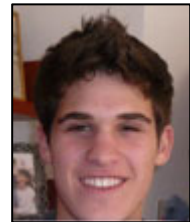


## STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Jerry Klaristenfeld



Coming to Yeshiva, I had relatively low expectations. I have always felt an innate connection to Judaism and Israel, and I didn't see how I'd be able to benefit from the yeshiva system. If all went according to plan, I would get a head start on some college-level readings and perhaps, along the way, become a little more independently adept at deciphering the Talmud. My goals for the year were mostly to evolve into a more collected and mature individual, so as to achieve the greatest academic success in university. To my parents and me this sounded like a perfectly reasonable understanding, and I boarded the plane, already imagining my return flight as a more relaxed and well-read student.

Fast-forward four months and everything has changed. All which I believed I had figured out dissipated, until all that was left were the roots. Beginning anew, by ways of abandoning the cynical and adopting a sense of open-mindedness, under tutelage from the Orayta staff and with the students, I have been able to conceptualize different ways of approaching Judaism, appreciate biblical texts for their spiritual output, and gain a new sense of respect for the human condition and purpose in this world.

After spending half a year studying philosophy, religion, and ethics with my fellow classmates in the Old City of Jerusalem, I can confidently acknowledge a spiritual and intellectual growth taking place inside of me and I excitedly await what is left in store for the rest of my Orayta experience.