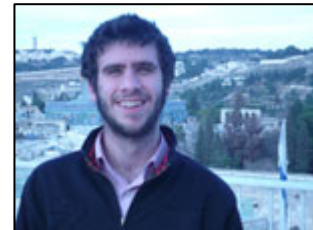




A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Jared Schmidt



Closing Time

With four weeks left to go, Orayta students are striving to maximize their time. This year has been very challenging in many ways; Rav Binny pointed out one aspect of this a few times. He told us that when he was in yeshiva, there were distractions, to be sure. But if you wanted to get to the game at 3:00 A.M. Saturday night which was being shown far away from yeshiva, the choice to stay in that night was made all the easier in direct proportion to the distance you needed to travel. By us, the game is a fifteen minute walk away. Not to mention the laptops in the dorms, with all the T.V. shows and movies we love; the phone calls which reach half way around the world in seconds; the video communication possible with our families. Our challenge is that we never really left America; and we're headed back there in a short four weeks.

The challenge is that four weeks out of a lifetime seems so insignificant; does it really matter how we spend this time? But what of the *Gedolim* who finished *shas mishnayos* over the course of a few years, just in the two or three minutes they spent waiting for the bus? The challenge is how little we think we can do, versus how much we really can do; the gap between our perception of our potential - and the reality.

It would seem that we can't afford to be totally present in what we're doing now; we have to prepare the way for ourselves in this world. College, jobs, social networks; how do we balance these against the need to refine ourselves as people, to develop our minds; how do we combine these with the need to explore and delve deeply into our Torah?

Amidst all these challenges we strive to use our time effectively, to believe that we have something valuable for which we should spend our time. We strive to get ourselves to sit those extra few minutes and learn a little extra; we strive to show up on time in the morning, to remind ourselves that yes, there is a point and that yes, these are our lives; not the lives of others. We are responsible. There is value. We strive to push ourselves as individuals,

and to push ourselves as a yeshiva. As we plan for our futures, we strive to remember our present moment, and our present experience. What will we take with us? How will we be different when we leave than when we came here? What are we taking with us and bringing into our worlds at home, into the world at large? Where we go from here starts with what we each do this moment; and this moment, we're in Yeshiva and we're learning Torah. It's what we do here; and it's who we are.

The future is unknown, and we must prepare for it; but as long as we're here, I hope we remember what a beautiful opportunity we've all been given; and I hope we use it very, very well.

Shabbat Shalom,
Jared (and all of Orayta)

Jared graduated from The HHNE (Hebrew High School of New England) in West Hartford, Connecticut. He has studied violin for the past 9 years, composes his own music and is the un-official musician of Orayta. He was in the break dancing club at school and is also a black belt in Tae Kwan Do.

Jared's favorite part of Orayta is: "The healthiness of the perspective being taught here. How all the parts that before seemed to be in conflict, have now harmonized with each other to form a perfect world view.

I also love the Gemara shiurim, the guys in it and the dynamic between us. And I love the dynamic of having the back and forth and slowly pushing through new levels of understanding."

After Orayta, Jared will be attending Yeshiva University.