



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Jesse Marcus



Everyone at Orayta is really starting to feel and embrace the positive effects that this year has had on them. For me personally, one strong area that stands out is that I have become more soulfully connected and in tuned with the understanding of what *Hashem* truly is; being able to see *Hashem* more in the world; and to feel a connection and sometimes a communication with *Hashem*.

This year I have really come to view every human being as an aspect of *Hashem*, along with everything else in this world. *Hashem* is not a super power dwelling in the sky, rewarding people for good and punishing them for bad; rather *Hashem* is everything that was, is, and always will be in existence. This includes the physical world that we see day to day. We as people are not separate - rather we are a part of *Hashem*. I'm not saying we **are** *Hashem*, or **greater** than *Hashem*. Notice that I am not using the words "god" or "him" or "he" to refer to *Hashem*, because *Hashem* essentially cannot be represented by those terms. *Ha-Shem* = The Name, and *Hashem* is referred to this way because there really is nothing like *Hashem*; and there is no real way to describe *Hashem* as a single entity. *Hashem* is so much bigger than that, and those terms convey that the world is **disconnected** from *Hashem* and constantly in judgment. *Hashem* has the best intentions for every human being, and as far as Jewish practice is concerned, it appears that *Hashem* has "checklists" for each Jew. The reason it seems this way, is because it is really meant to convey the idea that everyone has a goal to get to their level of how to positively live, and we should always strive to reach that full potential.

With this outlook I have now, my *tefillah* is more spiritual and meaningful than it ever was before. In the past I *davened* because I thought it would look good to "god" and I need to impress "him." Now I *daven* for the betterment of my soul; and the prayer will get where it needs to go through the guidance of *Hashem*, who will also work with me to get through my personal struggles, and those of the world. *Tefillah* is also a great time to acknowledge with happiness all the blessings that *Hashem* has brought us personally, and to the world.

Before I came here, I knew that the “god” taught to me in Jewish school was exactly the true *Hashem*, and I thank Rabbi David Aaron for teaching and clarifying many of these concepts I wrote about; helping me understand, connect to, hear and see *Hashem* every day.