

IMPACT OF PARDES ON STUDENTS' JEWISH IDENTIFICATION & INVOLVEMENT

A Research Study of Pardes's Israel Beit Midrash Programs

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Version: March 3, 2025



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"Pardes is helping me think about how I want Torah to be alive and relevant for me again in my decision making—realizing that the gym cannot answer all of life's questions."

"I feel I now have a much fuller understanding of the breadth of identities and practices that being Jewish includes and a glimpse of the depth that Jewish learning has to offer."

"Having left the ultra-orthodox community, I didn't think I could ever find a community that would fully accept me for who I am and where I'm at. Pardes showed me that I do belong as a Jew, exactly as I am."

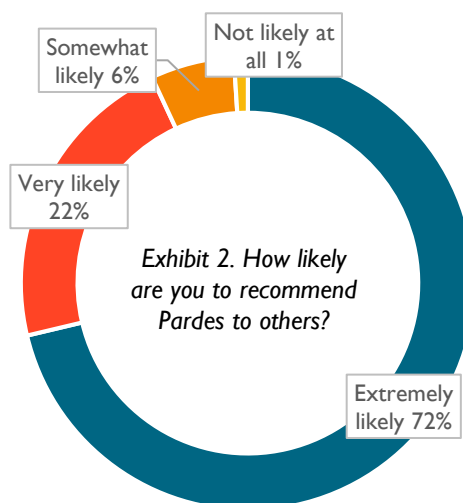
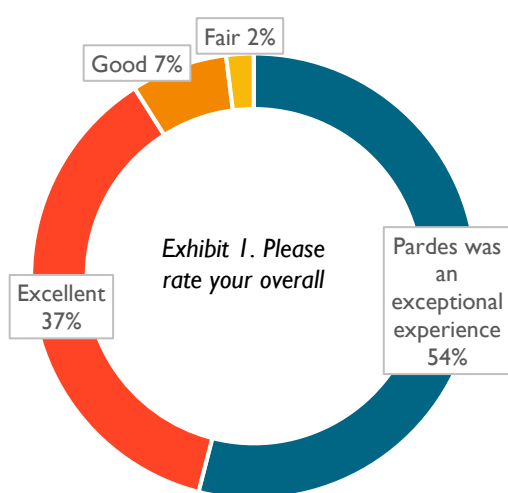
INTRODUCTION

The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies was founded in 1972 as a path-breaking model for beit midrash learning, that is open, gender egalitarian, inclusive of diverse religious and non-religious students, all participating together in one Jewish learning community based in Jerusalem. Pardes’s mission is “to cultivate a life-long love of Jewish learning, the Jewish people and Israel.” Learning is an immersive experience of Jewish community and intensive Torah study in the Pardes Beit Midrash. The Pardes experience plays out between learners in the context of their cohort, between learners and their teachers, with the broader Pardes community and experiencing life in Israel.

We ask: **How does the experience of studying at Pardes contribute to students’ Torah literacy and engagement with Jewish life? How does Pardes inform participants’ perceptions of themselves as Jews, their connection to Israel and desire to contribute to the Jewish People?**

A Baseline of Excellence

This report documents the contribution of studying at Pardes to students’ Torah literacy and engagement with Jewish life. Our focus is not program evaluation. It is clear from the survey results upon which this report draws that students are happy, indeed effusive about their Pardes experience. Almost all (91%) state that their Pardes experience was “exceptional” (54%) or “excellent” (37%) (exhibit 1). Likewise, almost all (94%) are “extremely likely” (71%) or “very likely” (22%) to state that they will recommend Pardes to others (exhibit 2).



Tailored for Diversity: Fostering Torah Literacy, Jewish Engagement and Peoplehood

This report focuses on Pardes’s achievement of its mission. Pardes offers an immersive environment for Torah study and Jewish communal living in Israel that successfully caters to the diverse Jewish motivations and aspirations of its students. Regardless of their reasons to attend, and the particular Pardes program they choose, students report increased Torah literacy and application of that learning to their lives. They deepen their self-understanding of themselves as Jews, intensify their engagement with Jewish community, deepen their connection to Israel and increase their desire to contribute to the Jewish People.



METHODOLOGY

This evaluation focuses on students studying during the 2023/4 academic year or summer of 2024 in three Pardes frameworks.

1. The **Pardes Summer Program** - a concentrated three-week experience
2. The **Pardes Beit Midrash Program** – study at Pardes for an academic year, with some students opting for shorter periods
3. The **Pardes Educator Programs** which include two groups:
 - ❖ The Pardes Teacher Fellowship - a fully funded, two-year teacher training program that aims to produce skilled and knowledgeable Jewish Studies educators to work in North American Jewish day schools.
 - ❖ The Pardes Experiential Educators Program - a fully funded 10-month fellowship that prepares educators and leaders to inspire a love for Judaism in camps, schools, campuses and communities across North America and Europe.

Exhibit 3: Response Rate

Program	Survey	Response Rate	# respondents	# students
Beit Midrash (One Year Program)	Start	82%	41	50
	End	94%	47	50
Pardes Educators	Start	81%	13	16
	End	75%	12	16
Summer Program	Start	92%	60	65
	End	85%	69	81

A total of 114 students answered the start of program surveys and 128 the end surveys

Students responding to the survey are a diverse and representative group in terms of their gender identification, age and childhood Jewish education.

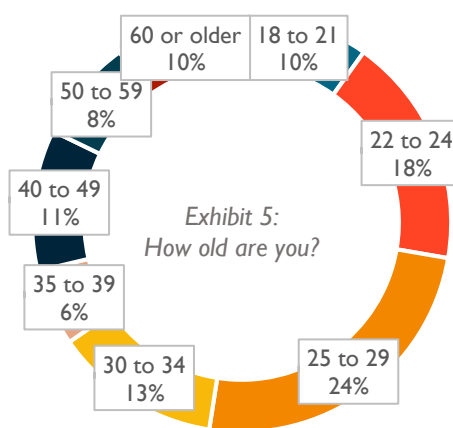
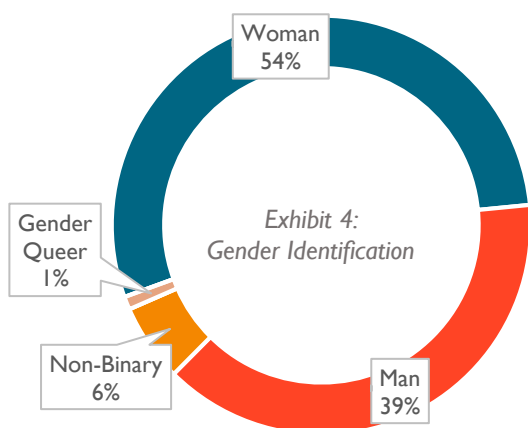


Exhibit 6: What is the main source of Jewish schooling you received until the age of 13?

	Childhood Jewish Schooling	
	Until Age 13	High School
Day school	39%	26%
Hebrew or religious school, that met twice a week or more	23%	10%
Hebrew or religious school, that met once a week	15%	21%
Other	0%	9%
None	22%	35%
Total	100%	100%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Torah Study at the Core

The foundation of Pardes's success lies in its Beit Midrash, where students engage intensively with Jewish texts under the guidance of master educators. Torah study is central to students' motivations, with nearly 90% citing it as a primary reason for attending Pardes. The experience fosters a lasting desire to continue Torah study in pluralistic settings. 84% of participants report that study at Pardes increased their desire to continue engaging in Torah study. This commitment extends to applying Torah learning in various aspects of their lives, from ethical decision-making to professional practices.

Diverse Pathways of Growth: Pardes provides a learning environment capable of attracting and supporting a wide range of student profiles, each reflecting distinct motivations for attending Pardes:

- ❖ **Here to Learn:** Focused on deepening textual knowledge through rigorous engagement with Jewish texts and learning under the guidance of master educators.
- ❖ **Learning to Integrate:** Seeking confidence to apply Jewish values and practices to their lives.
- ❖ **Finding My People:** Motivated by a desire for Jewish social connection and Peoplehood, prioritizing forming Jewish friendships with others who are interested in Torah learning and experiencing living and learning in Israel.
- ❖ **Finding Myself:** Exploratory and broad in their motivations with a focus on personal practice, ethical decision-making, and understanding of the relevance of Jewish values to their lives.

Pardes's educational environment allows these diverse students to each find their pathway to Jewish growth while learning in community together.

Strengthening Jewish Commitment: Pardes programs significantly enhance participants' Jewish engagement and leadership aspirations. By the program's end, the percentage of students identifying as "committed and working to advance Judaism/Jewish life" rose from 38% at the start of program to 54%. At program's start, 10% were not in a place of "Jewish commitment" either stating that they are "exploring" or "tentatively committed." This drops to 3% by the end of their time at Pardes. Many also reported increased comfort participating in Jewish rituals and leading discussions on complex social issues. These outcomes underscore Pardes's ability to foster meaningful connections to Jewish life.

Deeper Connections to Israel: Pardes's setting in Jerusalem and its Israel education programming plays a pivotal role in strengthening students' connection to the country and its people. By the end of their programs, 69% felt a deep connection to Israel, up from 46% at the start. Those answering that they feel connected to Israel "to an extent" or less, drop from 26% to 9%. The integration of Israel-focused programming with the rhythms of life in Jerusalem creates a holistic learning experience that deepens students' Jewish collective identification.

Professional and Personal Impact: Pardes equips participants with tools to integrate Jewish values into their personal and professional lives. The Educators Program is transformative, with 86% of participants expressing high motivation to serve as a leader for the field of Jewish education by program's end, up from 38% at the start. Across all programs, students reported growth in leadership skills, networking opportunities, and the ability to bring a Jewish lens to their professional endeavors.

Key Recommendations

To maximize impact, the report suggests:

1. Expanding tailored programming to meet the needs of diverse student archetypes.
2. Enhancing recruitment strategies by targeting profiles such as focused learners, Jewish seekers, leaders, and community builders.
3. Continuing to expand post-program engagement to sustain alumni involvement and leadership.

Conclusion

Pardes offers an educational experience which enriches students' lives and strengthens their connection to the Jewish people and Israel. Learning in Pardes's Beit Midrash, in community, while living in Jerusalem enables students with diverse needs to deepen a sense of Jewish belonging and leadership. The result are graduates equipped to lead meaningful Jewish lives and contribute to their Jewish communities and the Jewish People.

INTENSIFIED JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

The foundation of the Pardes experience is the Beit Midrash, where students engage deeply with Torah study under the guidance of master educators. For all students Torah study is central to their motivation to attend Pardes, with 89% citing “deepening my knowledge of Jewish text” as a key factor for their decision to apply to Pardes and 86% emphasizing the importance of “experiencing personally meaningful Torah study.”



TORAH STUDY AND ITS IMPACT

When asked at the end of their Pardes program: “Has your Pardes experience affected your desire for any of the following?” almost all focus on the desire to continue Torah study with 84% stating that Pardes has contributed to their desire to continue to engage in Torah study, and 74% wanting to do so in pluralistic settings (exhibit 7).

The shared desire to continue studying Torah integrates with other contributions, including:

1. Applying Torah learning and/or Jewish values into to one’s life
2. To enhance different areas of one’s personal and/or professional life.

Exhibit 7. Has your Pardes experience affected your desire for any of the following

<i>My Pardes experience has contributed to my desire to</i>		
Core outcomes for almost all touch on continued desire for Torah study.	Continue to engage in Torah study	84%
	Continue to engage in Torah study in pluralistic settings	74%
And in some combination to apply Torah learning and/or Jewish values to one’s life.	Explore big questions through Torah learning	65%
	Understand the role of Jewish values in my life	59%
	Integrate Torah into my life	56%
	Use a Jewish lens to consider ethical questions	54%
Increased desire for areas touching on professional and family life, halachic practice and social justice vary by students and their interests.	Pursue a career with a Jewish focus	41%
	Apply Torah to my professional work	41%
	Explore the role of Halacha in my daily life	48%
	Use Torah to guide my personal life decisions	37%
	Raise a Jewish family	39%
	Intensify my pursuit of social justice from a Torah-informed perspective	27%
	Pursue a graduate degree with a Jewish focus	24%

Students detailed “an especially formative moment” during their time at Pardes. Examples of their answers provide insight into the depth and breadth of the Pardes experience. The following themes emerged: (1) Opportunities for advanced text study, (2) learning with master teachers, (3) building connections and experiencing community support, and (4) leadership development and personal growth.

A Formative Moment

In thinking about your answers about your Pardes experience, please provide, in a few sentences, one example of an especially formative moment for you.

Advanced Text Study

• "Spending time in Advanced Talmud study was an excellent experience. Overcoming fears of engaging in Aramaic and learning important phrases common in Mishna was a great moment for me."

Master Teachers

• "My talmud shir with Rahel Berkovits was very meaningful. I never thought talmud study would feel like a spiritual pursuit."

Community and Support

• "The way the community came together after October 7th - by cooking us meals, checking in on each other, making sure everyone had Shabbat plans, etc. - really informed my experience this year and made it possible for me to stay."

Leadership and Personal Growth

• "I think some of the most formative moments were the most challenging. I had to learn to be a leader in a context I didn't know I'd ever be in. There was a conflict between me and another student that affected a group I was running, and I had to really step up, show humility, and put the group above myself."

JEWISH COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The combination of immersing oneself in Torah study and life in the Pardes community while living in Israel feeds a desire to commit to one's Jewish life and contribute to the Jewish People (exhibit 8).

- ❖ By program's end, 54% of participants state that they are now “committed and working to advance Judaism/Jewish life” versus only 38% prior to entering the program.
- ❖ At program's start, 10% were not in a place of “Jewish commitment” either stating that they are “exploring” or “tentatively committed.” This drops to 3% by the end of their time at Pardes.

Exhibit 8: Start and end of program answers to: In thinking about your involvement with Judaism or Jewish life, which of the following best describe you, today?

	Start	End
Committed and working to advance Judaism/Jewish life – I work as a professional or volunteer to adapt Jewish culture and civilization to our society	38%	54%
Committed and working to involve others – I am committed personally and want to engage others, in order that they will become more strongly connected to Judaism or Jewish life	29%	17%
Committed personally – I am totally committed to continuing my personal engagement with Jewish life	22%	26%
Tentatively committed – I will likely continue to be involved with Judaism or Jewish life in the future, but I'm not 100% sure	3%	2%
Exploring – I am actively exploring my relationship to Judaism or Jewish life	7%	1%
Curious – I think I want to learn more	0%	0%
Not interested - I am not interested in Judaism or Jewish life	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

DEEPER CONNECTION TO ISRAEL

Integral to the experience of study at Pardes is its setting in Jerusalem, offering participants the opportunity to integrate learning with the rhythms of Jewish communal life at Pardes while living in Jerusalem and experiencing Israeli society, through a robust curriculum of Israel focused programming.

At program's start 46% of Pardes students stated that the statement "I feel a sense of connection to Israel," describes them "to a very great extent," which rises to 69% by the end of their time at Pardes. Those answering that they feel connected to Israel "to an extent" or less, drop from 26% to 9% (exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9: Start and end of program answers to: To extent does the following statement describe you? I feel of sense of connection to Israel

	Start	End
Describes me to very great extent	46%	69%
To a great extent	28%	21%
To an extent	17%	7%
To a small extent	6%	1%
Not at all	3%	1%
Total	100%	100%

"Singing yerushayim shel zahav overlooking Jerusalem will forever be a special memory of my time spent at Pardes. For the first time all year, I didn't feel afraid of being demonized for feeling deeply spiritually, emotionally, religiously (ethnically?) connected to this beautiful place."

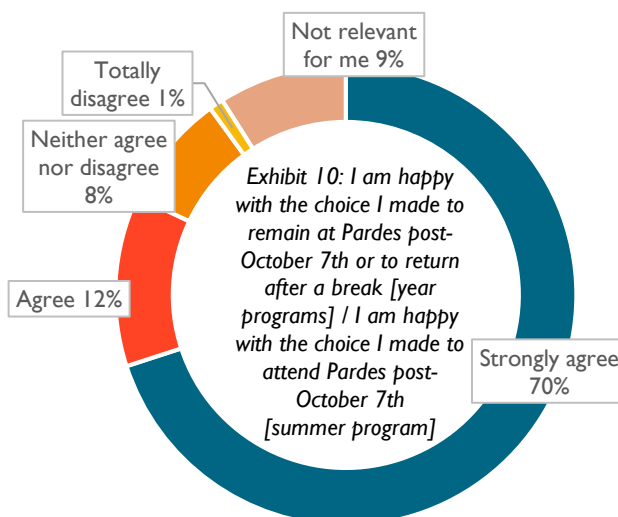
"The tiyulim that really brought Israel and Talmud stories to life."

"The teachers at Pardes belong to a segment of Israeli society that I previously had little contact with. It was meaningful to connect and learn."

"There was not one moment, rather ... more broadly, the entire Pardes community, staff and students were my family throughout my Israel experience and I feel so strongly connected to the people and the place."

A MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE IN POST-OCTOBER 7TH ISRAEL

Integral to the 2023/4 Pardes experience was the fallout from October 7th and the ensuing war. 82% of participants expressed satisfaction with their decision to remain in or attend Pardes, reflecting their resilience and commitment to Jewish learning and community (exhibit 10).



"It was wonderful to meet so many different types of people from so many different countries at a difficult time for Israel."

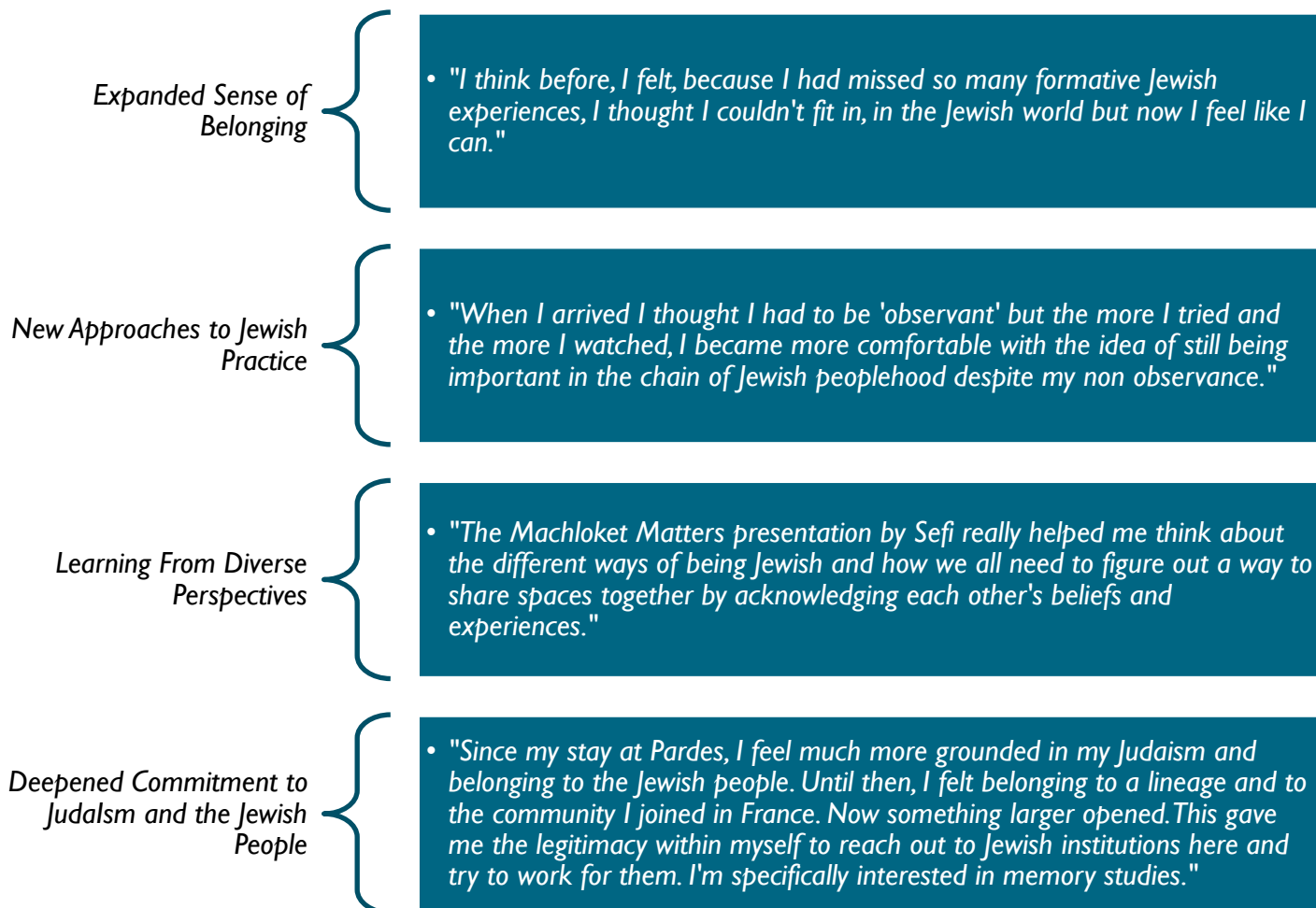
"Being here at this time with both Israelis and diaspora Jews was centering and meaningful. Every time I am in Israel I make connections with Torah and text, but even more so being immersed in study while I was here."

"After October 7th, Pardes staff both let us choose what was the best for us (to stay in Israel or to go home for a break or more) and provided intensive support to those who stayed. I think it would have been impossible to stay in Jerusalem at that time without Pardes support."

DEEPER JEWISH PERSPECTIVE AND GREATER ABILITY TO ENGAGE

When asked how Pardes affected their perspective on being Jewish, participants highlighted the following themes: (1) An expanded sense of belonging, (2) new approaches to Jewish practice, (3) the value of learning from diverse perspectives, and (4) a deepened commitment to Judaism and the Jewish People.

How has Pardes affected your perspective on being Jewish? In a few sentences provide an example of an especially meaningful contribution to you.



When asked for the top three ways that Pardes "contributed to the way you think about yourself as a Jew in this world," two main areas of contribution emerged (exhibit 11).

- ❖ **Engagement with Jewish Life:** Students report greater comfort participating in Jewish rituals, experiencing spiritual growth, and an increased ability to engage in meaningful discussions on contentious issues.
- ❖ **Sense of Collective Belonging:** Participants reported an enhanced sense of belonging to the Jewish people, increased participation in organized Jewish communities, and a deeper connection to Israel.

Exhibit 11. The following are ways in which participation in Pardes might have contributed to the way you think about yourself as a Jew in this world. Select up to three

Jewish Engagement	My feeling of comfort participating in Jewish life	50%
	My spiritual life	42%
	My feeling of comfort discussing contentious social issues with someone who has a very different opinion than mine	34%
	My feeling of comfort participating in a minyan (prayer quorum)	11%
Sense of Collective Belonging	My sense of belonging to the Jewish people	41%
	My participation in the organized Jewish community, meaning Jewish organizations and institutions in which I have an interest	40%
	My sense of connection to Israel	36%

DIVERSE PATHWAYS OF JEWISH GROWTH

An analysis of students' reasons for choosing to attend Pardes at the start of their programs shows four profiles or archetypes, each reflecting a distinct set of motivations to attend Pardes:¹

- ❖ **Here to Learn (27%):** These students focus on deepening their knowledge of Jewish texts.
- ❖ **Learning to Integrate (22%):** This group seeks confidence in applying Jewish values and practices in order to better integrate into Jewish community.
- ❖ **Finding My People (23%):** They are motivated by the desire for Jewish connection, prioritizing friendships with others who are interest in Torah learning, finding Jewish community and spending time in Israel.
- ❖ **Finding Myself (28%):** Exploratory and broad in their motivations with a focus on personal practice, ethical decision-making, and understanding of the relevance of Jewish values to their lives.

These archetypes illustrate Pardes's ability to attract students with different Jewish goals, and who are at various stages of their Jewish engagement. All share the desire for intensive Torah study, but otherwise arrive with different motivations and needs. The following are examples of the reasons, each group cites at the start of program for their reasons to attend Pardes.



The diversity of student motivations to attend Pardes, as demonstrated by the archetypes, show that the educational environment at Pardes, as envisioned by its founders, is able to provide all with pathways for Jewish growth in a manner suitable to them.

Outcomes

Here to Learn – arrive engaged, go deep. These students arrive at Pardes already engaged with Torah study motivated to deepen their learning with master teachers. They remain equally or somewhat more motivated at the end of their Pardes studies to continue their Torah study. The most notable impact for these students is their large growth from the start to end of program for their feeling of connection to Israel and the relevance of Torah for their professional decisions.

¹ The four groups are created by scoring each student on two dimensions for why they choose to attend Pardes: 1) Deepening: Connection to Judaism, community and Jewish life, and 2) Searching: Belonging and personal exploration. We use four to five survey questions for each dimension to create the score. Each student is categorized as "high" or "low" for each dimension.

In contrast to the focused outcomes of the “here to learn” group, all other Pardes students report wide ranging impact.

With a focus on Torah study almost all report a greater desire to continue to engage in Torah study in general and in pluralistic settings in particular. More than two-thirds also report Pardes affecting their desire to explore big questions through Torah learning.

Learning to Integrate – most intensive and wide-ranging impact: The students who arrive at Pardes seeking greater confidence and knowledge for integrating into Jewish life show the most intensive start to end of program growth for the largest number of areas, including feeling comfortable participating in Jewish community, feeling comfortable participating in a minyan (prayer quorum), the relevance of Torah for professional decisions and their feeling of connection to Israel. Three quarters of this group also report impact on their desire to participate in the organized Jewish community, understand the role of Jewish values in their lives, pursue a career with a Jewish focus, and explore the role of Halacha in their daily lives.

Finding my People: Students in this group report strong impact on how they “think of themselves as a Jew in this world”. They show large start to end of program growth for Torah’s relevance for their professional decisions, their sense of belonging to the Jewish People and their feeling of connection to Israel.

Finding Myself: The students who are on a personal search are the most likely to attribute strong impact on how they “think of themselves as a Jew in this world” with two-thirds stating to “a large extent” or higher. At least three-quarters of the group attribute impact of Pardes on their desire to understand the role of Jewish values in their lives, to use a Jewish lens to consider ethical questions, and “to use Torah to guide my personal life decisions.”

Exhibit 12: Has your Pardes experience affected your desire for any of the following? Select all that describe you.

		Here to Learn	Learning to Integrate	Finding my People	Finding Myself
Most important outcome for all	Continue to engage in Torah study	56%	93%	94%	100%
	Continue to engage in Torah study in pluralistic settings	50%	86%	100%	83%
Important outcome, except for “Here to Learn” group	Explore big questions through Torah learning	44%	79%	81%	72%
	Understand the role of Jewish values in my life	38%	71%	56%	89%
	Integrate Torah into my life	25%	57%	63%	72%
	Use a Jewish lens to consider ethical questions	31%	50%	63%	83%
	Pursue a career with a Jewish focus	19%	79%	38%	50%
Different outcomes per group	Apply Torah to my professional work	31%	50%	50%	28%
	Intensify my pursuit of social justice from a Torah-informed perspective	13%	43%	25%	50%
	Explore the role of Halacha in my daily life	19%	79%	56%	61%
	Use Torah to guide my personal life decisions	19%	50%	31%	72%
	Pursue a graduate degree with a Jewish focus	19%	43%	25%	28%
	Raise a Jewish family	13%	64%	38%	67%
	Other	19%	21%	13%	0%

TRACKS FOR ENGAGING WITH TORAH, JEWISH LIFE AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Pardes programs attract a diverse group of students seeking Torah learning to fulfill a range of needs and aspirations. The Educators Program, Beit Midrash Program, and Summer Program each offer unique attributes that influence why students choose to study at Pardes and the contributions these experiences provide. While these three tracks differ significantly in program length, intensity, and focus, they yield similar results across key categories outlined in this report. The following section highlights the distinct ways these programs differ in their structure and impact, showcasing the unique contributions of each track.

Immersive/Extended Experience with Jewish Community vs. Intensive Israel Experience

The Beit Midrash and Pardes Educator Programs stand out for providing students with an extended and immersive journey over the course of a year. The programs facilitate deep exploration of how Jewish values shape personal decisions, as well as acquiring knowledge and skills for living a Jewish life. Hence, students seeking to gain confidence and knowledge for integrating into organized Jewish life are far more likely to sign up for the year-long programs. At the end of their program the students are also far more likely to cite impact on their “participation in the organized Jewish community (Jewish organizations and institutions)” as one of the top three contributions of their Pardes experience “on how they think about themselves as a Jew in this world.” They are also far more likely to report developing long-lasting friendships and deeper formative relationships with Pardes faculty and mentors.

Summer Program students report an intensive experience of Torah study with a focus on the experience of living in Israel for three weeks. As a group they are less focused on gaining the confidence, knowledge and skills for living in Jewish community. Rather they are more likely to seek out a Peoplehood experience through the time in Israel with other students who are as interested in Torah learning as them. They are far more likely at the end of their program to cite a “sense of belonging to the Jewish People” as one of the top three contributions of their Pardes experience “on how they think about themselves as a Jew in this world.”

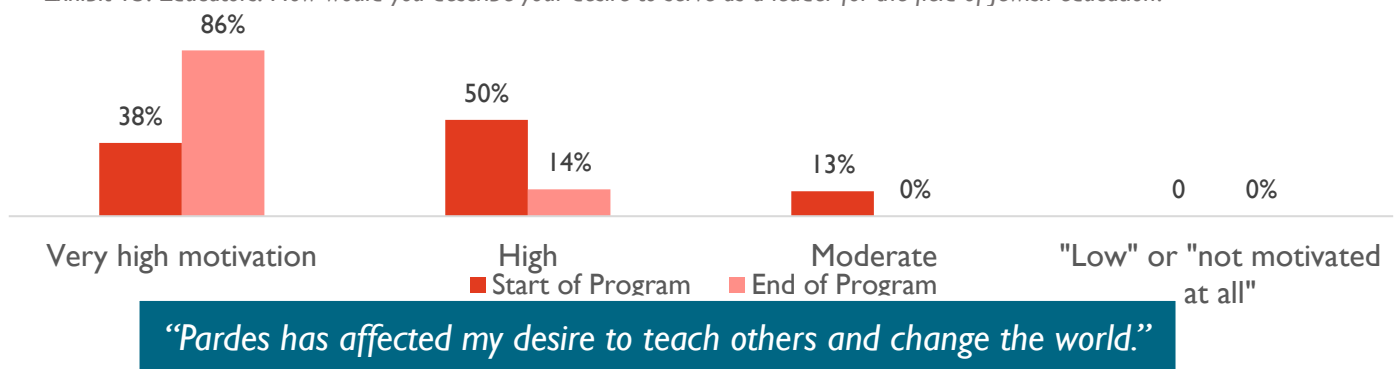
Professional Impact

In addition to satisfying the desire to engage with Torah Learning, Pardes also equips students seeking professional enrichment with the tools to bring Jewish values and a Torah perspective into their professional endeavors, also fostering personal growth and the desire to lead.

Students in the Pardes Educator Program show significant professional growth in most areas covered by the survey, with 86% expressing high motivation to serve as leaders for the field of Jewish education by the program’s end, a significant increase from 38% at the outset (exhibit 13). They report enhanced pedagogical skills, the ability to apply Torah learning to professional contexts, and deeper engagement with pluralistic Jewish education. Networking is another critical benefit, with participants forming connections with like-minded peers, through opportunities to connect with Pardes’s broader network.

Students in the Beit Midrash and Summer Programs who attend for professional enrichment also experience significant benefits, particularly in networking, professional abilities, and Jewish knowledge application. They too report strengthened leadership capabilities and a more profound vision for their work in Jewish communal and educational settings.

Exhibit 13: Educators: How would you describe your desire to serve as a leader for the field of Jewish education?



Professional Contribution of Study at Pardes

"Pardes completely shaped who I am as a Jewish educator. Every skill I have is thanks to PCJE."

"I feel like I gained some important qualifications and essential skills. And with Pardes and Hebrew College on my resume, I will also have a professional network to tap into."

"I think one of the greatest outcomes came from student teaching. Everything we learned was important, but student teaching taught me that I can actually do this. I can actually go to a school and work day in, day out and be a Jewish educator. I didn't know if I could before, and now I do. I got professional confidence."

"Feeling confident in my foundational understanding of the corpus of Jewish text and my ability to prepare and teach classes and shiurim upon returning to my job at home."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report is to tell the story of how studying at Pardes contributes to students' Torah literacy and engagement with Jewish life. Through the start and end of program surveys Pardes's students tell a story of significant impact on the manner in which they perceive of themselves as Jews, their desire to live a Torah informed Jewish life, while contributing to the Jewish People.

Impact of Study at Pardes

Torah at the Center: All participants attend Pardes out of a desire to deepen their knowledge of Jewish texts. The immersive Beit Midrash environment emphasizes rigorous, meaningful Torah study. After completing their programs students report their Pardes experience increasing their desire to continue engaging in Torah study in pluralistic settings.

Community and Setting: Pardes's location in Jerusalem creates an immersive environment for exploring Jewish community and life in Israel. Students experience a vibrant Jewish communal life at Pardes and Jerusalem, while engaging with Israeli society through Pardes's Israel focused programming and on their own. This combination of study and setting enhances their connection to Judaism, with almost all citing formative moments that blend rigorous intellectual engagement with personal discovery.

Integration of Jewish Learning and Jewish Values: Participants reported significant growth in integrating Jewish learning and Jewish values into their lives, including exploring big questions through Torah learning, a stronger desire to understand the role of Jewish values in their personal lives, and the desire to incorporate Torah study into their daily practices.

Peoplehood and Leadership: By the program's end, students are far more likely identified as "committed and working to advance Judaism or Jewish life." They report a heightened sense of belonging to the Jewish people, greater connection to Israel, and a desire for more active participation in organized Jewish communities.

Professional Impact: Pardes equips students seeking professional enrichment with the tools to bring Jewish values and a Torah perspective into their professional endeavors. They also express greater comfort with their own Jewish knowledge and ability to live a rich Jewish life, and thus serve as a model to their students.

Recommendations

The focus of this report is not program evaluation - hence, our recommendations do not focus on particular changes to any one program. Rather, we focus on Pardes's mission aligned accomplishment: **Pardes provides a transformative framework for Jewish engagement, offering an educational experience rooted in**

Torah study and Jewish community in Jerusalem that successfully meets the diverse Jewish motivations and needs of their students.

This narrative of diverse students engaging in a transformative Jewish experience offers Pardes a valuable opportunity to refine its recruitment, education, and fundraising strategies. By leveraging its strength in supporting the distinct learner archetypes outlined in this report, Pardes can further tailor its programs to meet students and alumni at critical junctures in their Jewish growth journeys. The *Here to Learn*, *Learning to Integrate*, *Finding My People*, and *Finding Myself* groups highlight unique priorities and growth opportunities that Pardes can address through targeted initiatives. These efforts not only enhance Pardes' ability to tell a compelling story of Torah study's transformative impact and the richness of pluralistic Jewish community in Israel but also position it to maximize its influence and reach. By emphasizing advanced textual study for those seeking rigorous scholarship, integrating Jewish values into practical leadership opportunities, fostering deep social bonds through immersive experiences, and supporting personal spiritual exploration, Pardes can further articulate its unique value proposition to new audiences.

Leadership as a Focus

The research highlights leadership as an area of importance.

- We learned of the transformation among participants in the Educator program, who come to see themselves as leaders within their field while at Pardes.
- As a group Pardes students are far more likely identified at program's end to be "committed and working to advance Judaism or Jewish life."

In particular, those students engaged in extended study or pursuing professional development, an emphasis on leadership cultivation and the integration of Torah study into both their Jewish communal and professional lives will equip them with the motivation and capacity to carry their learning forward in ways that benefit the broader Jewish world.

Leveraging these insights, Pardes can continue to attract, inspire, and empower the next generation of Jewish leaders, reinforcing its central role in shaping Jewish learning and communal belonging.

In Conclusion

Pardes provides a transformative framework for Jewish engagement, offering an educational experience rooted in Torah study and Jewish community in Jerusalem that meets diverse participant needs. Pardes enriches individual lives, enhances professional development and strengthens students' connection to Israel and the Jewish People. By fostering the desire for lifelong connection to Jewish values and learning, Pardes equips its alumni to lead meaningful, engaged Jewish lives.

By tailoring programs to address the unique needs of each student archetype, incorporating strategies to enhance commitment, and optimizing recruitment and alumni engagement, Pardes can further expand its transformative impact. These integrated approaches ensure that Pardes continues to lead in shaping Jewish belonging, fostering leadership, and strengthening community connections among its participants and alumni.

