



STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Mendel Osdoba



Coming into this year I had a million questions. After living in the Holy Land for almost 3 months many of those questions still remain, but one huge question truly bugs me every single day: Where has time gone?! It is hard to believe that *Elul Z'man* is in the history books and, as arctic conditions begin permeating the Old City, *Choref Z'man* is commencing.

Although Orayta rarely takes time away from *shteiging* in the *Beis Midrash*, every once in a while we are forced to peel ourselves away from our *Gemaras* and *Chumashim*. Last week we were fortunate enough to partake in an incredible two-part *tiyul*. Shortly after sunrise we popped out of bed (just like every day) and boarded a southbound bulletproof bus. The first leg of our trip was a tour of the *Netivot* Air Force Base in the *Negev*. At the base we were given an informative presentation on the behind-the-scenes action, the airplanes, and everything in between. After that we actually boarded a fuel plane and were able to see all the contraptions and gadgets that enable the flight crew to control every action of the plane. Following our up-close and personal tour we were lucky enough to actually fly it! (Just kidding) Instead, we took part in a dedication ceremony for a new medical building on the base. This seemed like more of a familial type event because one of our very own students, Jacob Lowenstein, was recognized on behalf of his family for their charitable donations to this noble cause.

For many the end of the day might have come at this point, but at Orayta the party never stops. Our next stop, *Chevron*, provided the students with a very meaningful and emotional experience. We were fortunate enough to tour the holy city, guided by Rabbi Simcha Hochbaum, one of the Jewish residents of *Chevron* today. We went to many holy sites, such as the *Tel Chevron* excavations; the *Avraham Avinu Shul*, where we saw a 500 year-old *Sefer Torah*; and the *Chevron* Museum, where we witnessed the tragic account of the 1929 massacres. Along the way we heard many amazing stories of perseverance, will-power, and commitment to *Chevron* and the Jewish right to inhabit the second holiest city on Earth.

The culmination of our trip was certainly *Ma'arat HaMachpela*, the burial site of our patriarchs and matriarchs. One could feel the holiness in the atmosphere as the prayers of the Jewish nation brought merit to the *neshamot* of our ancestors. It was truly an incredible experience.

On the way back to yeshiva we even took a pit stop to *daven maariv* at *Ke'ver Rachel*, whose *yahrzeit* was earlier in the week. By the time we arrived back at our dorms everyone was exhausted, yet every single person felt a sense of pride towards the Jewish people who have fought for our right to exist, past and present. Overall, it was a fun-filled, educational, insightful, and emotional day - one that I hope to never forget.

I am so grateful for all the *tiyulim* Orayta takes us on. They give us the opportunity to develop relationships with one another, the land of Israel, and its rich history. Every single experience on these trips truly enhances our learning and aids us in ultimately becoming a 'light unto nations.' On behalf of the Orayta student body, thank you to all those who put unimaginable amounts of time and effort into these fantastic adventures. It truly makes a difference.

May our *Torah* learning be elevated through our love for the holy land of Israel, and through the relationships we build along the way.

Shabbat Shalom!