



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Zach Morrow

Its 00:30 in the morning and The Old City of Jerusalem is still filling with a wide variety of people. Various groups of school children, high school students, Post high-school year programs, and other tourist groups, filter in through the city's, tight security waiting in crowded lines to get to the *Kotel Ha'Ma'Aravi*. The school children come from all over *Yerushalayim*, the high school, and post-high school students, from all over Israel, and the tourists from both North and South America, Europe and Asia are in *Yerushalayim*, considering themselves lucky if they manage to make it to the outer courtyard of the *Kotel* plaza. Making it to the actual Wall is a whole other story - one of my friends won a bet that night because she managed to get close enough to touch the wall. Living in The Old City has been an experience in itself, the ability to walk on top of stones that my ancestors walked on is mind-blowing. Earlier in the evening we took a walk through *Ir David*, the old city of David, the original *Yerushalayim*, to the house of our ulpan teacher. Walking among the places that my ancestors lived has put a whole new light into my perception of Israel. It is moments like this that bring me back into the moment, fortunately or unfortunately, I have become very comfortable with this magical place. It has become very easy to lose the perspective that we have lived here for two thousand plus years. However, the faces that I don't see everyday, the visitors to this place, my home, are filled with awe and wonderment as they walk through the city. I love that when someone asks me where I live I can tell them "*Ani Ba'ir Ha'Atika*" (I'm in The Old City).

Sukkot break starts this week and there is little more that excites me than the prospect of two weeks to explore Israel. All of us have put together various plans that take us from Eilat to the Golan to Tel Aviv and the Kineret. Many of us are staying in The Old City to experience Sukkot by the Kotel. Others are heading to Tzfat, all for the sake of finding a spiritual experience, which in Israel is not in short supply.

To share a little Torah, last week's *Parsha Va'Yelech*, deals with the issue of Moshe's death and his prohibition to enter the Land of Israel. There are many issues with the parsha ranging from how Yehoshua is supposed to take control of the nation of Israel, to its strategic location with the *parsha* before, *Nitzavim*. The part that bothers me is how Moshe, who's been hanging out with the same people for 20 years, meandering through the desert, counting the years before he could enter the land, is somehow able to not fight with G-d over his right to enter the land. Of anyone in the Torah there is not one individual who deserves that privilege more than him. Imagine that you are already in your old age, and you begin the long journey through the desert, after dealing with the Pharaoh, being chased by his army, then fighting

various nations, getting a set of commandments, breaking them, and then bargaining on behalf of the very people that will cause you to wander in the desert for longer due to the Sin of the Spies! I don't think that is something that I could deal with. Clearly the Torah is trying to teach us something. Maybe what we need to get out of this is that there are things in life, choices we have to make that go completely against everything that we have worked towards, for what might seem like an incredibly long period of time, but in reality it is very little in comparison to what Moshe went through. I hope that I, as well as my classmates, may be blessed with that ability, to overlook what we see as a challenge and look at the bigger picture and grow through that.