



HAVRUTA

Dammara Rose Kovnats Hall (Summer '16, PCJE '16-'19)

"I am thrilled to be part of the Pardes Educators Program, where the high caliber of teaching stimulates deep learning and the heartfelt commitment of the teachers and support of the Pardes community inspires true spiritual growth."

Returning to Zion

New Faces
Old Issues

BEHIND THE SCENES:
HOW WE KEEP OUR
ORCHARD
BLOOMING

LEADING THE WAY
CREATING PURSUERS OF PEACE





Why Study Torah?

Many Jews see ancient texts as irrelevant to a post-modern world.

Antiquated. Misogynistic. Even immoral. And honestly, the classical texts of the Jewish tradition are very old, and often challenging to us, who seem to live in a very different world. But is our world really so different?

In certain ways, it is – computers, cell phones and industrial production have changed our lives. In other ways, however, the French proverb holds true: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Human nature and human relationships have changed little over the centuries. The most important issues in life are surprisingly not so different: the need to provide for oneself and one's family, love, and balancing concern for oneself with concern for others, to name a few. And while our reality is changed, the quest to find something beyond remains, whether we call it a spiritual journey or meaning-making.

Torah often challenges current beliefs, but that is good, too. *Foon a kashe, shtorbnisht*, goes the Yiddish saying: From a hard question, nobody dies. There is something frustrating, yet refreshing about having our assumptions questioned. Those who have experienced deep, intensive

Jewish learning know that these texts are rich, nuanced, and filled with thought-provoking ideas and arguments.

Studying Bible, Mishna, Talmud and Jewish Thought often puts us up against the bigger questions of life. It takes us out of our routine concerns and daily decision-making, forcing us to confront questions of morality and meaning. As many of us know from our Pardes experience, it has the power to transform. Unlike superficial learning, there are no pat answers and we are often left with more questions than answers. Yet we emerge fuller and richer for the process.

The study of Torah also connects us with the genius of the Jewish people. It connects us to our ancestors, ancient, medieval, and modern, even if that connection is to disagree with them. We become part of a chain, linked to a tradition and culture that spans continents and generations.

We join the "Jewish conversation" over these texts, adding our own post-modern understanding and our own *hiddushim* (insights). The many voices we encounter in Torah study can transform us to become more human, more moral, and more understanding, while strengthening our identity and making life more meaningful.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks wrote (The Times, UK, July 2004), "My life is a chapter in a book begun by my ancestors long ago, to which I will add my contribution before handing it on to my children. Life has meaning when it is part of a story, and the larger the story, the more our imaginative horizons grow." This is the Pardes mission: to open the doors of study as wide as possible, to help all Jews deepen their understanding of the tradition to which we are all heirs.

Dr. David I. Bernstein is the Dean & Interim President of Pardes.



EUROPE

Pardes has expanded its European Leadership Fellowship, for emerging European Jewish professionals and educators. Three new slots are being generously funded by YESOD and this year's larger cohort includes participants from Hungary, France and the UK. In addition to free Pardes tuition, fellows benefit from guest speakers, workshops and mentoring to help create rich Jewish learning in their home communities.

Our faculty has been teaching across Europe too, including in St. Petersburg, Budapest, Stockholm, Paris, Zurich and beyond – in community centers, synagogues, Moishe Houses, Limmuds and more!

Pardes student groups visited and taught in Turkey and Germany, and will be traveling to Poland in January for a meaningful trip to explore the 900-year history of the Jewish community.



In the UK, Pardes has continued to grow with three packed Pop-Up Beit Midrash events at JW3, the London Jewish Community Centre. **Nechama Goldman Barash** was a huge hit at *Limmud in the Woods* and at the *Open Talmud Project* and **Rabbi Alex Israel** visited a number of university campuses in the fall. And there's still Limmud UK before the year is out!

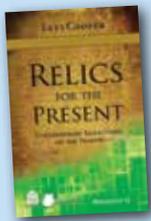


ISRAEL

A series of alumni gatherings brought together students from the last 44 years. In February, over 45 alumni from 1974-2015 attended a reception with **Rabbi Meir Schweiger**. Before Purim, **Debbie (Year '85-'86)** and **Eliot (Year '82-'83, '85-'86) Zimelman** hosted a Modiin event with over 20 guests, who enjoyed a shiur from **Rabbi David Levin-Kruss**. In May, **Dean Dr. David & Ricki Bernstein** hosted a reception for over 40 guests with a shiur by alumnus and former faculty member **Rabbi Aryeh Ben David (Year '79-'80)**.



This year, a new twist was added to the Summer Program. In addition to the three-week July program, a two-week August program was offered, particularly popular with those who could not take three weeks off from work. Over 120 students, from 13 countries, experienced an action-packed summer, in and out of the classroom, including 18 Hillel professionals who returned to campus inspired by their time at Pardes.



Congratulations to **Rabbi Dr. Levi Cooper** whose second volume of *Relics for the Present* was published earlier this year. Using Tractate Berakhot as the foundational text, Levi utilizes a unique combination of Talmudic wisdom, rabbinical commentary and Hasidic lore, to transform ancient teachings into inspiring vignettes for everyday life. Books available at www.korenpub.com.

This summer, faculty and staff participated in a transgender sensitivity training run by Eshel – an organization working to create community and acceptance for LGBTQ Jews and their families. The workshop offered practical tools to address the needs of students who do not identify with the traditional gender binary and provided a forum to share questions and concerns, learn a new language of gender inclusion and discuss the evolving nature of how we understand gender.

Pardes has been piloting lunch and learns in Israeli business centers. Pardes Israel Board Chair **Sherwin Pomerantz** initiated two events at Har Hotzvim in Jerusalem. In Tel Aviv, alumnus **Barak Platt (Year '90-'91)** hosted Pardes at Azrieli Towers with **Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth** who explored the tension between pursuing success in business and adhering to the principles of Jewish ethics.



NORTH AMERICA

This year, we launched a new venture to create grassroots-led, Pardes-style *batei midrash* across North America. Pardes will support local initiatives according to their needs, with the aim to provide open and inviting Jewish learning spaces, just like Pardes in Jerusalem. First stop, Brooklyn! In March, alumni and like-minded peers started the Brooklyn Beit Midrash: Powered by Pardes. The BBM has successfully established a monthly learning gathering with 40-50 people at each event.

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators is excited to announce the start of a pilot project focusing on middle school *tefilah* (prayer) in Jewish day schools.



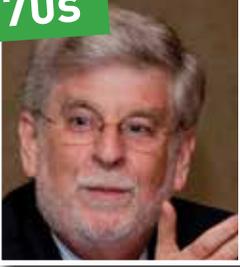
Thanks to a generous grant from the AVI CHAI Foundation, five schools in the Greater New York area will benefit from two years of training and implementation with the aim of addressing the challenges of *tefilah* and *tefilah* education in their schools.

Pardes taught over 200 classes in North America during 2015-16 of which over 100 were taught by **Rabba Yaffa Epstein**, North American Director of Education. These included 11 local Moishe House events, 3 Moishe House retreats, 7 Limmuds (including Mexico for the first time) and over 30 events on 26 campuses. Yaffa also taught at Hillel's Global Assembly, Educators' Kallah and Springboard Fellowship Training.

ALUMNI | *Check-in*

ACROSS THE DECADES

1970s



DAVID BARISH

David Barish (Year '72-'73) grew up active in the Reform movement and during an archeological dig in Israel, he heard about a new program called Pardes. David went from uncovering history to making it, by joining the inaugural class of

the world's first coeducational beit midrash. David reflects, "Pardes gave me direction that I didn't have. It helped me form a vision of Judaism that is pluralistic, traditional and based on the great literature of the Jewish people."

David returned to the US to complete his studies and went on to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati to earn his Ph.D. in Jewish history, focusing on the late antiquities period.

David left academia and joined the family business, Chair King – now the largest outdoor furniture retailer in the US. David remains deeply involved in Jewish life. "I am involved in anything Israel," David remarked. He is on the AIPAC National Council and on the boards of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the United Israel Appeal. He is also the Chair of HonestReporting.com. He is very proud of the fund his father created three years ago in memory of his mother, Shirley Barish z"l, at Congregation Emanu El in Houston, which sends teenagers to Israel every other year for free.

David and his wife Linda reside in Houston. They also own a home on Moshav Shores and enjoy spending time there.

1980s



LEWIS WARSHAUER

"I felt totally at sea." That's how Lewis Warshauer (Year '81-'82, '91-'92) describes his first encounter with Pardes, when he walked into Regina Stein's humash class. Lewis came to Pardes after working in real estate and realizing

that his Jewish education was sorely lacking. "Pardes gave me the entryway into all the Jewish study I've done since. I needed to be in an open environment where men and women studied together – which was rare at the time. The year taught me a lot: not just texts, but Jewish living."

After returning to the US, Lewis, together with fellow alumnus Phil Shaw, set up a US-based fundraising arm for Pardes. It has grown to be a core component of Pardes's global operations. Lewis was part of this growth every step of the way as Pardes's longest serving US-based board member. He stepped down this year after more than thirty years actively involved in Pardes leadership.

After a career on Capitol Hill, Lewis returned to Pardes. "I had decided to go to rabbinical school and needed preparation." Lewis has been an independent Jewish studies adult educator for many years and has a special interest in works of art that depict Bible characters and episodes. Lewis has taught classes at Congregation Habonim, Central Synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun and The Temple Emanu-El Skirball Center in New York City.

1990s



JAMIE TRAEGER-MUNEY

Even though Jamie Traeger-Muney (Year '91-'92) comes from a family with a strong sense of cultural Jewish

identity, Jewish religion was a far more nebulous piece of the puzzle for her to fit into the larger picture.

At Pardes, former director Rabbi Levi Lauer encouraged her to take ownership

of her Judaism, which is exactly what she did and continues to do.

As the founder and CEO of Wealth Legacy Group, Jamie is a wealth psychologist, exploring the impact that finances have on inheritors and guiding clients in finding purpose and fulfillment through using their financial resources. Jewish values and perspectives have played a major role in shaping her practice, and she has found that helping others to thrive and empowering them, is a niche

field that has wide ranging benefits for her clients.

Seven years ago, Jamie and her husband made aliyah. She is working to bring a sense of *tikkun olam* to the wider community, starting with her family. She has made a point of raising her two children in an atmosphere of diversity – they have attended mixed secular and religious schools, and will eventually continue on to mixed military units in the IDF.

2000s



AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN

When **Amanda Borschel-Dan (Year '99-'00, Fellow '00-'01)** came to Pardes, she didn't know much about traditional Jewish texts, other than the fact that they existed. She didn't even discover her Jewish roots until the age of nine.

"My mother converted to Christianity at 18," she says. "I sort of raised myself as Jewish."

These days, Amanda's Jewish knowledge is deep and rich. With the title, Jewish World Maven at the Times of Israel (TOI), that kind of knowledge is essential. As a founding staff member of TOI, Amanda has the distinction of covering whatever topics in the Jewish world interest her most, and those topics are varied. Amanda is constantly drawing on traditional Jewish and Rabbinic texts for her work, using the voices of ancient rabbis the same way that she incorporates contemporary voices into her writing.

While not observant herself, Amanda gained a strong connection with Talmud at Pardes in Rabbi Dr. Levi Cooper's classes. "It was like watching a sporting event," she says. Hoping to bring that level of excitement and fiery passion for the text to her readership at her former position as the Magazine editor at The Jerusalem Post, she brought Levi on to write a sort of *daf shevui* – a page of Talmud a week, in the publication.

Amanda made aliyah in 1999, and lives with her husband and six children in Kfar Adumim, where she feels she can immerse herself in an authentic Israeli lifestyle. Her son even finds Gemara to be his favorite subject at the mixed secular-religious school he attends. It would seem that a love for texts may very well be inherited.

2000s



ALMA REISEL

When it comes to diversity in the Jewish world, **Alma Reisel (Summer '09)** believes strongly in cultivating an atmosphere of inclusion. When she came to Pardes she found

a similar attitude and approach to what were formally unfamiliar Jewish texts. She says, "I love the ethos that everyone should learn. The sources are for all of us and that is an amazing contribution to the Jewish world." Her experience at Pardes was so positive that she convinced her mom and dad to attend the Summer Program a few years later.

For Alma, that conviction goes beyond the text. She is the director of Keshet UK, a charity organization that works to include LGBTQ Jews in the Jewish community. Alma sees this kind of work as not only necessary for LGBTQ Jews looking for a way to be a part of the mainstream Jewish community, but also as a way to enrich Judaism of all strands with the vibrancy of varying perspectives.

Currently in London, Alma is involved with a whole slew of Jewish events and organizations – from Jewish Women's Aid to United Jewish Israel Appeal. She has also attended and participated in more than two dozen Limmud events. Suffice it to say, as an activist and social worker, she keeps busy. Even with a baby on the way (as we go to print) she doesn't plan on slowing down any time soon.

2010s



ASHLEIGH TALBERTH

Ashleigh Talberth (Year '14-'15) calls herself an "accidental Jew," and

hadn't even heard of Shabbat until the age of 18. In college, while travelling through Thailand and meeting Israelis, she was convinced to go on a Birthright trip and see Israel herself. That decision changed her life. Eight years later, Ashleigh was determined to return to Israel for a more in-depth experience, and started at Pardes with a very remedial understanding of most things Jewish. "I went to the Dean frustrated by my inability to follow all the acronyms

and lingo with the intention of dropping out. Luckily, Dean David Bernstein convinced me otherwise, and made a special 'Foundations of Judaism' class, or as I called it, '-1 Aleph remedial,'" she recalls.

After falling in love with the country, Ashleigh extended her stay, eventually deciding to make aliyah. "The Start-Up Nation" was the perfect match for Ashleigh's entrepreneurial spirit. For the last 12 years, she has been working in the green-tech world, pioneering initiatives in the field and acting as a consultant for companies taking on challenges such as water scarcity, green transportation and environmentally

sound public policy. Ashleigh co-founded the Israel-California Greentech Partnership, aimed at taking Israeli water preservation technology and applying it to help alleviate California's water shortage crisis.

As someone who works between the US and Israel, it is only appropriate that Ashleigh calls both places home. She technically lives on a moshav in the Negev Desert, but often can be found in Rehovot or the Bay Area. Considering all the environmental development opportunities both places have to offer, she wouldn't have it any other way.

Returning to Zion: New Faces, Old Issues

When Persia became the dominant power in the Near East in the 6th century BCE, royal edicts allowed and even encouraged Jews to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple. Ezra and Nehemiah were two outstanding and exceptional figures who embraced this historic opportunity and took on leadership roles. The challenges they faced were formidable: physical danger, political intrigues, intermarriage, assimilation, ignorance and apathy.



Here, faculty members **Michael Hattin** and **Neima Novetsky** discuss one of the first problems faced by the returnees: how to deal with non-Jews who reside together with you in the land, an issue as relevant today as it was then.

וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ צָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵי־יִמֵן כִּי בְנֵי הַגּוֹלָה בּוֹנִים הֵיכַל לַיהוָה... וַיָּגִשׁוּ אֶל זְרֻבָּבֶל... וַיֹּאמְרוּ... נִבְנֶה עִמָּכֶם כִּי כָכֶם נִדְרוּשׁ יֵאלֶקְיָכֶם... וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶם זְרֻבָּבֶל... לֹא לָכֶם וְלָנוּ לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת לַאלֹהֵינוּ...

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity were building a temple unto the Lord... then they drew near to Zerubbabel... and said... 'Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as you do...' But Zerubbabel... said unto them: 'You have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord...' (Ezra 4:1-3)

Neima: When the nation returns to Israel after the Babylonian exile and begins to rebuild the temple, the Samaritan residents of the land ask to join in the building and are rebuffed. Though the Samaritans claim, "for we seek your God, as you do," they simultaneously worship other gods and are thus rejected by Israel. The episode makes one question: how open Jews should be to non-Jewish society and culture. Is it problematic to join with the "other"? Is assimilation always a bad thing? Was the nation's response to the Samaritans right or wrong?

I believe that there is much to be gained through interactions with people of disparate beliefs, but there is also a time and place for rejecting those beliefs, and, sometimes, even the people holding them. Interacting with the "other" often means discovering that we have much in common, leading to close friendships and enriched lives. But there is also a danger that it will lead to a compromising of one's own values. I think that

in certain areas of life and religion there are simple rights and wrongs, with little room for compromise. Not all lines can be crossed. Thus, if there is good reason to believe that a person or group will make you do so (as in the time of Ezra-Nehemiah), it might be worthwhile to reconsider the relationship.

Michael: Neima, I very much appreciate and sympathize with your comments. Perhaps a little more nuance might be in order. It seems to me that the main reason why the Samaritans were rebuffed in Nehemiah's time was because their motivations were less than sincere. While they proclaimed their seeming devotions to the God of Israel, they were not prepared to surrender the worship of their other gods. The God of Israel (because He is absolute and His moral values reflect that absoluteness) demands exclusivity; anything less is idolatry in disguise.



לא
לכם ולאנו



לבנות
בית
לאלהינו

But what about a situation in which those that want to partner with us are fully respectful of our special identity and make no attempts to usurp it? What if they are motivated by sincerity and are attracted to the enterprise precisely because of our unique role? To return to the context in question, what if they are prepared to adopt a fundamental monotheism while still maintaining their own cultural (as opposed to religious) identity?

Here, I believe, we are dealing with a different situation and in this case we might welcome their participation. This is, I believe, what Isaiah was referring to when he spoke of a messianic future in which "My house (or Temple) shall be a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7) or what Zefania meant when he spoke of "...all of them shall proclaim God's name and serve Him with a single purpose" (3:9).

Neima: Michael, I think we are more or less on the same page, and I totally agree that in situations of mutual respect and sincerity, the benefits of inclusion might outweigh the negatives. However, often the line between cultural and religious identity is blurry. Though it is easy to say that one's beliefs in one area won't affect the other, that is not always true in practice. That said, I too look forward to the fulfillment of Isaiah's promise of an era in which nations will join together, flowing to the Temple to hear the word of God and learn from His ways.

Michael: Your point is very well-taken, Neima. It seems to me that the trial faced by the returning Jews, insofar as rebuilding the Temple was concerned, highlights the abiding trial faced by the Jewish people throughout their long history of interacting with other peoples and faiths. The burning question, framed in terms of Jewish engagement with the larger world, concerns the dynamic tension between particularism versus universalism. Exclusivity tends to foster insularity and detachment while unfiltered embrace is a sure recipe for compromising or losing one's identity. Finding the right balance between these two – maintaining our unique and special role while interacting intellectually and culturally with the larger world – remains our greatest challenge whether as individuals or as a people.

*Rabbi Michael Hattin teaches Bible and Jewish Law.
Neima Novetsky teaches Bible, Prophets & Biblical Exegesis.*

Continue exploring Ezra and Nehemiah at the **Pardes Executive Learning Seminars 2017**
Returning to Zion: New Faces, Old Issues
July 2-6 & December 24-28, 2017 in Jerusalem.
www.pardes.org.il/executive

Scribal art: 'We ourselves together will build unto the Lord.' Illustrated by Rabbi Dov Laimon.



Pursuing Peace and Constructive Conflict in Schools, Synagogues... and even in Israel By Daniel Roth

In a world of constant advancement in global communications we seem to simultaneously be deteriorating in our ability to communicate constructively, especially with those with whom we disagree. From politics to parking spots, Jews tend to be very good at pursuing justice, advocating passionately for what they hold to be right, fair and true. Where we are more challenged though, is in our ability to act as pursuers of peace, balancing our interpretation of justice and truth with competing interpretations. As a result we can find ourselves “crazying” those with whom we strongly disagree and being outraged when the same is done to us.

To a certain extent, Pardes, for over forty years, has been addressing these challenges through the three core ingredients that make up the Pardes text study experience.

HAVRUTA

Pair study

Havruta study is not only the most classic form of text study but also has been identified by conflict resolution scholars as an indigenous Jewish model for conflict resolution training since it requires, among other things, the constant practice of deep face-to-face listening, and respectful communication around difference in interpretation.

MACHLOKET

Disagreement

In the classic Pardes text study, a rabbinic text that transmits a *machloket*, is almost always on the table. In-depth study of *machloket* requires one to see clearly how each side may be true even though they are of opposite positions and interpretations, a skill critical in conflict resolution and to the understanding of conflicting needs and narratives.

DERECH ERETZ

Ethical behavior

The Pardes text study experience is never truly complete until the ethical implications of the text on the lives of the students and society have fully been explored and argued. For example, what are the ramifications if a particular law was in accordance with the opinion of Shamai or Hillel, or if we were to read a Biblical story according to Rashi or the Rashbam?

Five years ago, Pardes moved from meeting these challenges implicitly to explicitly addressing them when it established the **Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution** (PCJCR). The PCJCR seeks to strengthen the Jewish culture of sacred and constructive conflict (*machloket l'shem shemayim*) and the pursuit of peace (*redifat shalom*) through the integration of Jewish texts, values, and development of qualities of soul (*middot*) along with contemporary conflict resolution theories and practices. To this end, PCJCR established programs that go deep and programs that go broad in effecting social change.

GOING DEEP

Pardes Rodef Shalom Schools and Communities Programs

Throughout Jewish history there were individuals, known as *rodfei shalom* (pursuers of peace), who would mediate conflicts between individuals, families and communities. However, this ancient Jewish tradition seems to have been lost around the mid 1950's. The Pardes Rodef Shalom Programs seek to revive this critical tradition, reaffirming it as a core component of Jewish communal life beginning with our schools and synagogues.

The **Pardes Rodef Shalom Schools Program** is a joint venture of the PCJCR and the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators (PCJE). Now in its fifth year, the program has 15 Jewish middle schools participating across North America which span all denominations. The program is tailored to meet school needs, including making rabbinic text study more meaningful to students, promoting social emotional learning in the classroom and/or exploring these issues throughout the school using a Jewish lens.

Now in its second year, the **Pardes Rodef Shalom Communities Program** works with North American rabbis and synagogues. This year, the PCJCR is partnering with the Union for Reform Judaism to offer the *Creating a Culture of Constructive Conflict Community of Practice Program* for six congregations that will participate in a 12-month cohort engaging lay leaders and clergy in addressing the challenges in congregational life. This past June, 10 rabbis across denominations participated in the first *Rabbi as Rodef Shalom* retreat.



GOING BROAD

The 9Adar Project: Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict

The Pardes Rodef Shalom Programs draw inspiration from ancient Jewish traditions to go deep into effecting sustainable communal change. Similarly, the **9Adar Project: Jewish Week of Constructive Conflict** draws inspiration from the 9th of Adar to work as broadly as possible within and between communities worldwide.

The 9th of Adar is a forgotten day on the Jewish calendar, when the House of Hillel and House of Shammai, who are well known as the model for how to disagree "for the sake of Heaven," engaged in what some sources describe as a violent battle over how to relate to non-Jews. The 9Adar Project marks this tragic event through an awareness-raising week focused on promoting the values and skills of how to disagree more constructively. In North America, hundreds of Pardes alumni, as well as schools, synagogues and campuses, participated this past year and plan to participate this coming year (February 19-25, 2017).

In Israel, the project is known as *Dibbur Chadash: Hashavua Lekidum Machloket Bonah* and attempts to reach out beyond the Jewish community to promote the shared values of constructive conflict known in Islam as *Thakeft Ikhtilaf*. The project is a joint initiative of the PCJCR and **Mosaica: the Center for Conflict Resolution through Agreement** and has created a growing network of 35 Israeli NGOs to promote the project throughout all sectors of Israeli society.



Ultimately, these programs do not aim to pursue a peace which attempts to "resolve" or end conflicts; rather, the opposite is the case. The peace or *shalom* we are seeking is known as the "unity of opposites"; it is a *shalom* which each of us experience every time we engage in Pardes text study with our havruta, communicating constructively about our shared and conflicting interpretations of the texts of our tradition and the texts of our lives.

Rabbi Dr. Daniel Roth is the founder and director of the Pardes Center for Judaism and Conflict Resolution. The Pardes Rodef Shalom Schools Program is directed by **Joan Vander Walde** and the Pardes Rodef Shalom Communities Program is directed by **Rabbi Amy Eilberg**. For more information about the programs and to get involved visit www.pardes.org.il/pcjcr.



Interview with **JOSHUA CHADAJO** Executive Director, North America



How did you first become involved with Pardes?

I graduated from Bates College in 1994 and took a job at CAMERA, the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America. During this time I really began to solidify my interest in Jewish professional life and decided it was time for graduate school. I was accepted to the Wexner Graduate Fellowship program and they funded my MBA from Yale. As part of the program, they asked that I also complete an intensive Jewish studies program. I started asking around and it seemed that everyone affiliated with Wexner had learned at Pardes! So I enrolled in the 2001-2002 Year Program. It was one of the best life choices I've ever made. I got to spend 10 hours a week learning with Levi Cooper. What could be better than that?

How did you become Executive Director?

After returning from my year at Pardes I was hired as the Executive Director of AMCHA-Coalition for Jewish Concerns, an organization founded by Rabbi Avi Weiss. Just being around Rav Avi was incredibly special. Sometime later, Pardes reached out to me about becoming Executive Director. At first, I wasn't really interested, as raising money didn't sound all that fun. But, since it was Pardes, I was open to having a conversation. Two weeks and six meetings later, I figured hey, let's give it a try. I'm glad I did. That was in 2004, so this December marks my 12th Pardes anniversary. All the rest is commentary.

12 years is a long time. Describe some of the changes you have seen.

To start, I have a lot less hair on my head now. That change aside, Pardes has really grown significantly in terms of programs, the number of people we serve, personnel and budget. When I started, the Year Program was the central Pardes program, which was the case for decades, and our work training day school educators was in its infancy. Today the Year Program is only one of many exciting programs at Pardes. The Pardes Educators Program grew into the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators which now offers eight programs in Israel and the US. We now have multiple summer learning opportunities, our Executive Learning Seminar now has a summer and winter option, and Elmad, our online learning portal, is growing exponentially. We're doing more in North America and the UK than ever before. What's great is that Pardes is always thinking of new and creative ways to engage people. Despite the programmatic growth, the rigorous learning, the centrality of the beit midrash, the openness and camaraderie – all of that is still there. Programmatic growth has not eroded our identity, rather it's reinforced it.

“Programmatic growth has not eroded our identity, rather it's reinforced it.”

How has Pardes funded this growth?

When I started in 2004 we raised around \$2.2 million a year globally. This year we raised about \$4.4 million. We are blessed to have incredible foundation partners and individual donors who have significantly increased their investment in Pardes over time. Our staff and



outstanding lay leaders have logged countless hours working to build a larger and more committed donor base. That only happens when you have a team that really cares. There's no B.S. on our team. I'm from Massachusetts, and naturally a New England Patriots fan, so I like to quote Coach Bill Belichick, who is famous for telling his players, simply but very firmly, "Do your job." That's what happens here. Our staff and lay leaders do their jobs, and it shows.

It's important not to forget that underlying everything, of course, is our stellar faculty. Anyone who has learned with a Pardes faculty member knows that our product is second to none. We are truly leading the field when it comes to providing serious text-based Jewish education grounded in openness, tolerance and diversity of opinions. As fundraisers, staying connected to that learning is critical, which is why I encourage our US staff to regularly listen to Pardes podcasts. It helps us tell our story, whether we're asking for a gift or recruiting new students.

What's on the horizon for Pardes?

We have over 6,500 alumni of our core programs, and thousands more learn with our faculty members in informal settings each year. We now have concentrations of Pardes alumni all over the world. Building more robust international programming is on the top of the agenda. Right now we are looking for serious funders who want to help us expand in North America, where the bulk of our alumni live. Jerusalem will always remain our home, but we want to stay engaged with our alumni and continue to learn Torah together. The next few years will be very exciting in the US, UK and Canada.

In Israel there is always a tremendous amount happening. What's most exciting is the upcoming construction of a new facility. We have passed the main municipal and state hurdles to break ground and we hope to have a new home by 2019. A new building is going to be a tremendous benefit to our students.

Can you leave us with a funny story about meeting with donors?

One of my favorite meetings each year is with a donor who insists that we do a *l'chaim* on a shot of ice-cold vodka. It's a great idea... although sometimes we meet at 10:30 am in the morning! I always leave that meeting happy.

Some stories, of course, are far more amusing in hindsight. Like the time I came close to literally falling out of my chair during my very first board meeting as Executive Director. Luckily that was not a metaphor for the years to come. I'm so happy I took this job 12 years ago, and I'm just as excited about our work today as I was when I started.

The number of people who **attended over 200 events** in North America during 2015-16.

6,000



The number of **programs** offered by the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators.

The number of **countries** students came from on the 2016 Summer Program.

13



\$4.4 m

The amount Pardes **raised** in 2015-16.

The number of unique visitors to **Elmad** in 2015-16.

24,000



1,500

The number of **students** who studied at Pardes in Jerusalem in 2015-16.

US 4,776

Israel 1,278

Canada 289

UK 196

The **location of alumni** of core Pardes programs.

THANK | You

This listing includes Annual Campaign donations to Pardes from September 2015 through the first week of September 2016. If one or both donors are alumni, they are listed in red. We apologize for misspellings, omissions and other mistakes. Please send corrections to info@pardes.org.

Pardes would like to thank all of its generous Annual Campaign donors. Your contributions strengthen the Jewish people by providing student scholarships and organizational support that enable students to have a life-changing experience studying Jewish texts in Jerusalem and across the world.

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"I have been a longtime donor because Pardes was a significant influence in my Jewish and philanthropic journey. As with any educational institution, the tuition was only a portion of the true cost. I was fortunate to have my tuition covered through Dorot and

Wexner fellowships and many of my friends also received generous financial aid awards. I feel a deep *chiyuv* (obligation) to Pardes to cover what it invested in my Jewish journey, so I can 'pay it forward' and enable more students to have their own transformative Jewish experience."

Sacha Litman (Year '95-'96, Summer '02)
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"A day of learning to honor our mothers seemed natural. We could think of no better way to link generations. We are delighted to support Pardes and contribute to Jewish education."

Jeff and Lynn Coe (PELS '14-'16)

sponsored a 2016 Day of Learning at Pardes in memory of their mothers, Blanche May Levi z"l and Ida Coe z"l.
 To sponsor a Day of Learning at Pardes, email Jamie Bornstein at jamie@pardes.org.

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"Through learning Jewish texts at Pardes, I have become part of the Jewish story. What were once abstract concepts are now part of my way of thinking and being. This could not have happened without Pardes, and I want to give all I can to ensure that others have the opportunity to be blessed in this same way."

Celeste Aronoff (Year '14-'15, Fellow '15-'16) contributed to the 2016 student giving campaign.

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CLOSING | Words

by Maya Zinkow

When I thought about how to encapsulate two special years at Pardes, I thought about the Maya of two years ago, how she might be unsure of where to begin. There was always the *parsha* (weekly portion). But if she were to visualize bookshelves full of wisdom to pepper a message of closure and gratitude with textual meaning, she'd see a blur of black and white, overwhelmed and stifled. Those bookshelves are still there in my mind, still overwhelming and capable of keeping me at a standstill. But now, they are full of vivid color. They are within arm's reach; they have meaning, an order, a rhythm, and a reason. They are mine to explore and discover, beautiful and full and decipherable.

So as I contemplated words of closure and saw my bookshelf towering before me, where did I end up? The *parsha*, of course. Last week we read *parshat Behar*. I remain on the mountain, not quite ready for the desert ahead of me; it's wildness yet impenetrable.

In Vayikra 20:5, God blesses the Children of Israel that their land be fruitful for three years – in the year before *shmita* (sabbatical year), in the seventh year itself, and in the eighth year. My Pardes journey began in summer 2013, which happened to be the year before *shmita*. I returned for my first year at Pardes just as the *shmita* year began, and here I am: continuing to benefit from the fruits of *shmita* as the third year of extra blessings ends. My Pardes journey has been intricately bound up with the holiness of *shmita* in both the literal and spiritual sense. For what is *shmita*? It is a release; a letting go of something essential, the work of our hands, the guarantee of livelihood, in order to serve the greater purpose of allowing the land to breathe and souls to be set free. We let the tools of our trade grow rusty with disuse, with the faith that God will sustain us with the Earth's natural goodness.

Even without the cosmic chronological connection between *shmita* and my Pardes experience, it is clear that in coming to Jerusalem to spend our days in the beit midrash, we've all taken our own *shmita*. We've left loved ones, taken time from careers, shifted our paths of ambition, let relationships and bank accounts lie fallow with the faith that whatever might come of this release would sustain us for now and beyond.

Vayikra Raba expounds on a verse from *Tehilim* (Psalms) to explain the heightened consciousness *shmita* demands of us: "It is common to find someone who keeps *shmita* for a day, for a week, for a month; but do we really find many people who keep it the entire year? Is there a mightier person who sees their field go untilled, their vineyard go untilled, yet still pays their taxes and doesn't complain?"

There is bravery in what we've each done for the sake of learning and growing. Yet in our own vibrant orchard, there are those mightier than we who release our normative reality for a year or more. The *giburei koach* (mighty heros) of Pardes, of course, are our inspiring, intelligent, funny, creative and kind teachers. They enable us to keep our special kind of *shmita*, and even more than this; they help us plant more abundant fields and vineyards than we could have ever imagined possible, their wisdom bringing forth new, wild growth, covering our lives with blossoming color.

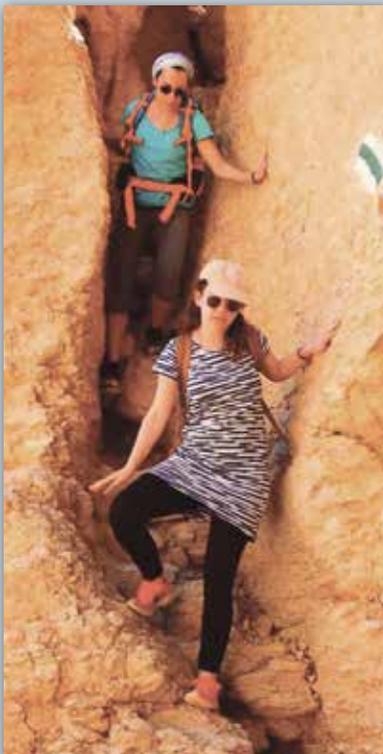
As I face the reality of transition, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for these mighty tillers of Torah. Thank you, for making my bookshelf increasingly more accessible. Thank you to my friends for making Torah, Israel, and Judaism come alive with hearty laughter, unbridled joy, vivid color, and raucous and soulful song. Thank you to this community for allowing me to be my full self, unapologetically.

As I collect the final fruits of this third year of abundance, my blessing for us all is that the seeds planted here are rooted in *this* moment and in *this* place, but even more, that you take your Torah with you. Share the sweet rewards of your *shmita* wherever you go. Plant new seeds, find new farming partners, keep your tools sharp, and honor the might of Pardes's *giburei koach* by aspiring to that might yourself. There's only one Pardes, but the orchard of Torah is ours to plant, maintain, and care for wherever we find ourselves on our journey.

Read at closing lunch, May 2016. Maya Zinkow (Summer '13, Year '14-'15, Fellow '15-'16) is a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

2015-16 | *in Pictures*

Clockwise from top: Havruta in our Summer Program; Megillat Esther class siyum; Closing dinner of the Summer Executive Learning Seminar at the Bible Lands Museum; 9Adar event and alumni reception; Purim; Teaching in Turkey; Opening Circle; Graduation ceremony for the Pardes Day School Educators Program; **Andrew Ash (Year '15-'16)** and **Rachel Cohn (Summer '13, PCJE '15-'16)** get engaged at Pardes; Hiking on the Arava tiyul.



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