learn *b'chavruta* with either another student, or with one of the fellows or *rebbeim*. Parents were encouraged to learn with their sons.

*Shabbat* was the highlight of our stay. It began with the magnificent *Kabbalat Shabbat* on the roof of the *Yeshiva's* crusader fortress building, overlooking the *Kotel*, led by Rav Binny Friedman. The *davening* was a very moving experience, enhanced by the *achdut*, friendship, and mutual respect that was evident amongst the students and *Rebbeim*. During the *Shabbat* meals, the parents were encouraged to tell something about their children, and this created an atmosphere of laughter as well as an appreciation of our differences, and the individuality of the students. Many of the students gave *Divrei Torah*. The presence of seven Orayta alumni over *Shabbat* was a wonderful addition - in addition to their *Divrei Torah*, they conveyed to the first year students the understanding that their time in Orayta was a precious gift to be used wisely.

The *Rebbeim* at Orayta promote an atmosphere of knowledge, kindness, passion and compassion. Their love and respect for the students is expressed through the kind and gentle manner with which they teach and lead. They encourage the students to ask the difficult questions, and strive to provide responses which are meaningful and honest.

What we found to be so educationally vital was the daily learning of the *Rabbanim* with the fellows – a diverse group of young Rabbinical students. Discussions of methodology, stories and all types of learning impart to the fellows the philosophy of Orayta. They learn to stress to the students certain elements of the *seforim* they are studying such as the embracing of *Hashem*, and learning from the tales of our *Avot* and biblical figures. The skills necessary to learn *Mishna* and *Talmud* are developed.

We are so thankful to have met Rav Moish Kornblum during the Israel night program at Ramaz. He was the first person whom Aryeh met from Orayta, and was the catalyst, with *Hashem's* help, to lead Aryeh to this program. We want to express *hakarat hatov* to Rabbi David Aaron, Rav Binny, Rabbi Sam, Rav Noam, Benny Rofeh and Yehuda HaKohen for their tremendous scholarship and *hitlahavut*, for inspiring Aryeh to continue his journey through study and introspection, and for their *kavod* for, and trust and confidence in Aryeh and all the students of Orayta. We want to give thanks to the very devoted *madrichim* who have the difficult task of getting the boys to fulfill their responsibilities while still maintaining a meaningful and close relationship with them. *Kol hakavod* to Josh and Yoni on *Chabad* street, and Yaakov from *Rechov Tuppim*.

We loved meeting the families of Rabbi David Aaron, Rav Binny Friedman and Rav Moish Kornblum. We were so fortunate to experience that side of these giants of *Torah* and *Chessed*. We saw that all the families knew the students of Orayta. When we introduced ourselves to Yair Friedman *Shabbat* morning, he said: "Aryeh's your son? Oh, he's a really good guy."

We also want to thank Scott Apfelbaum, Devorah Moss and Shlomit for organizing such a magnificent and delightful *Shabbat* for all the parents and students, and for their constant patience and understanding.

In conclusion, "*Ve'Eleh Shemot Bnei Yisrael*" – we are thankful to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for keeping our son, Aryeh, and his fellow students, involved, committed and filled with a thirst for *Limudei Kodesh*, as they continue their quest to become proactive members of *Klal Yisrael*. We are so touched that Aryeh now has, *Baruch Hashem*, a place in *Yerushalayim*, on *Misgav Ladach* street, that he can always call his own in a beautiful, warm *Beit Midrash* filled with the light of Torah. *Tihiyu Bri'im* to all who dwell and slumber on *Rechov Chabad* and *Rechov Tuppim*.

*Shabbat shalom* to all of you!

*B'Kavod Rav u'B'yedidut*

Rosie and Mark Friedman