

THAVRUT

חברות

A
PARDES
LEARNING
COMPANION

COMMENT: It's unclear to me whether all roads do, in fact, lead to Rome. Nevertheless, I can't help but be amazed when the diverse strands of one's existence seem on occasion to converge. When I interviewed Karolj and Kati Eri, I had never been to Budapest. Since then, I've been there twice for a total of three months to take my son to the Peto Institute for the Motor Disabled. Hungary, even while straining under the yolk of a Communist regime, managed, nevertheless, to create a singularly successful program, that teaches motor-disabled children how to walk and maximize use of their bodies. One usually associates such state-of-the-art advances with Western countries. Yet the training system of the Peto, despite Hungary's limited contacts with the West, is now being sought after and emulated by countries around the world. In fact, Israel was one of the first to benefit from this association. In addition to dozens of children who regularly go back and forth for treatment, Israel has more than a dozen students at the Peto Institute learning to become qualified practitioners, with the aim of establishing a similar program here in Israel.

How does this relate to the Eri's? Well, while one's child is at the Peto all day, the accompanying parent usually has time on his/her hands. I decided to use it to find out about the Hungarian Jewish community, through conversations with its members, interviews with its leaders and my own observations of Hungarian Jewish life.

The Jewish community in Hungary is the largest in Eastern Europe. From a population of 800,000 Jews in 1944, before deportations began, 600,000 perished in the Shoah. Today the number remaining is estimated to be around 80,000, a figure difficult to substantiate, since a large proportion of this number is only partially Jewish. Furthermore, only a few thousand Jews are involved in any organized Jewish activity.

Throughout the forty-year rule of the Hungarian People's Republic, Jewish affairs were administered by the Church Affairs Office of the Communist Party. The Communist government, which prided itself on guaranteeing freedom of religious faith to all religions, established the Board of Hungarian Jews and named Party members to posts of importance. Ironically while this guaranteed the right of the Jewish community to operate a national rabbinic school, synagogues, a Jewish day school,

yeshivas, and a kosher kitchen, and to carry on various welfare activities, it also alienated many young people who viewed these institutions as pawns manipulated by an uncaring and cynical government.

Thus, despite, or perhaps because of, official approval, Jewish life in Hungary languished throughout forty years of communist rule.

But there were other reasons for this as well. Even before the Shoah, Jewish assimilation was rampant in Budapest. The centers of Orthodoxy had existed in the countryside and small towns. By 1956, those few enclaves of Orthodoxy remaining outside of Budapest, used the opportunity of the Hungarian uprising against the Soviet Union to leave the country. The Jews remaining, many of whom were partially Jewish and intermarried, and who had no institutional affiliation, were removed from any experience or memory of Jewish life. In addition, because official contact with Israel was outlawed, Zionist youth activities were proscribed and the teaching of Hebrew forbidden. All of this further isolated Hungarian Jewry from the wellsprings of Jewish spiritual and national life.

Another problem was age. The Jews of Hungary today are largely an aging population of survivors, dependent to a considerable degree on the American Joint Distribution Committee for aid in the form of food, clothing, fuel and medical care. In Budapest, children of survivors are largely assimilated. Consequently, the intensity of Jewish life has become adulterated through each succeeding generation.

Today, however, this bleak picture is changing. Two years ago, the Communists were ousted from Parliament, and one year ago, the first democratically elected government took office. Thus, it is only now that the Jewish community is at last free to choose its own spokesmen and community leaders. Furthermore, an infusion of money, talent and organizing energy, the major goal of which is to reclaim the young people, is revitalizing Hungarian Jewish life. For the first time since the creation of the State of Israel, Zionist groups are active in Hungary. Many young people who are only now discovering their Jewish or partially Jewish identity, are flocking to discussion groups, meetings and cultural events. Two new Jewish day schools with a

continued on back page

Hungarian Couple Studies at Pardes

Karolj and Kati Eri '89-'90, '91, met in Serbo-Croatian class during their first year at university in Budapest. They were married three years later. Kati was born in Hungary, Karolj in a Hungarian-populated area of Yugoslavia. Neither of them had been brought up in a religious family. Karolj knew nothing about the Protestantism of his parents, and Kati very little about Judaism. As a result of her growing interest, which she began to share with Karolj, Kati started studying Judaism at university. Kati received a Nahum Goldmann Fellowship to attend a Jewish seminary in England where she met Dr. Binyamin Ish-Shalom who recommended Pardes to them. Karolj completed his conversion, following which he and Kati were married in an Orthodox ceremony. Their studies at Pardes were supported by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture in the Diaspora and by Pardes.

Kati: Growing up in a small town, I had no way to be in touch with other Jews. I knew about the Shoah and about Israel, but nothing about the



Jewish religion. My first exposure to Judaism was at age thirteen when I started going to a Jewish summer camp in Yugoslavia. I loved it. There I met Jews from Yugoslavia and Israel for the first time and began to learn something about Judaism. I continued to go there until I was 20. Since it was such a significant part of my life, I wanted to share it with Karolj right away. So, almost as soon as I met him, I took him to visit the camp.

Karolj: In fact my sister also came, and all of us studied Hebrew and other subjects offered by the camp.

Kati: Then, before our wedding, we came with my father to visit Israel, where my grandmother had been living for twenty years. In Hungary, there is not much fear that intermarriage will pose a threat to the Jewish heritage, because there is so little awareness of that heritage. The main concern with intermarriage is, rather, that it may introduce antisemitism into the family. Therefore, there was little objection to the marriage and both sets of parents came to our wedding, which was of course non-religious.

Karolj: Even before our wedding, I had become involved in Jewish cultural activities in Hungary. Three years ago we started teaching Jewish and Israeli folk dancing that Kati had learned during her years at camp.



Kati: The more I progressed in Jewish studies, the more we became aware of the lack of Jewish culture in Hungary. We both began to feel we wanted to contribute what we could.

Karolj: During my first year of study at Pardes, I decided I wanted to become Jewish. My first exposure to Judaism in Hungary was strictly cultural, and it was only here at Pardes that I had an exposure to religious Judaism. I have always believed that one should change one's life and environment in whatever

way is necessary to improve them. In Judaism this finds expression in the idea that each of us must take responsibility as we move from creation to completion, a process that reaches its final form at the time of the coming of the Messiah. What is important is the way one works on the world to make it better. Judaism puts this philosophy into everyday practice by means of traditions and *halachot*. My own observance began at zero level and gradually increased the more informed I became. I converted not only because I am in agreement with the teachings of Judaism, but because I believe doing *mitzvot* is the way of putting these ideas into practice.

Kati: It is not enough to *have* an idea; one must *live* it. We also learned the connection between *mitzvot* and philosophy, so that rituals which once seemed irrelevant and arbitrary, now appear meaningful.

Karolj: It has been a great experience being at Pardes. We were shown lots of different subjects and taught how to learn. We could visit our teachers at home and see their lives.

Kati: It was very important to see for ourselves that Judaism is not just a way of life lived thousands of years ago, but one possible today.

Karolj: The most important thing we learned at Pardes was not facts, but method and approach. Since most students spend only one year here, they need to be prepared to go on with their studies once they leave. Pardes teaches you how to ask questions about Judaism so that you can become independent in your studies. Since we cannot stay on indefinitely, we like this approach very much.

Kati: After we completed our first year at Pardes, we spent five months on kibbutz ulpan working and learning Hebrew. We are back now at Pardes for another semester, after which our contract with the Foundation requires us to return to Hungary for two to three years to teach. If during that time, we decide that eventually we want to return to Israel to live, we will have to prepare ourselves professionally so that we can make a good *klita* (absorption). I don't think there is much demand in Israel for teachers of Hungarian literature or Serbo-Croatian.

Karolj: What we want to do in Hungary is something similar to Pardes but with high school students. Pardes is the model for us as a way to approach young people who were not brought up in religious families and yet who are interested in knowing more about Judaism. ♦

Following is a partial list of Bonei Pardes for whom we no longer have current addresses. Mail keeps coming back to us, including copies of HAVRUTA. If your name appears below, or if you know the whereabouts of individuals on this list, please fill in the form below and mail to Beth Newmark, 111 Ocean Street, Lynn, MA 01902.

Bearman, Amy
Berger, Tamara
Blumberg, Lester
Brooks, Ilene
Brown, Brenda
Brown, Steven
Burstein, Mark
Cheskin, Baruch
Eisen Tovah
Goldgeier, Adam

Goldwater, Susan
Gross, Michelle
Heyman, Fannie
Hoshen, Moshe
Kalman, Jonathan
Kaplan, Gayle A.
Karsch, Shmulik
Koran, Michael
Krakovitz-Avshalom, Audrey
Kravitz, Jeffrey
Lambert, Yael

Lebowitz, Ellen
Levine, Barbara
Lobel, Diana
Maletzky, Eliot
Margulies, Carol
Marks, Gretchen Anne
Melman, Barry
Mernit, Ralph Eric
Miller, Anna
Morris, Barbara

Name: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

While the Gulf Crisis was still brewing, and war imminent, I began asking students at Pardes how they felt about staying on in Israel. The answers were overwhelmingly in favor of remaining, though concern for the anxiety expressed by parents and family in the States weighed heavily. In the end, all but two students remained. A third went home briefly but soon returned. Ellen, Andrea, Josh and Jocelyn, who tell their stories in this issue, were among that great majority who were here for the duration. They talk candidly about their perceptions and fears and how they view Pardes' role. Jocelyn's is an abbreviated version of an article she wrote for the Stanford Hillel Alumni Newsletter, Haver.

J.K.

ANDREA HODOS is from Greenfield, Massachusetts. She received her B.A. in English literature from Yale University in 1988.

I was just making the decision to stay in Israel for the year and attend Pardes when we heard about the invasion of Kuwait. At the time I really didn't expect the war to escalate; the situation, therefore, had little effect on my choice. My parents expressed some concern about my being here, but strongly supported my decision to remain. But as the year at Pardes progressed, the situation in the Gulf began to worsen.

One of my good friends, who had been concerned about the war from the beginning, was continually reassessing the situation. I found the questions she posed to herself important ones for me as well. We embarked on an extensive *havruta* process, analyzing the deteriorating political situation and how we should best respond. I found myself pushed to clarify whether I wanted to stay on and, if so, why. The process went on for months.

First, she would ask me why I felt I could stay. I would reply that I'm still much safer in Jerusalem than on the streets of New Haven; that chances are it won't be chemical; that even if it is, it probably won't fall here, and if it does, it is unlikely it would affect me. Not surprisingly, she felt that my

reasoning was suspect. And I think she was right. If you are unsure about what is going to happen, it is naive to take a risk that requires putting yourself on the line, unless you are clear as to why you want to be here and have a real commitment to it. For those of us who are in Israel for the first time or who are just at the beginning level at Pardes, the war has posed new and difficult questions.

As a result of all my questioning and soul searching, I began to realize that I do have a growing relationship with Israel, one that I very much want to develop and deepen. I didn't want to leave in a moment of difficulty. I wanted to be present and weather the situation, doing whatever I had to stay here. While I still don't know just what this relationship is, I didn't want it jeopardized in the aftermath of the war by the confusion that would have resulted from my leaving.

But having made the decision to stay, I was not without worries. Was it possible for someone who was in the country for the first time not to be? With my negligible Hebrew, I wondered how I would be able to communicate in case of a crisis and whether it was reasonable to be committed to a country where I didn't know the language. However as soon as I began to take precautions to protect myself, I experienced a greater sense of confidence and emotional security. After the fright of the first few missile attacks wore off, I found myself dealing more with feelings of anger at the harm people do to each other.

My friend, however, decided to go back to the States for a short period

of time, and eventually not to return to Israel this year. While part of me felt a sense of loss and somewhat abandoned, I understood and supported her reasons for not returning. I was glad she had made the right decision for her. It seemed important that individuals be allowed to make independent decisions without fear of being judged by the community. I don't think this was the prevailing attitude at Pardes. There were both teachers and students less tolerant of people's decision to leave. Generally I think these were individuals who had already made the commitment to live here. They may not remember feeling themselves pulled between two worlds, with strong connections to both of them.

Although the Pardes community wasn't particularly supportive of decisions to leave, there was considerable support for those of us who decided to stay. Feeling part of a supportive community was an important factor in my own decision to stay. In the end, however, it was the students themselves who provided the most crucial support for one another. We shuffled between apartments, ensuring that no one was alone overnight and that everyone had a chance to escape from the house in order to avoid going stir crazy. We learned how to read each other's stress and how to help alleviate it.

Support from the teachers was also important. In the beginning of the war, while the building was closed, one teacher organized classes outside of the school. It was reassuring to continue learning during that time, and particularly meaningful under those conditions. Shabbat dinners at teachers' houses had a different feel. It was even more generous than usual that they opened their homes to us for a dinner that was almost certain to be interrupted by a siren that would send all of us scurrying into the family's sealed room.

I feel that staying in Israel during the war was the right decision for me. Before coming here, I had only an abstract sense of the significance and function of the State of Israel. Being here during the attacks—both in their dramatic and more banal moments—forced me to confront certain realities of life in Israel, both positive and negative. I still have a number of questions to work out about my relationship with Israel, but my experience this year has definitely helped to forge what I know will continue to be a strong and deepening connection. ♦



JOSH SALTZMAN grew up in Indianapolis. He has a B.A. from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, an M.A. from Baltimore Hebrew College and is contemplating entering rabbinical school. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife, Mooki.

My father is a Reform rabbi. I grew up in a Zionist home and was active in NFTY. Summer camp was a strong influence. During my first year at the University of Indiana, I was co-counselor with an Israeli kibbutznik who convinced me to come to Israel and try it out. So I went to live on kibbutz for six months, the first leg of a process that led to *aliya*. I loved being on kibbutz and had exposure there to a wide variety of people. While there I became a fanatic with regard to Hebrew and refused to speak English, even to friends in the ulpan program with me. I stayed almost two years which, of course, included going into Zahal.

My parents were happy I had "found" myself, but were not happy that I would be going into the army. Knowing I would have to serve two and a half years, I returned to the States for six months. Two weeks after my return, I was contacted by the army and two months later drafted. That was in 1980. In the army I served as a battle medic in Lebanon during the war. I was part of a frontal assault unit that suffered an aerial attack in which ground units were strafed and bombed. Many of our soldiers were killed and many wounded.

My parents went through a terrible time. I remember the whole family came to visit after I was in Lebanon two months. I spent three weeks with them. Then the week I was to be discharged, war broke out. I talk with my parents on the phone now about what is happening. They don't mention being frightened because they've been through this before with me. I think it's harder for parents because they don't know what is going on. They only know what they see in the news. On the other hand, the fact that my parents have experienced it before may be increasing their anxiety, and perhaps that is why they don't bring it up.

War takes you out of normal everyday reality. Even after you return to civilian life, that experience often haunts you. Nevertheless, it's amazing how very quickly you return. I suspect I view being in Israel differently from the other students I study with at Pardes. What frightens me



the most about the Gulf War is the prospect of having to go, again, into battle.

After my army service I felt I had to get away and went to the States for a year. I knew I would be returning to Israel. I felt I was suffering from a form of battleshock and that it was important for me to return. Soon after my return, I was sent again to Lebanon. It was difficult for me to go back there, but I think it helped me come to terms with my war experience and to affirm my life goals. I wanted to be a writer, so I decided to go to Hebrew University and major in English literature and philosophy. I wrote a lot of poetry and short fiction after the war, some of which was published.

After Hebrew University, I went to the States for four years. For the first two I was a journalist with the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, and after that I freelanced and wrote for a national radio series on health issues. At the same time I began an M.A. in Jewish mysticism at Baltimore Hebrew College, started teaching at a religious school, and was youth director at a synagogue. As youth director, I began a new educational project, Tikkun Olam, to get kids turned on to Judaism through community involvement in social justice programs. I finished my M.A. last June and applied to Hebrew Union College.

I've known Levi Lauer since I was eleven, and for a long time I've wanted to study at Pardes. I have also been attracted to the idea of taking a year to devote to Torah *lishma*. I wanted exposure to what I felt was authentic, but never had a chance to experience. And I love it. Someone told me that one of their chief impressions of Pardes alumni was how

fiercely loyal they are to Pardes. I think this is because you develop such a strong sense of community. I find the *havruta* experience creates an intimate relationship with people, something quite unlike what you have at university. Through the meeting of minds you expose yourself, and are thus challenged to grow.

Pardes has deepened and transformed my perspective on being Jewish and the extent to which I want to incorporate tradition into my life. I've certainly become more observant and gained a new and exciting perspective on Jewish texts. When I first came to Israel I was looking for a way to express my Jewish identity, a secular, rather than a traditional, one. Both in the army and in university, I had moved away from tradition, rather than toward it. While I grew up in a very Jewish home, it was only through Pardes that I've really begun to feel more whole Jewishly. I was always uncomfortable and alienated at traditional services because I never knew what was going on. Now that I know what is happening, I find prayer is a way to connect with my spiritual self. This has certainly deepened my understanding of traditional observance.

With Israel facing a possible threat from Iraq, I feel it is especially important to be here now and provide whatever support one can. Despite the current situation, there are so many wonderful changes taking place that attract me. With the influx of Russian immigrants and the new openness to Judaism that lies between the *haredi* (ultra Orthodox) and the secular, there are increased opportunities for getting involved in exposing secular Israelis to what Judaism has to offer. Because of my



army background and Hebrew, I am a good bridge to this population. I've come to appreciate basic things here. Being part of Israel puts you into direct relationship with the land and people, whether you are walking in the city, shopping in the shuk or whatever. You shed lots of layers here that you carry around in the States. This gives you greater access to a healthier, more spiritual life.

There's no question that these days I'm more apprehensive when my wife is walking alone in the city. I'm more conscious with whom I'm coming in contact when I'm alone in areas where there is a higher concentration of Arabs. There are places I won't go any more, East Jerusalem and the Arab Quarter of the Old City. People are more frightened and anxious than before. Though it disturbs me to walk around Jerusalem and feel this sense of apprehension, I'm committed to being here in Israel. ♦

ELLEN KAPLAN is from San Diego. She received her B.A. in history in 1989 from the University of California at Berkeley.

When I graduated from university, I was accepted to law school, but decided to defer my admission for a year in order to spend a year in Israel. This was to be the realization of a promise I had made to myself on my first visit here when I was sixteen. Part of my reason for returning was to do something useful for Israel; I chose, therefore, to spend the year doing community service work through Project OTZMA.

OTZMA did not emphasize religious observance or Jewish learning, but while I was here, I started to won-



der whether these could fit into my life. I had been an actively involved Reform Jew in the States and at university was president of Hillel. One of my project assignments at OTZMA was to spend six weeks at a religious Youth Aliya village teaching English to Ethiopian teenagers. This was a positive and non-coercive exposure to observant Jewish life. During that year, my boyfriend, later to become my fiancé, was at Pardes, which also enabled me to experience an observant lifestyle.

I was not yet putting much of this into practice, which troubled me. I knew I had to learn more in order to integrate ideas and practice; I needed an education. I also realized that my reasons for going to law school owed more to the career pressure felt in the States than to an inherent love of the law. Most of my friends were going to graduate and professional schools and that seemed like reason enough to do likewise. Now, I am unsure as to choice of career. I do know, however, that I want to further my Jewish learning and continue to integrate my studies with my personal behavior. At present, I hope to remain in Israel for another year (we're planning a June wedding in Jerusalem) and then return to the States to pursue our education.

Despite everything that's happened since I've been here—the intensification of the intifada and the Gulf War, and despite parental pressure to return, I've never seriously thought about leaving Israel. I've experienced little internal conflict, perhaps because my reason for coming to Pardes was not just to study texts, which one can do anywhere, but also to be in Israel.

My parents worried for my physical safety, especially just before the war

started. I think, however, that because I was here last year and because I am engaged and seriously considering *aliya*, they have begun to accept my view of being here.

They've even come to respect my commitment to Israel, though they don't identify with it. But, because of me, they have come here for a visit and seem to feel more connected to Israel than ever before. When war broke out and Israel was attacked, in place of pressure to return which I had formerly sensed, I heard a certain measure of pride in their voices.

I was frightened the first time I was in a sealed room. I was in Efrat with my fiancé at the home of the family he lives with. It was scary; we didn't know what was happening. It's also strange because when in our sealed rooms, we're so isolated from one another. But life continues on as before. A full schedule of classes has resumed. And when I'm not in class, I spend my time going to caterers and looking for a wedding dress. Nevertheless, underlying this appearance of normality, is a certain fear, because no one can be certain what Saddam Hussein will do.

I think a lot of people have become political and military analysts overnight. I find it best, however, to deal with what I'm sure of, rather than speculate about what I know little. I remember, before the Scud missile attacks began, when students were trying to decide whether to stay in Israel or go home, a teacher told me that to leave because of fear of something that might never happen is to give up on that area of my life over which I feel I have control. I wake up, study Torah and go about my business. If I'd left because of fears of Jerusalem being overcome, I wouldn't be able to take advantage of things I still have the ability to do. Because I see Israel as always having had to live with the threat of war, I don't regard the present as anything but a heightened tension. I'm not under the illusion that there will be peace when this is finished.

I feel, as a result of my Torah study at Pardes, and from what I'm learning from the teachers here, that living Jewishly means living within the context of a Jewish community and that this is best exemplified within the Jewish State. I feel a sense of responsibility to be here and to stand with the Jewish people when they are attacked, as well as when they are celebrating. This is not to say that my commitment to Israel and to Jewish life are not constantly challenged. The war has only intensified that challenge. ♦



JOCELYN REISMAN is from Weston, Connecticut. She received her B.A. in History and Psychology in 1986 from Stanford University, and worked as Program Director at Stanford Hillel until coming to Israel. The following is an abbreviated version of an article she wrote for the Stanford Hillel alumni newsletter, Haver.



Moments before take-off from JFK, the bustling passengers in the packed Tel Aviv-bound 747 hushed to a chilling silence. All eyes shifted to the television monitors. News cameras focused on an Israeli storefront with gas masks for sale. "Bad timing for my big adventure in Israel," I thought as the inescapable talk of war filled the plane.

It was August 9, one week after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The tension and uncertainty of war continued until what seemed to be the last second on January 15. The tenor of conversations with family and friends back in the United States, who called with increasing frequency as the U.N. deadline approached, switched from concern to imploring "Come home now!" Teachers and administrators at Pardes, however, provided encouragement and a supportive environment for those who decided to stay. This helped me conclude that remaining in Israel was important, even though I wasn't sure at the time why. Now, after the cease-fire, that I'm free to dismantle my sealed room and leave my gas mask in my closet, I'm glad I didn't hop the first plane home.

One truth, reinforced for me during the war, is that Israel constantly fights to protect its existence. Israel is prepared to pull together during a national crisis in a way unthinkable in a vast country like the United States. On first glance, a visitor would understandably not believe it. Israel's infamous bureaucratic obstacle courses, with endless forms, offices and lines can be more daunting than tear gas and guns. Thankfully, such feared nightmares did not become a reality. The streamlined process by Haga, Israel's Civil Defense organization, to educate the public, distribute personal protection kits, and coordinate radio and television emergency broadcasts was most impressive. Although everyone received a brown cardboard, lunchbox-sized kit, with gas mask (*masaycha*), anti-chemical injection and powder, no one wanted to believe it would have to be opened.

War preparation entailed that each building undergo some interior deco-

rating. Using layers of plastic sheets to cover windows and tape to seal all apertures, one room per household, office or school became the *heder atoom*, the sealed room. In preparation for a possible daytime attack, everyone in the Musrara Jewish Community Center, home of a day care center, programs for the elderly and Pardes, participated in several practice drills. My job was to run to the first floor, pick up a ten-month old and his *mamat*, the chemical-proof rectangular plastic tent for babies, and run back up to the second-floor sealed room, a barren storage room with a small window close to the ceiling. We packed into this room, shoulder to shoulder. The infant cooed next to the 90-year-old, who unable to hear the drill instructions, thought it was the real thing. Even in this rehearsed procedure, tension mounted to the point that everyone streamed out of the room with long sighs of relief. Yet, the Holocaust imagery haunted me for the rest of the day. Noticing I was unable to work, my teacher reminded me that, unlike forty-five years ago, we're now actively protecting ourselves from gas.

I cried myself to sleep the night of January 15, terrified that the world would once again stand aside while a hater of Jews would attempt to destroy the Jewish nation. Four hours after the war began, I awoke and in a daze, huddled in the *heder atoom* (which sounded too much like tomb to me) of my Israeli relatives: Evan, Netta, their four-year-old son, seven-year-old daughter and Labrador puppy. As I worried about the fate of this maskless dog, Evan and Netta forced the masks on their children, who promptly screamed and cried in protest. Not much more willing to ac-

cept the gruesome possibility of attack, I too, acquiesced. The dog stared quizzically at his five aardvark-looking friends. The kids sobbed and I trembled, as we waited for over an hour for news, breathing and talking though our masks like astronauts.

At the outbreak of the war, phone lines were jammed. Bezek, Israel's AT&T, reaped a bundle with more calls per minute than ever before. Since the phone lines were overloaded, Nachman Shai, the army spokesperson (whose calming voice rocketed him to fame and heart-throb status for many women), could not contact the national radio station to deliver information. Bezek placed ads in papers asking people *not* to make phone calls during an alert. For the first few days of the war, the *azakot*, warning sirens, wailed regularly every evening. A routine was quickly established—grabbing a last snack, running to the sealed room, putting on the masks, sealing the door shut with a long screech of tape, and pressing the *smartoot ratoov*, a wet rag, under the door. Then on with the T.V. and radio, frantically alternating the volume dials on each to find out which would bring information faster. Worried relatives from the United States often conveyed the news faster than Israel's media.

With civilians comprising the rear military guard, all of Israel turned into one unit, one family. Since I refused to be held hostage by Saddam and remain at home in the evenings, I found myself walking on the relatively deserted streets during three *azakot*. The three Israeli homes that opened their doors to me exemplify the diverse, yet communal nature of the country: an Iraqi family who calmly watched television as if nothing had happened, insisted I eat, eat, eat, and marry their youngest of eight; a Yugoslav family and friends who crowded into their *heder atoom* in the master bedroom and filled the room with a loud clamor of their native dialect as they frenetically called every Yugoslav family in the area; and a *sabra* family who lived in a breathtaking, monstrous home. (I picked it because I was curious to see what it looked like inside.) Can you imagine knocking on a random door in New York City in a time of emergency and being welcomed in? Once, as I made my way home after an *azakah*, I stopped to watch the fireworks-like glow of the Patriot missiles winding their way through the sky. An Egged bus stopped next to me; the driver asked if I needed a ride. I felt safe in a country like this. Even the T.V. anchors wished us a *leila*

shaket, a quiet night, instead of a good night, reminding everyone that the whole country was in this together.

No one could believe it when Nachman Shai suddenly announced, the day before Purim, that we could dismantle our *heder atoom* and leave our gas masks at home. My roommate, along with many other astonished Israelis, insisted we keep our sealed room intact, and she continued to carry around her mask until it was obvious that the war was really over. And that reality sunk in soon after Purim began. It was a Purim celebration and *megilla* reading I will never forget. People created costumes to reflect all aspects of the war: *heder atooms*, the worried parents overseas, Scud and Patriot missiles, and everyone's "hero" Nachman Shai. During the *megilla* chanting, Saddam was substituted for Haman (hamantaschen, normally called *ozney* Haman, were now *ozney* Saddam) as the congregation made the noisiest and longest drowning out of Haman's name. It seemed like divine providence—we were reading an ancient scroll which uncannily mirrored our reality.

There were thirty-nine Scud missile attacks on Israel by war's end and only one direct casualty. (A number of people died from heart attacks and putting their masks on improperly). Israelis talk in amazement about this *nes*, this miracle. In fact, during a regular weekend ten people die on average in car accidents in the country. Since people were confined to their homes during the first weekend of the war, no one died in car accidents and only three people died due to war-related circumstances. Saddam saved seven lives! People keep asking me if I was afraid during the war. My answer is always, "Yes, I was afraid at the onset of the war, but I was much more afraid about crossing the street or getting into a car, even to drive down the block." During the week I left Israel to come home for Passover vacation, forty people were killed in car accidents.

As I waited in Ben Gurion airport to board my delayed plane, I reflected on my emotional state during the war and marveled anew at the variety of people crowded around me. The war was a great equalizer; it blurred distinctions. We were all the same potential targets feeling similar limited control of our fates. On the long flight home, as I reclined my seat and contemplated my surreal wartime experiences, I felt a quiet elation knowing I would soon be back in Jerusalem. ♦

THE PARDES CONNECTION

news of classmates and staff...

Debbie Brief '85-'86, is working this year at a community center in Casablanca, Morocco. She is employed by the American Joint Distribution Committee.

Pam Hoffman '73-'74, has received *smicha* from The Jewish Theological Seminary. She is living in New York.

Robert Housman '78-'79, founded the Yad Chessed Charity Fund to provide grants and interest-free loans to Jews in the Boston area.

Elissa Kaplan '84-'85, has been involved in establishing a Torah school in Brooklyn for women, which offers serious textual study with women teachers.

Josh Shuman '87-'88, is currently serving in the Israel Defense Force.

and their weddings...

Jacqueline Espinoza, Pardes student and staff '89-'90, to Joseph Elbaz. They are living on Kibbutz Keturah in the Negev.

Stephanie Greenblatt '88-'89 and **Daniel Ginessky** '86-'87. They are living in Jerusalem.

Philip Miller '86-'88, to Ruth Greenfield. They are living in New York.

Rachel Montagu '80-'82, to Francis Trevherz. They are living in London.

and their babies...

Judy Oppenheim Beizer '80-'81, and husband, Matthew, are the parents of a son, David Jacob. They are living in Forest Hills, New York.

Yochanan Ben Avraham '84-'86, and wife, Michal, are the parents of a daughter, Naomi. They are living in Lev Hashomron.

Debra Blog '80-'81, and husband Larry Zisman, are the parents of a daughter, Rachel Emma. They are living in Mount Vernon, N.Y.

Meir Charash '80-'82, and wife Debra Roytenberg are the parents of a daughter, Galit Eva. They are living in Jerusalem.

Kenneth Cohen '78-'79, and wife, Gillian, are the parents of a son, Zachary Natan. They are living in Maryland.

Debbi Cooper '76-'77, and husband, David Rosenberg, are the parents of a daughter, Naomi. They are living in Jerusalem.

Andrew and Rachel Eisen '87-'88, are the parents of a son, Noam David. They are living in New Jersey.

Stephanie Ellman '82-'84, and husband, Moshe Sherman, are the parents of a daughter, Adina. They are living in Toronto.

Ditza Eshed '76-'77, and husband, Shimon Shabtai, are the parents of a daughter, Ora Malia. They are living in Jerusalem.

Steve '80-'81 and **Leah Fine** '87-'90, are the parents of a son, Elisha Nir. After four years in Jerusalem, they are returning to Los Angeles where Steve has been awarded a Finkelstein Fellowship to com-

plete his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Judaism.

Cheri Fox '80-'81, and husband, Hayim Goldgraber, are the parents of a daughter, Naomi. They are living in Jerusalem and Boston.

Gershom Gorenberg '77-'78 and **Myra Noveck** '82-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Elisheva Yasmin. They are living in Jerusalem.

Asher Goshen '85-'87, and wife Nitzhia, are the parents of a son, Mordechai. They are living in Jerusalem.

Gwenn Schlansky Herman '81-'82, and husband, Malcolm, are the parents of a daughter, Ma'ayan. They are living in Jerusalem.

Tina Goldman Lehrer '80-'81, and husband, Ya'akov, are the parents of a daughter, Gabriella Ruth. They are living in Holon.

Miriam Mandel-Levi '87-'88, and husband, Daniel Levi, are the parents of a son, Yehuda Yonatan. They are living in Toronto.

Karen Morritt '87-'88, and husband, Jonathan Berlinger, are the parents of a son, Saarya. They are living in the Boston area.

Steve '83-'86 and **Naomi (Krull) Moss** '84-'86, are the parents of a daughter, Yocheved Miriam. They are living in Jerusalem.

Laura Nelson-Levy '82-'83, and husband, Seth, are the parents of a son, Yochanan Yaakov. They are living in Jerusalem.

Susan (Lieberman) Oppenheimer '82-'84, and husband, Shmuel, are the parents of a daughter, Noa Leah. They are living in Jerusalem.

Helen Plotnick '82-'83 and **Richard Schuldenfrei** '82-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Miriam. They are living in Philadelphia.

Rafi Rothman '84-'85, and wife, Randi, are the parents of a son, Eitan Mordecai. They are living in Kiryat Shmona.

Bakol Ruben Gellar '88-'89 and **Shmuel Gellar** '88-'89, are the parents of a son, Raphael Ruben. They are living in Jerusalem.

Arlene Ruby '85-'86, and husband, Mickey Har-el, are the parents of a daughter, Shira Miriam. They are living in Jerusalem.

Carolyn Shaffer '88-'89, and husband, David Schwartz, are the parents of a son, Eliahu. They are living in Jerusalem.

Lynn Sussman '80-'81, and husband, Yitzhak Alster, are the parents of a son, Nadav. They are living in Jerusalem.

Cindy Weiner '86-'88 and **Scott (Yuval) Sobel** '87-'88, are the parents of a daughter, Miriam Heneh. They are living in Los Angeles. Cindy completed her M.A. in occupational therapy at University of Southern California and Yuval is an attorney.

Randy Wolfe '74-'75, and wife, Bev Werbul, are the parents of a daughter, Rachel Bria. They are living in Winnipeg, Canada.

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Zionist orientation have been established, one of which is religious. Five hundred Jewish children attend summer camp in Israel annually.

"For forty years," says one official of the community, "we were not allowed to speak Hebrew or show support for Israel. For this we need a new generation that must gain its voice. If we gain the children, we will gain the people." The truth of this statement is much in evidence. At the Pesach seder we attended in Budapest, which was conducted by the B'nei Akiva *shaliach*, we encountered dozens of teenage boys and girls. Fully familiar with the Haggadah, they enjoyed belting out their favorites tunes. I have no doubt that this is the generation that is regaining its voice. Yet they are an anomaly, these B'nei Akiva enthusiasts. For they are children of a lost generation, of parents who remain only tenuously connected to Judaism.

It is still too early to know what this ferment portends. Only time will tell whether it is a passing phase, or whether it can be sustained over time.

The Eris are committed to sustaining it. They are now back in Budapest where they are trying to establish an outreach program for young, non-involved Hungarian Jews and to piece together the institutional and financial support they will need. That they are singularly qualified for this task is obvious. They have "been there," and they bring to this undertaking both personal experience and profound dedication. The time is right for success. We at Pardes wish them well.

Jane Kimchi

IN MEMORY

Rebecca Gura ⁵⁷⁵⁷, lost her struggle with leukemia. She died on February 13, the 30th of Shevat. May her memory be for a blessing.

PARDES CENTER FOR BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Pardes is offering a new month-long program in August for intensive study of biblical exegesis. Courses are offered in both Hebrew and English during morning, afternoon and evening hours. The program, organized by Pardes teacher Dr. Zev (Walter) Herzberg, is being taught by the following experts in *parshanut*: Professor Nehama Leibowitz, Dr. Avraham Zalkin, Dr. Avigdor Shinan, Dr. Yisrael Rosenson, Haim Avitan, Shoshana Rabin, Hasia Biala, Arella Yidgar, Dr. Baruch Schwartz, Shoshana Rabin, Judy Klitsner and Dr. Herzberg.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS

- 1) Dorot Foundation Fellowships: Eight Pardes students will be receiving Dorot Fellowships for the 1991-92 academic year. Dorot Fellows devote half-time to study at Pardes and half to community service projects. In addition to the Dorot Fellows, a number of Pardes students are receiving assistance from the Dorot Foundation enabling them to learn at Pardes next year.
- 2) Helen Daniels Bader Charitable Trust: A \$150,000 fund, to be used in part as an endowment and in part as financial aid to students.
- 3) S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer Family Foundation: Grant of \$10,000 for student scholarships for 1991-1992.
- 4) Sapirstein-Stone-Weiss Foundation: Five year grant of \$25,000.
- 5) Anonymous grant of \$40,000 for student scholarships and faculty salaries.

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Pardes Friends,

I'm very sad to tell you that our daughter, Rebecca, died this past February 13th, the 30th of Shevat, when her leukemia reappeared quite suddenly and virulently...

We are thankful at least that for her the worst of her suffering was short.

Our community rallied to our side and helped Kathy, Ethan and me wander through the miasma of pain that next thirty days.

Independent of theology, our Tradition's mourning rites make the best therapy and create the best circumstances for re-entering daily life. Kathy and I owe a debt to Pardes for arming us with the common-sense to let our Tradition do its work for us. We were thus able to surrender to its authority—exactly at the point when we could not think.

We have, through the four and one-half years that Rebecca was treated at UCLA, met a number of parents who have lost children. Each has worked through their pain in their own way. But those who attended to it inside a coherent tradition, Jewish or otherwise, came out, we observed, more whole, though never in one unaltered piece. Those who seemed to have the hardest time were the Jews most distanced from our faith and our people. Pardes helped us bridge the gap back from an unbridled secularism.

Gratefully,
Dennis Gura

Yes, I too want to make a contribution to Pardes. Enclosed is my contribution for \$ _____ (or its equivalent).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

I am making this contribution in honor/memory of: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Checks for tax-deductible contributions should be made out to American Pardes Foundation, Box 58, Roseland, NY 07068.

For information on programs, please contact Beth Newmark, 111 Ocean Street, Lynn, MA 01902. Telephone: 617-592-4542; FAX: 617-592-5759.

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