



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Daneel Schaechter



Purim in Israel this year was like no other *Purim* I've experienced in my life. Maybe it's because I'd never heard of *ada'lo'yada* before; or maybe it's because there was an uber-high level of spirituality and happiness permeating throughout the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Purim was definitely one of the most special experiences of this year at Orayta. It's the one time in the year that you are able to, in fact encouraged, to drink until you cannot differentiate between Blessed be *Mordechai* and Cursed be *Haman*. And you're drinking with your Rabbis; experiencing a spiritual high with them.

At this point in the year, all of the students have established a great comfort with each other and with the *Rebbaim*. We have reached a great group dynamic that keeps on growing positively. This was evident from our *Purim seudas*, where people were having heart-to-hearts with the Rabbis, giving each other meaningful *brachos*, dancing like mad men, giving twenty minute *divrei torah* in multiple languages while standing on chairs, singing *Vehi She'amda* on the top of their lungs, and reciting Grammen (puns set to a melody that tease Orayta students and Rabbis).

As *Yerushalmim* this year, we had the ability and were urged to experience both *Purim* and *Shushan Purim*; many guys took this opportunity, traveling to see an Ultra-Orthodox *Purim* in *Bnei Brak*, or going to *Yeshivat Har Etzion* to experience a *Dati Leumi Purim* with hundreds of students. Both *Bnei Brak* and *Yeshivat Har Etzion* were enjoyable, but Orayta was so much more incredible because of our intimacy with each other.

Our *Purim* was so *hey mish* and meaningful that I can only hope that we all have as meaningful a *Purim* next year, and that we take all of the *Purim Torah* that we learnt with us.

Daneel Schaechter graduated from Hunter College High School in New York City. He was President of the Jewish Cultural Awareness Club, Captain of the Hunter Cycling Team, and sang Tenor in the Hunter Chamber and Concert Choir. He is excited to be attending the University of Pennsylvania this Fall. His favorite aspect of Orayta is Rabbi Aaron's Philosophy and Mysticism class.