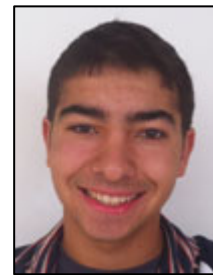


STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Ari Bressman



In the first chapter of *Rambam's Hilchot Deot* it states "Each and every man possesses many character traits. Each trait is very different and distant from the others." Recently, while sitting in Rav Binny's class on the *Rambam*, I pondered what this statement means and how it could apply to my life. The *Rambam* adds in his commentary on this statement a line from the Tractate of *Berachot*, "Whoever sees a multitude of Jews recites the blessing: 'Blessed is... the wise who knows the hidden secrets,' because just as their natures are not similar, neither are their faces." (*Berachot* 58a) Within one hour of that class I was on a bus bringing the *Rambam's* words to life.

The beauty of Orayta is that our year is filled not just with learning, but with applying what we learn and sharing it with others all over Israel. Every Tuesday a group of fifteen Orayta students board the 38 bus inside the Old City and head towards Talpiyot to an afterschool program for children ranging in ages from seven to twelve. When we arrive we are warmly greeted by the students and faculty and we start to engage in different exercises with the students to help them improve their English. Exercises range from English associated games or worksheets and reading stories in English. Sometimes it's hard to get the children to focus, but their energy only makes me want to keep on trying to connect with them and make progress. So far, the children have made good progress in their English skills, but the progress I've made is far greater.

Being blessed with the ability to interact and teach children who come from all different backgrounds is what has made this year in Israel special so far. Many of the children in this afterschool program come from broken homes, poor families, or even well-off families, but during this one hour none of that matters. The students just want to have fun with one another and learn English, and I'm glad I'm able to bring that goal to life. Just as the *Rambam* says "Each and every man possesses many character traits," I'm able to see that in a small classroom of five fifth graders. As the year progresses I hope to teach these students a great deal more, but I also hope that these students will realize how much they are teaching me.