



פרדס חיים

Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies Student Journal
5782 / 2021 - 2022 | Volume 2





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Reset, Renew, Refresh

Students' Reflections on *Shmittah*

Faculty Editor / Rav Raḥel Berkovits

Student Editor / Shoshana Gottlieb

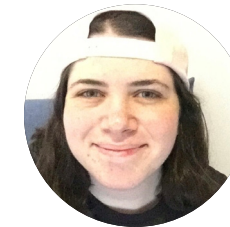
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About Raḥel

Rahel Berkovits has been teaching *mishnah*, *talmud* and *halakha* at Pardes for over twenty-five years. Rahel lectures widely in both Israel and abroad especially on topics concerning women and Jewish law and a Jewish sexual ethic. She is the Halakhic Editor and a writer for *Hilkhhot Nashim*, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance's Halakhic Source-Guide Series published by Maggid Books. Rahel is a founding member of Congregation Shirah Hadasha, a *halakhic* partnership Synagogue, and serves on their *halakha* committee. In June 2015, Rahel received Rabbinic Ordination from Rabbis Herzl Hefter and Daniel Sperber. Rahel loves playing basketball, especially with Pardes students.



About Shoshana

Shoshana Gottlieb is a writer, playlist maker and future educator from Sydney, Australia. Her thirteen years at a Chabad high school filled her with lots of religious neuroses, as well as a love for Torah. She spends arguably too much of her time watching and talking about films, as well as imagining which Jewish stories would make a good movie. A soon-to-be graduate of The Pardes Day School Educator Program, Shoshana hopes to become a Jewish Studies teacher some time in the near future, and foster a passion for *Tanakh* in a new generation of students. Her mother thinks she would've made a great doctor.

From the Faculty Editor

תורה נקראת חיים
שנאמר (משלי ג:י)
עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה

ותומכיה מאושר

אבות דרבי נתן לד:יא


The Torah is called Living,
as it says (Proverbs 3:18),
“It is a Tree of Life [etz hayyim] for
those who hold fast to it,
and all its supporters are
happy [mushar].”
Avot D’Rabbi Natan Chapter 34:11

The *midrash's* comparison of Torah to a living, growing organism emphasizes that its body is always expanding—creating new roots, branches and leaves as more people study it. Just as the tree provides people with oxygen that sustains us, so too is Torah the breath and life of the Jewish people. We chose to name our Student Torah Journal *Pardes Hayyim* as a play on the notion of Torah being an *Etz Hayyim*. Our student body is made up of a diverse group of individuals, and each one brings their own unique voice as a learner and reader of Torah. Using art, poetry, music, and creative writing, they have each shown how they hold fast to Torah and how it is alive and growing in their lives today. Together, these living trees of Torah create the orchard that is Pardes. Their roots gain substance and sustenance from the same soil, but each tree develops in its own distinct fashion.

This year, Shoshana and I selected that the Journal should focus on the Pardes theme of the year "Reset, Renew, Refresh: *Shmit-*

tah & Us". All the entries to the journal focus on this same theme and what unfolds is multiple ways in which the same concept can be read, understood, and discussed. Each contributor interacted with the concept in a different manner and from a different perspective, and the Torah texts that inspired their works are presented at the end of each piece. Although normally the physical orchard would lay fallow during the Sabbatical year, our orchard of living Torah is vibrant and growing and all should feel free to come and enjoy it.

We hope you will find *osher* as you wander through our orchard and encounter the living Torah of our Pardes learning community.


Raḥel Berkovits
Faculty Editor

From the Student Editor

When I took a gap year after high school, my mother told me to savor it; she said that I’d never get a chance like this again, to live in Israel and study Torah, away from the grind of real life. Not only that, but I’d never experience another *shmittah* year as a local. Little did she know that I’d be doing exactly the same thing, almost ten years later at Pardes. Little did she know that it would be another *shmittah* year.


I find the idea that Torah study is leisurely, or a break from real life, very amusing. Learning Torah from 8.30am-5pm every single day (often studying further into the night) is not just challenging, it’s physically, emotionally and spiritually grueling. Torah study, as the Pardes faculty can tell you, is a full time job.

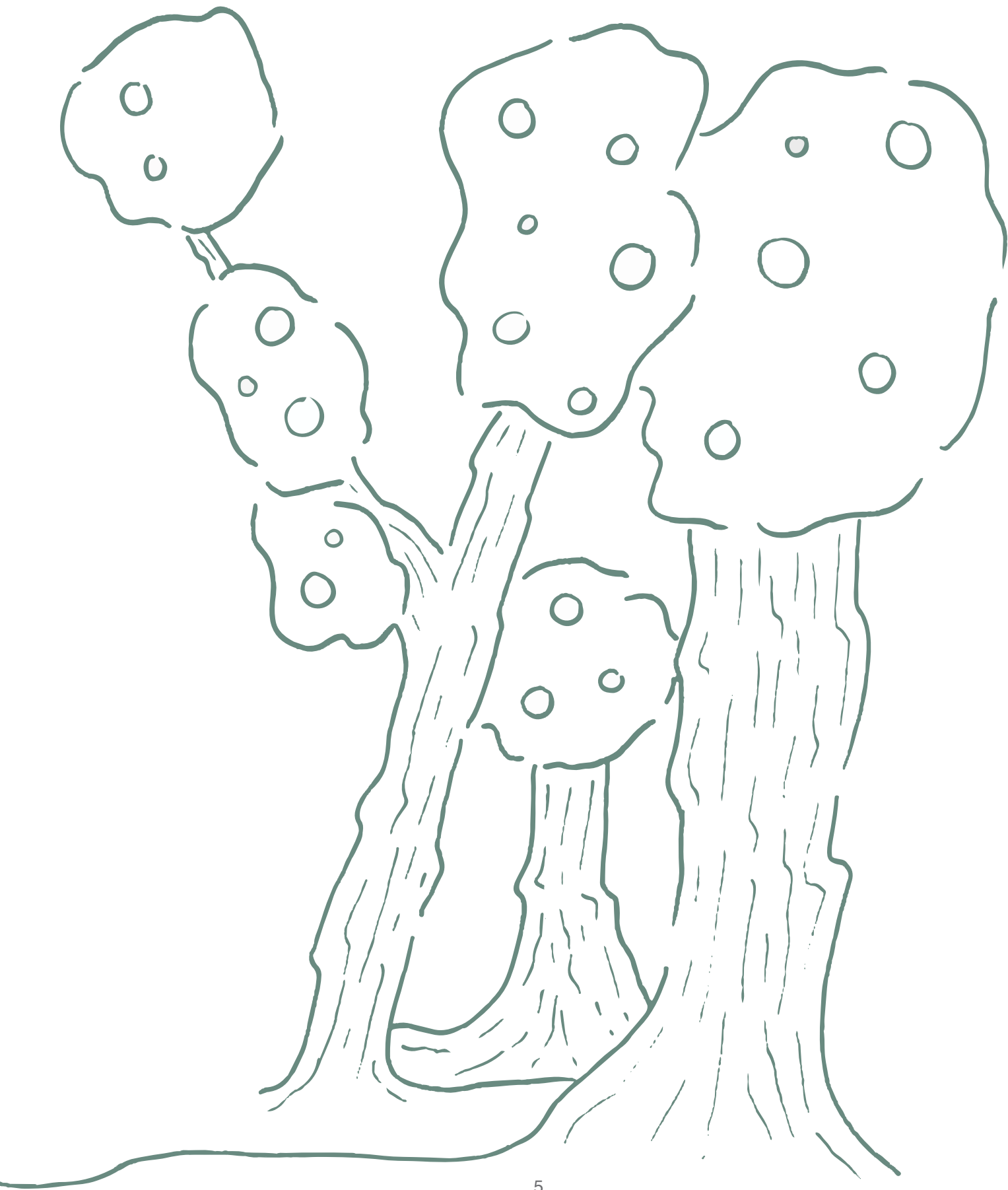
So how do we, the students of Pardes, achieve rest when our lives revolve around the work of Torah? In his seminal work *Shabbat HaAretz*, Rav Kook says that “life can only be perfected through the affording of a breathing space from the bustle of everyday life.” To observe *shmittah* in a *Beit Midrash* setting means finding breathing space in the text we study, the silences between words, the gaps in the story where we insert ourselves.

It’s no coincidence that this, the second edition of the *Pardes Hayyim*, is made up of creative pieces. The very nature of ‘rest from work’ is that we have more time to dedicate to our creative pursuits, the hobbies that we unwittingly put aside when we work full time jobs. When we abstain from work, we have time to draw, to write, to compose. Our journal is exactly that: proof of our rest, a testament to our *shmittah* year, filling in the gaps of Torah with words of our own.

I commend the students who bare their souls in these pages, who invite us into their creative spaces, and allow us to understand them—and our Sacred texts—with just a little more clarity. And I hope, above all else, that your own *shmittah* years are filled with creativity, passion, and rejuvenation.

B’virkat Torah V’Chesed,
Shoshana


Shoshana Gottlieb
Student Editor



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For You Are Strangers

By Claire Abramovitz

I'm going to be honest, I've never found *shmittah* particularly interesting. Living most of my life outside the Land of Israel, I only had a vague sense of it. I knew in the barest of terms it meant people would start posting online about Israel buying their oranges or whatever from some other place. That was it. Foreign fruit—the extent of my *shmittah* knowledge.

Now I've done far more learning about *shmittah*. And I'm still going to be honest. I don't all care that much. I've heard about it from environmentalist angles, anti-capitalist angles, *halakhic* angles, hippy dippy spiritualist angles—a range of things. You'd think one would appeal to me. Ironically, I feel as though this year (being, in fact, a *shmittah* year) the entire concept has been worked to death for me.

So what about the loopholes? So what about if you place your plant on this type of thing you can still tend to it? So what if the land gets sold to whoever and so congrats keep farming away at those sweet, sweet, profitable cucumbers. It seems as though we've come up with so many loopholes for getting around *shmittah*, we've almost missed the point entirely. Where's the rest? When does the land actually get to lie fallow, because nothing seems all that different to me.

Then again, I'm not a farmer. What do I know?

I'm also most of the time terribly bored by the ins and outs of *halakha*. Blasphemy. How dare.

My eyes glaze over at the prospect of hearing about *heter mechira*. I've selectively deleted all other phrases from my brain. Wow

what a *dvar*. Will you continue to complain? A true descendant of the children of Israel. You could have just left me in Egypt, right?

I can't help thinking of the role of God in all this.

What does a complete rest for God look like? We are told that *shmittah* is a complete rest for the land, and then the *pasuk* adds a complete rest for God. (*Vayikra* 25:4)

The *pasuk* ties the land and God together. They both need time to lie fallow.

You know how every seven years we get new skin cells or something? I'm thinking a lot about that too. Seven year cycles and what it means to let ourselves go.

Only it seems like a world in which rest is made out to seem weak, to seem lazy. You can rest when you're dead. Well the land will outlive us and so will God.

Later on in the chapter God says “for the land is Mine; for strangers and dwellers are you with me.” (*Vayikra* 25:23)

What does it mean to be created in the image of God and be told we are strangers to our own creator? How painful to hear that in a way we are unrecognizable to that which put us here on Earth.

Why would God tell us this now? Why would we be reminded this jarring fact after being given the commandments for *shmittah* and *yovel*?

I don't know much about God. Evidently, we're strangers. He's told us so himself.

We can talk about how ultimately there isn't enough time on Earth for us for God to really know us. We're simply passing through. And since we can never know God how can

we ever spend our one measly life getting it right. We can talk about how, again, the land originally belongs to God and here we are messing it all up. Here we all are needing to be told to give it a break.

But I think there's something profoundly lonely about God's statement here. God gave the land over to humanity, and in the Torah the Land of Israel to the Israelites (insofar as they are on their best behavior). God's major project was the creation of Heaven and Earth, the fashioning of the world. And then God created humans to help, to take the reins for a while. God has copyright claims to the land, but handed over his project to a trusted director—us. God puts His trust in us to take care of His work knowing that it might make us distant. God puts His trust in us knowing little can truly grow if He does not make strangers of us. The cost of God's faith in us is that we can never really know each other.

We're always striving to know each other; that's the human condition. That's the purpose of human kind. Perhaps we are strangers to the land, deep in the back of our minds contending with the fact that ownership is an illusion, that lasting claim to any part of God's Earth is ultimately false. The God who leaves us the land and returns to it every seven years calls us strangers.

But what of the workers in the field for the other six? What do they become to us when we are all given a chance to rest? Do we see the face of God in our fellow man during the six years we work the land or do we simply wait for God to return in the seventh to finally say, ah yes, here is The Lord?

God in heaven is a stranger to us. The God who formed the land we are strangers to is unknowable, yes. We don't know how and why He did it. We weren't there when the

stars and moon were formed, we weren't there when the waters were separated from the heavens, we weren't there when life was first breathed into a lump of clay and called human. We don't remember our births, we can never fully know our mothers and fathers. It is so easy to be a stranger with the world, to be a stranger with God. We pass by hundreds of people in the streets and only see what's next on our agenda. Get to the bus. Get the keys out of your pocket. Cook a sad little dinner. Watch TV. Pay your bills. Go to sleep. Wake up. Work. Make a joke to a colleague at the communal microwave (score). Pack up. Get to the bus.

Oh I could talk endlessly about become strangers to the land, making all the land strange with our cities and our systems. But I want to talk about people. I always want to talk about people. Because the easiest way to become strangers to God is to exist without seeing God in every person around you. The people you love, the people you loathe, the people you'll see once riding by and never again.

Not to sound like Ferris Bueller, but if you don't stop and look around every once in a while, you'll miss it. You'll never really see the God who comes back to visit the land that He left so dearly in our fickle hands. You'll never see the God that came before your time or the God who will come after. Seven years have come and go and the cycle will repeat again and again and again. *shmittah* is about land, sure it's always been about land, it'll always be about land. On the surface. Just the topsoil.

But if we're thinking about what it means to let God return to the land, if we're thinking about what it means to step back, perhaps we can think about what it means to stop and take stock of the fact that we also dwell amongst God. We are reminded that we are

both strangers and dwellers with God. And we do dwell with God. The seventh year might remind us that to the world, to God on High, we are strangers, we are nothing, we are as unknowable to each other as I am to the fly buzzing near my window trying to come in. But the *shmittah* year also reminds us that if not the land, it is with God that we truly dwell. We dwell with the old woman the floor below and her nurse who thanks me too many times when I simply hold the door open for the both of them. We dwell with the guy who nearly ran us over with his car even though we had the right of way and we dwell with him even as we flip him off—a zealous God. We dwell with peers who enlighten us, with our parasocial love of YouTubers and celebrities. We dwell with those who work to take our rights away; we dwell with those who fight tirelessly to make the world a more just place. We dwell with God in everyone, and sometimes we love God. Sometimes we really don't.

So fine. Even if we have all the loopholes in the world to keep growing our sweet, sweet profits—I mean fruit—if we don't step back. If we don't just stop. If we don't allow ourselves to step back from those six years of repetition, we'll burn out fast. We'll always be strangers to God, and that will never not be painful. Our detachment from the land, the reminder that we are but strangers upon it, should only serve to remind us that the only cure to alleviate the pain of not knowing God is finding Him in the form of another. The only antidote to the inevitable distance between us and our Creator is by stepping back and taking a good hard look at the God that dwells in us as much as we dwell in Him.



About Claire

Claire is a second year student and Talmudic Literature Research Fellow at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies. She originally hails from the greatest center of Jewish life outside Jerusalem—Boca Raton, Florida. She holds a Bachelors degree in English, Theatre, and Jewish Studies from Oberlin College. She is a published author and playwright. Her play *To Rot in His Bones* was a semifinalist in the 2021 Jewish Plays Project Annual Jewish Playwriting Contest. In her spare time she writes poetry, song parodies, jokes, keeps a list of fake band names, creates custom crop tops, and makes soup for thirty despite being only one gal. Her dream is to open a soup restaurant/comedy club called *The Laughing Stock*.

Lie Fallow
By Claire Abramovitz

I've kept growing, who's picking?		You see, I've not ever let my head hit the pillow and
I bet you can already tell, but		sunk, deep, I mean deep, into rest
I got picked last	A lot	I don't let myself lie fallow
		Not my body
A year to lie fallow		Not my heart
But keep going		Not my mind
Keep going		
Keep GOING	I think I'm gone?	I had a nightmare the other week. I mean a real nightmare. No one was trying to kill me. I've had those. The clearest nightmare I can remember—well one of the clearest—it was the 40s. It was Europe. My father and I were in a basement. Packed in with dozens of other Jews. It was a basement. There were bombs exploding all around us. It was a basement. I guess it looked like a gas chamber. My father and I were there. The worst nightmares I've ever had are about my father. I am always afraid for my father's life. I clung to him in that dream, in that basement that wasn't a basement packed up against dozens of other Jews in Europe in the 40s. How can I lie fallow when generations I never lived are still screaming within me. Anyway
A year to lie fallow, NOT a year to disappear		
A year to lie fallow	But God	
How I wished for a harvest	God	
Lie fallow		Anyway
Lie fallow		
Lie down	Rest	ANYWAY, I had this nightmare the other night, right. This nightmare where I was in class, Howard's class (hi Howard) and he surprised us with a final exam (please don't get any ideas Howard, I have other dreams I'd rather see come true). Everyone else in the class finished in an hour. It took me
I don't know the meaning of the word		
I've not rested a single day in my life you see		

three. I cried the whole time. Howard said it would be easy if we studied. I didn't know I was supposed to study for anything. It took everyone else one hour. I woke up crying. I think I failed Howard's exam.		turned me to smoke he did
		We all called it love
I always feel like everyone else but me was told to study for something. Like everyone's gonna get to where they want to go in an hour without crying a tear. And it's gonna take me three hours and a whole bunch of hyperventilation.		Someone called it soul mates
		Lie fallow
		Lie fallow
		Lie fallow
		Don't plant the seeds just watch them grow
I'm a lily of the valley		
I'm a thorn in my side		He didn't plant anything in me. There was nothing growing. Let's call it a miracle. Nothing got planted. And nothing grew. And I lied and lied and lied fallow.
I'm gonna grow into something but I don't know what		
There's a beloved		But if you plant a seed when you aren't supposed to, you can't hear the land screaming. The seed will just grow. That's the way life works. Laws are only as sacred as you make them. Love is only as sacred as you make it.
He was in the past		
A new one in the future		
I thought it was a time of reaping		
I thought it was a time of sewing		Who will tell you STOP? Who will put up its hands and raise its voice?
	But God	Not the land.
I've been told to lie fallow		But God
His kisses were sweeter than wine		
Only he got drunk on me		It doesn't matter. Because I, unlike the land, told you to leave me be anyway, I screamed. I told you to leave me be. But nothing grew. Nothing grew.
So drunk he couldn't tell		
Where the lilies stopped		
And the thorns started		Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto le'olam va'ed
I looked for him a long time		
the one I loved		I had a timeline. New Years seemed real-

istic. By Purim I was certain. Well here we are. Fallow, fallow, fallow. Still lying. Lying constantly. It's not good for man to be alone. Woman never even got the chance. Maybe it's good for woman to be alone. Or not man to be alone. I don't know. Anyone who wasn't a man never got the chance to Be. Only God, I suppose, has ever gotten to Be. I had a timeline. Now I have a therapist. And I am just trying To Be. There's no Hamlet question here. I tried Not To Be for a long time. I failed Howard's nightmare exam. I thought I had a beloved. I thought I was going to marry him. I thought a lot of things. I thought he had just made human mistakes. Well, Cain killed Abel. That was a mistake.

O Daughter of Jerusalem
O Daughter of Jerusalem
Will you please just relax?

Will you stop looking for him through every bus window
Will you stop seeing his face in every man's dark eyes
Will you stop and let yourself be alone?

Lie fallow
You can still grow
Lie fallow
What does it look like to let yourself just grow

No plans
No harvests
Just milk and honey and time
A time for everything

Everything under heaven
Even love
Even you
Especially love
Especially you
O Daughter of Jerusalem
There is a time for you
O Daughter of Jerusalem
You will bound over the hills
Into the arms of a new beloved

O Daughter of Jerusalem
O you teary eyed child of God
It is only from decay that new life grows

lie fallow, lie fallow
it's natural, it's good
some things
just need to rot

Shemot 23:10-11

וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע אֶת־אֲרָצְךָ וְאַסְפֹּתָ אֶת־בְּרִיאֹתָהּ:

Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield;

וְהַשְׁבִּיעַתָּ תְּשַׁמְטָנָהּ וְנָטְשָׁתָהּ

but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow.



About Claire

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Release
By Lexie Botzum

you see she never really rested,
because some people never came.
we stood all together, made a final
pact, and then they planted their feet
in the earth on this side of the river
bank—the earth that never rests, the
earth that always bears the weight of
people working like it’s worship.

we stood on the other side carrying
a torah we could never live in full,
we spread our bare toes in the mud
and called it conquest called it
claiming and grew so deeply rooted
that we couldn’t even imagine
what it would be like,
to let go.

if this land isn’t ours why can’t
we wrench ourselves from it.
once we’ve been uprooted we can’t
meet the dirt in a way that doesn’t
feel like a wound. we have buried
the needy in the earth below, and
aboveground everything blossoms;

she never really rested,
because we never really let her.
when we worshiped the soil we
lived in and gathered sacred greedy
handfuls it felt so good, to touch

something so holy and so unalterably
ours—you never let us believe in
abundance so we nourished ourselves
on desperation and grasping. we never
learned to let go. we never learned to
let go.

Leviticus 25:23

וְהָאֲרֶץ לֹא תִמְכַּר לְעֻמָּתָהּ כִּי־לִי הָאֲרֶץ כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשָׁבִים אֲתֵם
עִמָּדִי:

*But the land must not be sold beyond re-
claim, for the land is Mine; you are but
strangers resident with Me.*

Avot 5:9

גְּלוּת בָּאָה לְעוֹלָם עַל עֹבְדֵי עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְעַל גְּלוּי עֲרִיזוֹת, וְעַל
שְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים, וְעַל הַשְׁמָטָה הָאֲרֶץ

*Exile comes to the world for idolatry, for sex-
ual sins and for bloodshed, and for [trans-
gressing the commandment of] the [year of
the] release of the land.*

Rashi on Deuteronomy 15:4

אִפְסָ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה בָךְ אֲבִיוֹן. וְלִהְיוֹן הוּא אֹמֵר "כִּי לֹא יִחַדֵּל
אֲבִיוֹן?" אֵלֶּה בְּזִמְנָן שֶׁאֲתֵם עוֹשִׂים רְצוֹנוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם אֲבִיוֹנִים
בְּאַחֲרִים וְלֹא בָכֶם, וְכִשְׂאִין אֲתֵם עוֹשִׂים רְצוֹנוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם
אֲבִיוֹנִים בָּכֶם

אִפְסָ כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה בָךְ אֲבִיוֹן

HOWBEIT THERE SHALL BE NO NEEDY
AMONG YOU — But further on (v. 11) it
states, “For the needy shall never cease
out of the land”! But the explanation is:
When you do the will of the Omnipresent
the needy will be amongst the others and

not amongst you, if, however, you do not
the will of the Omnipresent, the needy will
be amongst you (Sifrei Devarim 114:1)

Akedat Yitzchak Vayikra #69, Parashat Be-
har

זוה כי במספר שבע שני העבודה ושביעת העיר את
לבנו והשמייע לאזנינו כי לא שולחנו הנה להיות עבדים נמכרים
לאדמה כי אם לתכלית אחר נכבד ונפלא ממנו ושלא נתכוין
בעבודתה רק לכדי צורך אוכל נפש ושאר הספוקים בעוד שאנו
משתדלים בהשגת התכלית ההוא העליון

*This is because the number seven—the
years of work and the sabbatical of the sev-
enth—enlighten our hearts and are sound-
ed to our ears that we were not sent here
to be slaves sold to the land; rather, we are
here to serve another more honorable, mar-
velous purpose, and that we should only in-
tend in our work to provide the necessary
food and other needs to sustain us as we
work towards this higher cause.*

Bamidbar 32:1-2,5

וּמִקֵּנָה רַב הָיָה לִבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וּלְבְנֵי־גָד עֲצוּם מְאֹד וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת־דָּאָרְץ
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־דָּאָרְץ גִּלְעָד וְהֵנָּה הַמְּקוֹם מְקוֹם מִקְנֶה:

*The Reubenites and the Gadites owned
cattle in very great numbers. Noting that
the lands of Jazer and Gilead were a region
suitable for cattle,*

וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן
וְאֶל־נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר:

*the Gadite and Reubenite [leaders] came
to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chief-
tains of the community, and said,*

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶסְמְצָאנוּ חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ יְיָ אֶת־הָאֲרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְעִבְדֶּיךָ
לְאֶחְזָה אֶל־תַּעֲבֵרנוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן:

*It would be a favor to us,” they continued,
“if this land were given to your servants as
a holding; do not move us across the Jor-
dan.”*



About Lexie

Lexie grew up in Allentown, Pennsylvania,
and has learned with the Pardes Kollel for
the past two years. She graduated from
Johns Hopkins in 2019 with a degree in
Political Science and International Studies,
and has been learning and teaching in Je-
rusalem since then. She’s passionate about
Torah, poetry, fantasy novels, and justice
work. When not learning Torah or doing ac-
tivism, Lexie can be found trapped in her
home with a cat lying on top of her.



Growing Vine
By Valerie Brown

Artist Statement

This year hasn't been particularly restful. As a second-year student in The Pardes Day School Educator Program and a third-year Pardes student, I've been trying to fit in a lot: finishing a graduate degree, sharpening my *gemara* and *tanakh* skills, crossing things off my Israel bucket list, recording a weekly *parashah* podcast, spending time with friends, and having quality time with my partner. Despite all this, or perhaps because of all this, my time at Pardes has been a tremendous growth opportunity for me. This piece was created for my Hebrew College final project, to represent my growth as an educator.

I came to Pardes with many of the qualities that make a great educator, and PEP has helped to train those aspects around a strong foundation of pedagogical knowledge—just as the vine grows around a trellis. This particular vine was inspired by my first apartment in Israel, where I had an ox-eye daisy vine on my *mirpeset* [balcony]. The vine wound around a curved trellis in its pot, and then onto the railing of the balcony itself. These two structures have an apt symbolism as the two types of learning I have experienced at Pardes, as a part of the PEP cohort and the work I've done in classes learning Torah, *talmud*, and other *sifrei kodesh*. Thus, the trellis and balcony are collaged using my notes from my Pardes classes. Each of the blooms on the vine represent a core learning experience, collaged with images that evoke their significance.

My *shmittah* year may not have been restful, but the opportunity to dedicate it to the study of Torah has been rejuvenating, enough to get me through the next seven years.



About Valerie

Valerie Brown (she/hers) is finishing her third year at Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, having completed The Pardes Day School Educator Program and The Experiential Educators Program. Prior to moving to Jerusalem, she lived in Washington, D.C. and worked at Jewish Women International managing marketing and communications. In another life, Valerie studied Design and Art History at UC Davis, and then spent a year working as an au pair and designer in Paris, France. Favorite activities besides studying Torah include listening to podcasts, making art, and reminding her two kittens that she rescued them from a dumpster.

Shnat Shabbaton

Words by Rav Avraham Yitzhak Kook Music by Isaac Mayer

♩ = 108 Dm F

Shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi, shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi,

5 Gm Dm/A A7 Dm A

shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi la - u - mah v - la - a - retz.

9 Dm F

Shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi, shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi,

13 Gm Dm Bb7 Dm/A A7 Dm Fine

shnat shab-ba-ton mukh - ra - hat hi la - u - mah v - la - a - retz.

(♩=♩.)

17 Gm C7 F Dm7/F

Shnat she - ket v - shal - va, shnat shiv-yon u - mar-go - a',

21 Gm Gm6 F/C C7 F

shnat shab-ba-ton yih - yeh la - a - retz, shab - bat la - do - shem.

25 Gm C7 F Dm7/F

Shnat she - ket v - shal - va, shnat shiv-yon u - mar-go - a',

29 Gm Gm6 Dm Bb7 Dm/A A7 Dm D.C. al Fine

shnat shab-ba-ton yih - yeh la - a - retz, shab - bat la - do - shem.

שְׁנַת שְׁבַתוֹן מְכַרְחַת הִיא
לְאֻמָּה וּלְאֶרֶץ.
שְׁנַת שְׁקֵט וְשָׁלוֹם,
שְׁנַת שׁוּיוֹן וּמִרְגּוּעַ
שְׁנַת שְׁבַתוֹן יְהִיָּה לְאֶרֶץ
שְׁבַת לַה'

A year of rest is necessary
for the people and the land.
A year of quiet and contentment,
A year of equality and relaxation
A year of great-sabbath it will be for the land,
A sabbath for the CAUSE.

Shnat Shabbaton By Isaac Gantwerk Mayer



About Isaac
From a family of musicians, Isaac Gantwerk Mayer (PEP Cohort 22) believes that creative art is one of the most powerful ways to get in touch with the Divine. He composes music and poetry in Hebrew and English.

To listen to Isaac's piece, scan the QR code below:



eishet noah
By Shoshana Gottlieb

i couldn't sleep last night.
rain poured down
in angry torrents
apparently i get seasick.

i couldn't sleep last night.
the animals finally grew quiet
but my mind
refused to do the same.

i miss my mother.
i miss my sister.

i couldn't sleep last night.
my mind, she thinks about dry land
my stomach refuses to settle
my heart, it beats too fast.

i couldn't sleep last night.
i wonder if i will ever sleep again
when we return to the ground
and i regain my name
and my husband can rest and plant his
grapes.

i cannot sleep on this boat
and yet noah, he snores softly beside me.

Vayikra 25:23
כִּי־לִי הָאָרֶץ כְּיֹגְרִים וְתוֹשְׁבֵי אֲדָמָה עִמָּדִי
for the land is Mine; you are but strangers
resident with Me.

*I was struck by the reasoning behind Yovel
and shmittah as given in Parashat Behar
—we are always strangers in our land, it
belongs to God and God alone. The story
that immediately came to mind was that of
Noah: who better highlights just how much
power God has over the land of this earth?
This poem is from the viewpoint of Noah's
wife, who is never named. She not only loses
her land, but she herself is lost, enveloped
into her husband's story. But when all
is said and done, after their stressful rest,
they return to land once more.*



About Shoshana
Shoshana Gottlieb is a writer, playlist maker and future educator from Sydney, Australia. Her thirteen years at a Chabad high school filled her with lots of religious neuroses, as well as a love for Torah. She spends arguably too much of her time watching and talking about films, as well as imagining which Jewish stories would make a good movie. A soon-to-be graduate of The Pardes Day School Educator Program, Shoshana hopes to become a Jewish Studies teacher some time in the near future, and foster a passion for Tanakh in a new generation of students. Her mother thinks she would've made a great doctor.

A Soul's Restful Adventure

By Hannah Greenberg

The world swallowed me whole
In the darkness, I found you
The breath of creation gave us life
Life of wonder, of paradise, of love, of rest
Love that warms me from fingers to my toes
Love that opens my heart and hands to you
Love that allows me to find calm with you

Taken from my rib,
Created in a divine image
A helper
A friend
A guide
We walk from the garden together
The beginning of a journey
Creation of love

I reach out through the forest to find you
among the trees
Eating the fruits of paradise
Our eyes opened to the world around us
Cast out from paradise to wander in a bar-
ren wilderness

Our love alone cannot protect
Our love alone cannot shield
Our love alone cannot save

Our love supports
Our love uplifts
Our love guides
Our love connects
We built a place for ourselves in the vast
unknown
A place for our love to rest and rejuvenate
A place to become whole again

Scars on my side remind me from a time
before
A time without
A void, darkness

The love of another in a relationship and self-love are two sides of the same coin. Upon reading Sarah's poem "True Rest" (page 29) I could not help but imagine what love and rest may look like in a relationship where two individuals truly support each other. Relationships can leave us scarred, and sometimes we need a break to give our own self, self-love. When a relationship between two is positive for the individuals, rest and rejuvenation can be found within the relationship itself. This poem guides us to see two such individuals, who through their love, find rest, rejuvenation, and adventure.



About Hannah

Hannah Greenberg is from Yardley, PA, and has recently completed the Pardes Day School Educator Program where she earned a certificate in Advanced Judaic Studies. She also earned a BS in Elementary Education and her Master's in Education in Exceptional Children and Youth with a concentration in Autism and Severe Disabilities from the University of Delaware. This upcoming school year she will be teaching second grade at Beit Rabban Day School in NYC.



The Passage of Time
By Sara Laya Heller

Artist Statement

The passage of time,
The passage of growth

תעבר זמן, מעבר צמיחה

Color gradient of growth. Dark green to light green to the yellowing dryness of summer and brown earth renewing or resting.

Times of 'ugliness' or rest periods might not be pretty, but they allow for the regrowth to come back vibrant and strong and even more beautiful than before.

Let time sweep things away, the growth, the renewal. Let it flow like a river and wash over you as it will get there to the time of new growth.



About Sara Laya

Sara Laya Heller was born and raised in Silver Spring, MD, and now calls Jerusalem home. After making *Aliyah* in 2010, she attended Michlelet Emunah College for Women in Jerusalem with a focus in Art Education. She has been a youth educator and art teacher in many settings, including Yeshiva University's Counterpoint summer camp for at-risk Israeli youth, Camp Tizmoret Shoshana – a summer arts camp for ultra-Orthodox girls, Midreshet Amalia Middle School in Jerusalem, Amit Banim Boys High School in Maale Adumim, and Evelina Tehila Girls High School in Jerusalem.

As this past year's Arts and Culture Fellow for PCJE, Sara Laya explored pathways of combining Torah study and self-introspection through the Arts. Her dream is to create an art studio that brings color and life to the page of Jewish text and the canvas of the self.

Only Holy Things

By Audrey Honig

I'd never write a poem about napping,
the way daylight swirls and pauses.

Cause I've always claimed I couldn't fall
asleep
with the lights on. *Too much to be awake
for...*

Some days, there's an emptiness that
dresses up as "tired,"
so I get a cappuccino cause I can order
that in Hebrew.

My lips sink into the foam and moments
later,
my bones are hollow, buzzing. Don't know
how people drink this every day.

Whenever I'm awake, the algorithm re-
minds me what to buy,
who's on vacation, all the poems I didn't
write this month.

Bored, I let my eyelids shut, letting go of
this hour-
What I could make of it, buy from it, give to
it.

I like to call this move a power
nap but I don't set an alarm,

I thank the One for this blessing in my
dreams-
let go of another hour just cause I want to.

As my eyes open to orange light, I pour
myself a Coke.

Bubbles jump up to the surface, happy to
see me.

I smile and remember that I'm holy.
Only sacred things get to rest like this.

*"A holy spirit will be poured out upon all life;
'it will be a year of complete rest for the
land—Sabbath of the Lord.'*

*In this year, the divine character within
the people will be revealed in its glory."*
*Rav Kook, Shabbat HaAretz, Introduction
#14*



About Audrey

Audrey Honig is from Elmhurst, Illinois and is a Year Program student at Pardes. She graduated from Kalamazoo College with a degree in English and Religion. Next year, she is so excited to start Rabbinical School at HUC. Fun fact: She also plays the flute and accordion!

True Rest
By Sarah Klein

This year will finally be a true rest.
A rest from being cultivated.
A rest from carving space. A rest from critiques.
His words the past six years have dug into my soul, leaving wounds that will never fully heal.

This year will be a true rest.
A rest from communication. From social media.
A rest from my heart being tugged.

It'll be a true rest.
A time rejuvenate.
A rest from dreaming of the future I thought we would have.
Can I really forgive all of his debts? What if that will cause me significant loss?

It's time for me to be free.
To be free from my heart being a slave to his needs, not getting what I needed.
Freedom to find happiness without him.
Freedom to change and be me without hiding my flaws.
I am not dependent on him for my happiness. That is what freedom is for.

I let go of being dependent on him.
Whose am I now? Am I mine? Or G-d's?

In the previous years, I planted the seed that there would come a time, inconceivable to me, that would be without him.
I would come into my holy, promised land alone and independent.
And when I did, I would be okay.
And I am. I am here.

I have prepared. I have planned.
I rose to the occasion.
I didn't shut down or flee.
I let go of myself and my control.

And now is my *shmittah* year.
To reset for my next cycle of love.
I'll let my heart lie fallow and not be cultivated this year.
But I'll consume what my heart naturally produces without tending to her.
I'll welcome G-d's presence around me.
I have trust it'll work out.
This year will finally be a true rest.

I let go of him.
Release him. Release myself from his grip.
I was clinging to him with the illusion that he was mine.

Vayikra 25:4

וּבִשְׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שְׁבַת שְׂבָתוֹן יִהְיֶה לְאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לֹה' שָׁדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תִזְמַר:

"But in the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath of complete rest, a sabbath of G-d. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard."

Vayikra 25:6

וְהִיתָה שְׁבַת הָאָרֶץ לָכֶם לְאֲכֹלָהּ לֶךָ וּלְעֶבְדְּךָ וּלְאִמְתְּךָ וּלְשִׁכְרֶךָ וּלְתוֹשֵׁבְךָ הַגֵּרִים עִמָּךְ:

"But you may eat whatever the land during its sabbath will produce..."

Devarim 15:2

זֶה דְּבַר הַשְּׁמִטָּה שְׁמוֹט כָּל־בַּעַל מִשָּׁה יָדוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשֶׁה בְּרַעְיָהּ לֹא־יִגַּשׁ אֶת־רַעְיָהּ וְאֶת־אָחִיו בִּיַּקְרָא שְׁמִטָּה לֹה':

"This shall be the nature of the remission: all creditors shall remit the due that they claim from their fellow..."



About Sarah

Sarah Klein is currently pursuing her Masters in Jewish Education through the William Davidson Graduate School and is a Second Year Fellow at Pardes. She is formerly a member of Pardes Experiential Educators Program. Sarah is an aspiring rabbi and educator, hoping to imbue Jewish education with spirituality and action. Sarah was previously a Program Director at various conservative synagogues in Michigan. In the Fall, Sarah will be attending Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies of American Jewish University in Los Angeles.



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By Meryl Salpeter

Artist Statement

Every seventh year, Jewish people living in Israel make a concerted effort to allow the land to rest. Spiritually, this is also a time for Jewish people to reflect on themselves and, in doing so, revitalize themselves in their various personal pursuits. To me, *Shmittah* feels like a moment of standstill; a time when we are given permission to slow down, to stop if we need to. This got me thinking about the home where I spent my summers growing up. My dad describes the town it's in as "the place where time stands still". He isn't wrong. While it has become more populated over the last few years, its general state has been the same for as long as I can remember. The quietness, the open space and solitude, the clean air and the nature all seemed like a foreign concept to a native Manhattanite. I never spent more than a weekend at a time there, until Covid hit in 2020.

All of a sudden, it was my new home. And while it felt strange at first—to live in a place that was always temporary, pristine and perfectly encapsulated—I quickly learned to love the timelessness of it. How I felt painfully my age and ten years old all at the same time. To be able to hold all of the memories and feelings of the house, while coming to terms with the new relationship I had formed with it. It was old, it was new, it was familiar and it was completely foreign. And within that physical space of confusion—of not knowing what to do with myself in the silence and expansiveness—I came to appreciate and even require it.

I feel like this is a very similar experience that we have with *Shmittah*. Without working the land and being able to rely on it for sustenance, we must rethink our relationship with it. What is it for? How do we live within this new framework of existence?

The need to constantly adapt, to throw ourselves in for a loop. But that chaos and uncertainty must be observed through pause instead of action. It can be very frustrating and uncomfortable.

This small watercolor pictures the front porch of my house, 157 South Country Road. The appreciation I have developed for it in the last few years is something I hold deeply, and was the first and only thing I could think about when contributing to this journal.



About Meryl

Meryl is a New York City native, in her second year at Pardes. She received her BFA in Fashion Design from Parsons in 2018 and briefly worked as a swimwear designer before moving to Israel. While not at Pardes, Meryl enjoys spending time with her family and friends, reading, drawing, exploring Jerusalem and contemplating whether she should buy ice cream or not (she usually does).