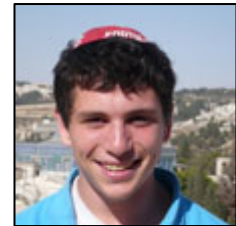




A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Kobi Weener



On most days Orayta students have the same schedule. We wake up; learn for the majority of the day; then go to sleep - to start the routine all over again. However, this week we had the opportunity to break from our learning and spiritual growth to help people. The students, accompanied by several Rabbis, went to a soup kitchen in Jerusalem to give our time preparing food for people who do not have the money to support themselves.

We went bright and early, and after a short video about the program were put immediately to work. Some students helped out in the office, while others, including myself, were put in the kitchen peeling and cutting potatoes. The atmosphere was amazing - the kitchen was filled with unselfish people all wanting to help out as much as possible. You know the saying: time flies when you're having fun; well, time flew and before I knew it 11:30 had rolled around and we had probably cut upwards of 100 pounds of potatoes. The feeling of accomplishment was a feeling I could not describe. I felt that I had done a great deed, while feeling bad for the people put in this situation.

After we took a small lunch break, most people went back to the kitchen. Some students, on the other hand, stayed to help distribute bags of essential items to some of the people who had lunch at the kitchen. We were told to stand near a big bucket of bags with the food, take the tickets handed to us, and give each person a bag of food. I have never felt so overwhelmed before. Every person was pushing, as if the bags were going to disappear. I felt like these people knew that this bag was what was going to allow them to keep on trucking for another week.

On the way home from the soup kitchen I was thinking about the morning I had just helped with, and I felt joint feelings of satisfaction and hunger. It was satisfying to help the soup kitchen and the people make their only hot meal of the day as smooth as possible. On the other hand I was hungry to help more often, because I felt that I enjoyed helping the soup kitchen, and I enjoyed making these people happy even if only for one meal.

I had been wondering when our opportunity to do charity work was going to present itself; and I am glad that it did. It was one of the most meaningful and labor intensive mornings since I arrived at Orayta, but I knew that I had just done one of the best acts of kindness that I could have. Actually, I think that this morning has contributed to our spiritual growth just as much as our learning! This experience has changed my outlook on the year ahead, and I hope to be able to work at the soup kitchen many more times throughout the year.