

HAVRUTA

חברותא

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A PARDES LEARNING COMPANION

COMMENT According to Ethics of the Fathers (Avot, 1:2), "The world is based on three principles—Torah, worship and *gemilut hasadim* (deeds of loving kindness)." Unfortunately, in much of the world of Jewish learning, the third of these principles is largely ignored. *Gemilut hasadim* provides an essential bridge between Torah learning in the *beit midrash* and the larger community. Yet within the world of Jewish learning, few are willing to cross this bridge. By failing to accommodate *gemilut hasadim* in the curriculum, an intellectual model is presented that creates a gulf between the study of Torah and the doing of good deeds. In fact, many Jewish educators regard time spent away from learning Torah as wasted.

At Pardes, *gemilut hasadim* is another

way of learning Torah. In concept and in curriculum, Pardes presents a model for uniting the learning of Torah with the *mitzva* of loving one's neighbor. By incorporating textual learning of *gemilut hasadim* and by requiring that each student spend half a day a week away from the *beit midrash* actively engaged in a community service project, Pardes avoids isolation from the larger community. Students talk about the impact this singular approach has had on their lives in the Pardes People feature, "Repairing the World."

When I was a student at Pardes in '80-'81, my project was to serve as companion to an ailing Bulgarian couple in their 80's. My relationship with them continued for ten years until they both died. The two-room apartment they occupied was

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FACULTY PROFILE



Baruch Feldstern, Assistant Director for Academic Affairs, came to Pardes in 1990 from Midreshet Yerushalayim, a Jewish studies program which he directed for The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) of America for twelve years. He has a B.A. and Ed.M. from Temple University in Philadelphia, where he grew up, and a second master's degree and rabbinic ordination from JTS. This past May, Baruch received his Ph.D., also from JTS. His dissertation was a critical edition of a thirteenth century commentary to Bereshit, *Hemat Hahemda*, one of the earliest works produced in the Jewish community of Aleppo, Syria. The dissertation straddles the fields of Midrash and Parshanut Hamikra (biblical exegesis), both of which he teaches at Pardes in addition to his administrative duties. Baruch, his wife Adina and the oldest of their three sons, then three months old, made *aliya* in 1978.

"I felt very much at home at Pardes from the moment I arrived. Aside from the warmth which I found in the faculty and student body, the program's non-coercive orientation is one with which I feel very comfortable. I think it is vital for students to see that openness to diverse opinions is not merely a nod to contemporary pluralism, but is characteristic of Jewish tradition at every stage. Ibn Ezra disagrees with Rashi on every page of the rabbinic Bible, and Ramban represents a third approach; yet there they are, side by side, informing the world-views of generations of Jews who revere all three. I hope that in the texts I study with them, my students will find categories from which they can construct a variety of deeply Jewish lifestyles, without feeling that they must conform to one particular denominational stance."

PARDES PEOPLE: Repairing the World

Three students volunteer at the Enosh *moaddon* (social club) for recovering, mentally ill adults who are living independently. Many were formerly hospitalized, but with the advent of effective drug treatment, or because of more substantive recovery, they were seen as sufficiently autonomous to leave the hospital.

Stephen Bickel is from Berkeley, California. He got his B.A. from Oberlin in biology in 1991 and intends to go to graduate school in virology. This Fall, he begins work in a genetics laboratory at Stanford University.

The *moaddon* is a strange sort of place, simultaneously inviting and alienating. After a one month get acquainted period, volunteers are encouraged to offer a weekly *chug* (special activity) of their own choosing. Sugar being the universal elixir, and possessing a sweet-tooth myself, I elected to sponsor a dessert cooking *chug*. I would bring the ingredients and try to recruit participants. While the end product is always very popular, I felt fortunate if on any given day I got one or two members actively involved.

Our time in the *moaddon* was split fairly evenly between supervising the *chug* and socializing with members, an activity which proved far more challenging than it sounds. It demanded cultivation of a certain sensitivity to members' needs and preferences (some preferred not talking at all), at the same time that I felt frustrated by my insufficient fluency in Hebrew. In spite of these drawbacks, however, I think they really liked having us there.

All in all, my work at the *moaddon* has been a rewarding, educational experience. Not only did I encounter a part of Israeli society I would otherwise not have seen, but hopefully I have helped to lessen their troubles and provide some small comfort.



Chaim Kram grew up in Rockville, Maryland. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 1988 with dual degrees in electrical engineering and mathematics and worked for the next three years as an engineer. He plans to return to the States and work in either Jewish education, engineering and/or computers.

I was selected to organize the computer club for the Mo'addon at Enosh. When we finish with computer club, I join the others in playing backgammon or ping-pong and chatting with the members. I have to admit that the main reason I took on the volunteer work at Enosh is because Pardes requires it. Nevertheless, I realized then, and still feel, that *gemilut hasadim* is an important way to help the community and perform *tikkun olam*. It is difficult work for me, though, for it is not the one-on-one contact at which I excel. I have great difficulty conversing with members because of the language barrier and tend to gravitate towards the few who speak English. Nevertheless, I think we volunteers are making an impact, and this helps provide the motivation to keep on going.



Paul Rosenfield was born and lived for five years in Bangkok, Thailand, after which his family moved to Hartsdale, New York. He graduated from Brown University in 1990 with a B.A. in history, and is entering medical school this year at Columbia University.

The more aware I become Jewishly, the more I realize that my seemingly universalist upbringing, an eclectic mix of religious and philosophical traditions, was not as estranged from Jewish thought and values as I had presumed. Both of my parents' untiring public service work and active concern for family and friends are inspiring examples of *gemilut hasadim*. I myself have been involved in community service work for many years, but I find it reinvigorating and refreshing to transpose my actions into a Jewish framework. Viewing my isolated, limited acts as playing a part in *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), has strengthened this commitment.

At the Enosh social club, besides getting to know the people and listening to their stories, I play and teach guitar. There are several members of the club who are at varying levels of ability, and are interested in learning new chords and songs. When they are learning, each individual expresses his or her personality more fully than at any other time. One woman I teach is a true mystic, exhibiting a religious intensity in each of the four notes she knows how to play. Another is eager to learn but remains unsure of herself even as she makes progress. I have also played a couple of times accompanied by one of the members on flute. He never had a lesson and can't read music, but his playing and improvisation are impeccable.

Volunteering has been an important part of my time at Pardes. In addition to providing an opportunity to step outside the *beit midrash* into Israeli society, it has allowed me to translate my new understanding of Judaism into positive action. As Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah taught: One whose wisdom exceeds his good deeds, to what may he be compared? To a tree with many branches and few roots. A wind can come and uproot it and topple it over." ■

Clare Goldwater is from London. She did her degree in English literature at Oxford and spent last year working for the Union of Jewish Students in London.

I volunteer at a hospital for the elderly with five other Pardes students. Our task is to develop and run activities that will stimulate the patients, all of whom have physical and/or mental problems. We do a number of things designed to vary their experience: organize exercise groups as well as art and sense stimulation projects; celebrate festivals; sing or even just get



them to talk about themselves. They speak a mixture of Roumenian, Yiddish, Russian, French or Arabic. Very few are native Hebrew speakers. We use a combination of Hebrew, English and signs, and somehow manage to communicate. Even though they don't remember our names, or exactly who we are, they are happy to see us and we have become attached. Despite their age and dementia, they each have an individual personality which we have come to know. When one of them died recently, we were deeply saddened.

My response to doing community service projects is two-fold. On the one hand, I do it primarily because it is required, for it is a mentally exhausting and emotionally draining intrusion into my learning. On the other hand, when I see the positive effect it has on the people we work with and realize it is true giving for the sake of giving, *gemilut hasadim*, I feel a sense of responsibility that goes far beyond the few hours a week I spend with them.

I think this is expressed in the effort that goes into planning our programming, in preparing what we do more carefully and in trying to compensate for the shortcomings of the staff by doing more than is required of us. We have regular workshops with our supervisor, a staff member there, during which we express our concerns and suggest improvements that will benefit the patients. We are also taught techniques for dealing with

the elderly infirm, and can discuss our attitudes to aging and death.

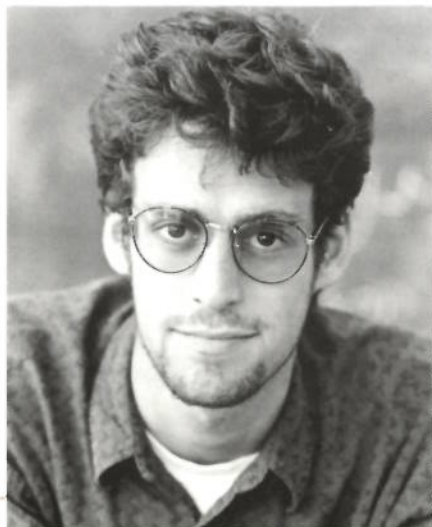
Pardes has taught us that the community is of paramount value in Jewish life. These sick, elderly people are part of the community. Therefore, it is only natural that I view our work with them as an extension of what we learn, as an expression of learning Torah. Of course, community concern derives from secular values as well, and I was brought up to seek interaction with the world, and not to live in self-enclosed isolation.

I hope always to be able to make work of this kind a part of my life. I know it requires great effort, but I feel it worthwhile because it enables me to express my sense of responsibility to the community as well as my appreciation for the richness and relevance of my Jewish heritage. ■

Peter Weiss, from Short Hills, New Jersey, received his B.A. in English from Yassar in 1989 and participated in the WUJS program in Arad before coming to Pardes. He will remain in Israel an additional year to pursue further study and work.

My community service project began with an abandoned eighteen-month-old boy who had been living in the children's oncology ward at Hadassah Hospital, Ein Kerem, since September 1991. He was suffering from a malignant tumor of the spine which affected his ability to walk. I was assigned to work with him as part of a team consisting of a physical therapist and a devoted young woman who, as part of her *sherut leumi* (national service), ran the children's play group.

I played with him, was taught how to help him with his walking and made an effort to expose him to new experiences. He was bright, alert, sociable and lovable. It was impossible to be with him and not become emotionally involved. I would show him the sunset from his window, the



Chagall windows in the synagogue and the elevator, where he loved to play with the buttons and watch the lights. He called us "imma" and "abba." I spoke to him in Hebrew, brought him goodies and even had visions of adopting him. Today, it's hard to believe that before I got to know him, or how he would react, I was afraid to touch him and apprehensive that he would reject me.

Although his cancer is in remission and hopefully was cured, he still required further surgery to remove the tumor, after which he was to be released to foster care. Shortly before this time, he fell, suffering a head injury requiring a few weeks further hospitalization and leaving his future health and personal fate somewhat uncertain. It was at this time that I began the difficult process of emotionally severing myself from him.

Despite my relatively insignificant role in helping him, I feel fortunate that I was able to get to know him and to participate in caring for him. I think volunteering enables one to see the "real" Israel and to be more deeply affected by it—the pain, failure and sickness, as well as the accomplishments and joy. When you're here for just a year, it's easy to arrange your time to see only the encouraging, and avoid the unpleasant.

Undergoing this experience has inspired me with optimism, for nothing is more beautiful than seeing the way a child can be deathly ill, yet happy at the same time. I was very much affected by the extent of communal caring I saw in the hospital, and by the commonality of suffering which knows no barriers: black garbed *haredim* (ultra religious Jews) whose kids share the same rooms with Arabs, or with less traditionally observant Jews—all together in the same predicament, all watching, waiting and praying.

One afternoon I was praying *mincha* when two Muslims cleared a space and knelt on the floor next to me to begin their prayers. Being together in this environment makes all other conflicts seem ridiculous. I think every person who leaves the hospital leaves with an awareness of the common ground they share. There's too much talk in Israel about the differences that separate us. When your child is sick, and in the next bed you see another child's arm weighted with intravenous infusions, barriers tend to disappear.

When I came to Israel for the first time I "believed" in universalism. Then I began to learn about Judaism at Pardes and discover the particularity of my own identity. Now, after my experience in the children's cancer ward of Hadassah Hospital, I find myself again touched by our common humanity, too often wearing the tragic face of suffering. ■

Michael Granoff, from Saddle River, New Jersey, received a B.A. from Tufts University in Judaic Studies (1991).

I work with Ya'acov, an elderly widower who lives alone in the neighborhood where Pardes is located. His leg was partially amputated, leaving him moderately disabled. Yakov came from Morocco in 1949 and has ten children, and many grandchildren, all of whom live in Israel, mostly in Jerusalem. I've met some of them as they come in from time to time to bring groceries and check up on him.

Each week I visit Ya'acov in his apartment. He is a gracious host, preparing a cup of tea as soon as I arrive. We spend most of the time talking, and with the help of a dictionary and Ya'acov, who loves teaching me new words, we discuss a wide range of topics. I usually read him *parshat hashavua* (the weekly Torah portion), talking about some of the things I've learned about it that week. His knowledge of the text, which he studied intensely as a boy in Morocco, is extremely impressive.

He seems fascinated by the fact that I'm an American, and shows me off to his neighbors. Although he is curious and asks a lot of questions about the United States, he doesn't view America favorably. He didn't think the riots in Los Angeles were a surprising development, but rather reflective of inherent problems in American society. He has very well-defined opinions, particularly about religious observance, keeping *mitzvot* and the sanctity of the Jewish people. If he were younger, his lack of tolerance for less traditional Jews and for non-Jews would probably bother me greatly, but I take what he says with a grain of salt and understand that he speaks from a set of experiences very different from my own. He is also caught up in messianic fervor, assuring me weekly with a smile that a redeemer is coming soon and reminding me of this whenever I talk to him about my future plans. I have enormous respect for the fact that he came here at the

beginning of the State with nothing, except a strong Zionist commitment, and worked hard to raise his ten children and build the country.

Through my relationship with Ya'acov, I have been exposed to aspects of Israeli life that I would never have experienced as a student. It has also provided me with an opportunity to see the country through the eyes of someone who has been part of Israel's development since the beginning and who has definite ideas regarding the religious implications of building the Jewish State.

I think that community service is one of the features that distinguishes Pardes. It gives students the opportunity to make a contribution to the lives of individuals in the community in which we are living, at the same time we are having so intensive a learning experience. It has helped me to better understand how I can transmit my experience at Pardes and what I am learning in the *beit midrash* to the world outside. ■



Vicki Goldman grew up in San Francisco, attended Northwestern University and graduated in 1989. Her B.A. is in History and Literature of Religion. After graduation, she spent six months on kibbutz ulpan, followed by a year in a public relations firm in California.

My volunteer project is with Haya Simkin, the daughter of two former Pardes students, who was born with a midline cleft defect, without a nose and unable to see. Before I began working with her, I read the article about her in Pardes' *Havruta* (No. 13). I was very apprehensive about what she would be like and how I would react to her. But one step through the door into her house and I found her to have the most delightful personality. She was just like one of "my" three-year-olds on kibbutz whom I had cared for during my days in ulpan.

The way in which I help the Simkins has gradually changed. At first, I went to their home and worked directly with Haya, playing games designed to help her development, reading books, and helping her learn to become more independent. On occasion, if Haya was sick, I would play with her older brother Michael. More recently, I have been using this time to prepare Braille books and special games which she can play with sighted kids.

Haya attends Gan Harmony, a unique and wonderful nursery school that integrates handicapped (about one fourth of the kids) with non-handicapped children. Working with Haya has made me aware of new concerns and realities. The first time I walked into the gan, I was struck by the extent to which nursery schools direct themselves to the seeing child. Every inch of wall space was covered with material designed to stimulate the kids. For Haya, one has to translate this into an experience that can appeal to her other senses.

If not for the fact that Pardes requires us to do a volunteer project, I probably would not be doing one. I simply wouldn't have thought of it. But now I have a tremendous emotional investment in what I'm doing. The highest form of *tzedaka* is helping people to help themselves and I can't wish for more for Chaya. Knowing and loving her has also given me a family in Israel. So I, too, have richly benefitted from this experience. ■

Rachel Greenblatt is from Toledo, Ohio. She grew up in the Conservative movement, was active in USY and involved in Hillel at Cornell where she got her B.A. in history in 1990. This was her second year at Pardes.

Since I've been at Pardes, I've had two volunteer projects. During my first year I worked at Beit Reuven, a home for elderly people with various physical and mental problems. Each week we volunteers had to gird up our courage to walk through the door. Many of the people had come



WEXNER FELLOWS

Four of this year's Pardes students were recipients of Wexner Graduate Fellowships. The fellowships are designed to encourage the professional dedication of highly talented young adults to Jewish leadership, teaching and the rabbinate.

Lewis Warshauer '81-'82, '91-'92, is from Tenafly, New Jersey. He has a B.A. in history (1980) and an M.A. in international affairs (1985) from Columbia University, after which he worked in Washington, D.C. for five years as Chief of Staff for Robert Torricelli, Democratic Congressman from New Jersey. For the past ten years, Lewis has played a leadership role in Pardes' fundraising arm in the United States. He is attending rabbinical school at The Jewish Theological Seminary.

"There can be no Jewish community without Jewish learning. I think lack of learning is the major crisis in Western Jewry today; the other problems are symptoms. I hope to be part of the effort to reverse this trend by working with people interested in strengthening their Jewish learning and involvement."

Jocelyn Reisman '90-'92 is from Weston, Connecticut. She did a B.A. at Stanford in history and psychology in 1986 and stayed on for the next four years as Hillel



Lewis Warshauer



Jocelyn Reisman



Jeremy Kalmanofsky

program director. She attends JTS.

"While growing up, I was often encouraged to take a public role within the Jewish community, such as chanting Torah and Megillat Esther. For years, on and off, I entertained the idea of becoming a rabbi. The year I graduated from university, women were admitted to the rabbinate at JTS. I'm terribly excited by the changes that have enabled women to enter all facets of Jewish life. Personally, I love studying Jewish texts. I would like to bring part of the heightened spiritual existence I've experienced in Israel to the American Jewish community."

Jeremy Kalmanofsky '91-'92, grew up in Louisville, Kentucky. He got his

B.A. in history from Cornell in 1988, after which he came to Israel and worked for the *The Nation*, a short-lived English language daily. He then returned to the States and became a reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. His wife Amy, also at Pardes, is a third year student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia. Jeremy entered JTS in the Fall.

"I had been a newspaper reporter until I decided to go to rabbinical school. Essentially I decided to stop spending my days and nights chasing down political gossip and to start working full-time at seeking God."

Andrea Shlipak was no longer at Pardes at the time of these interviews.

to Israel in their youth, highly qualified in various fields, and had accomplished much throughout their lives. Seeing these once-capable individuals so incapacitated mentally and emotionally was very depressing despite the fact that they were well cared for.

On the positive side, however, we felt we were making a difference in their lives. Though we were limited to English and pretty basic Hebrew, these elderly people spoke to us in a variety of languages. Many spoke English. Others addressed us in Hebrew, Hungarian, Arabic, French, Spanish, Russian, often mixing two or more languages in a single sentence. We played games with them, sang songs and did our best to communicate. Some of the people there remembered us from week to week. It also helped that the staff treated us as interns and taught us a lot about what was going on.

This year I wanted to be in a situation where I would be speaking Hebrew. So I'm working in the community center in which Pardes is situated, tutoring kids in various homework

assignments—math, social studies, English and *Tanach*. This has been a somewhat frustrating experience. First, seeing them only once a week is not enough to really gain their trust, and we lost a number of days because of the snow. Second, an American also has to overcome the students' scepticism that it is possible to know math even if one doesn't know Hebrew so well. But, as at Beit Reuven, the occasional flash of recognition, and even understanding, makes it worthwhile.

My parents raised me in a home in which the primary values were Jewish ones and in which taking care of those around us was a prime example. I learned that social action is the way in which you exemplify your responsibility for what goes on around you, and at the same time, that how you treat people in general is as important as a specific volunteer project.

Of course, you don't have to be Jewish to have these values. But it is very difficult to perpetuate them without a specific framework. In my own life I choose to give expression to them within a Jewish system. For this to work, I need

to feel like a participant in that system, not simply an observer. By enabling me to feel like an insider in terms of the texts, and by helping me strengthen my Zionism, Pardes has put me more strongly and more actively within a Jewish framework. It is the strength that comes from within the Jewish tradition that will fuel me and allow me to turn my attention once again outward to the needs of the community at large. And it is Pardes that has given me access to the sources of that tradition.

Sometimes the demands of learning text and the demands of being in the world at large come into conflict. There is only so much time in a day, and only so much energy in a person—physically and emotionally. For the time that we are students at Pardes, Pardes helps create this conflict, and it is therefore appropriate that Pardes provides a specific framework for its resolution. In the end, I will face the challenge of integrating text and learning with the larger world, and of using the learning to bring people together, and not to drive them apart. ■

DANCING THE MISHNA

Two Pardes students, Andrea Hodos '90-'92 and Aliza Shapiro '89-'91, have created a dance/theater piece based on an interpretation of the Mishna "Turn it over and turn it over for everything is in it (Pirke Avot 5)." The piece, performed in Israel numerous times and in Los Angeles at the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education (CAJE), serves as a springboard for discussion on topics such as the interaction between Torah and art, roles of women within the tradition and their relationship with Torah, and the dynamics of intensive learning.

The performance begins as the dancers sit in chairs facing each other and open texts represented by the stripes of the *tallit* held between them. They read, and then, a text-based question pulls them into dancing the turnings over of text, *havruta*, and self that characterize serious learning.

Aliza is from Brookline, Massachusetts and did her undergraduate degree in the Great Books Program at St. John's College. Andrea grew up in Greenfield, Massachusetts, graduated from Yale in 1988 with a degree in English literature and danced professionally before coming to Israel.



Andrea at left, and Aliza.



THE PLANTING OF PARDES

Some Thoughts Twenty Years Later

by Michael Swirsky

We all know the importance of origins and the stories we tell about them – cosmogonies, foundation myths, primal experiences – for the ongoing life of society and the individual. Perhaps because I was first trained as a biologist, I tend to think of this phenomenon in genetic terms: tiny filaments of nucleic acid in a single cell somehow provide the patterns and the momentum for the elaboration of enormously complex organisms, over life-spans of decades or even centuries. To be sure, environment plays an important role right from the start and can alter development in many different ways; but the original pattern continues to exert its influence throughout. Might this observation not hold true for institutions too, Pardes among them?

Let me start with some prevailing misconceptions. Pardes' original *raison d'être* had nothing to do with men and women studying together *per se*, nor did it have anything to do with Zionism. It had to do with a certain principled conception of the relationship between student and subject matter, more specifically between the Jew and the Torah, and the role of the teacher and the school in that relationship. Pardes was predicated on the notion that the Torah is the inheritance of every Jew, regardless of where he or she stands on the spectrum of observance or belief. All Jews – and we are speaking here of adults – thus have the right, and should have the opportunity, to gain access to that inheritance, to take hold of it and make it part of their lives, without arbitrary restriction as to the circumstances under which this may be done. It was to be the role of this school and its teachers to facilitate such appropriation – to uncover, to make accessible – without constraint of any kind.

Another, not unrelated misconception: Pardes was not founded by great scholars or teachers, pillars of the Jerusalem community. It was founded by a young man, a new *oleh* from a rather typical American-Jewish background, fresh out of graduate school and not yet thirty, who in matters of the spirit still thought of himself very much as a student and a seeker. Pardes was, in fact, the school he himself had always wanted to attend, would in fact have attended just a few years before had it existed, and once he had created it, *did* attend, sitting in on its classes, at the feet of its teachers. (As it happens, I was that young man.)

Why do I stress this? Because I think it has probably been decisive for the special character of Pardes all along, through many changes of personnel. Here we

have a good example of the importance of beginnings. Pardes began with the vantage point and concerns of the student, not the teacher; of the seeker after knowledge, not the dispenser of it. And it is this above all that has made it the uniquely warm, supportive, *humane* place of learning that has proven nourishing to so many generations of students.

In this, as in some other respects, the beginnings of Pardes reflect, for better or worse, the accidents of my personal experience. As an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, I had had the good fortune to come under the influence of a remarkable educator, the late Maurice Pekarsky מ"ר, then director of Hillel there. Protesting the manipulateness of so many of our institutions and organizations, Pekarsky always took what he called the "human-being-born-Jew" as his point of departure and goal. "In the discussions of the Jewish people and Jewish religion," he wrote, "the fate of the *Jew*...has been submerged...as if Jewish persons were only bricks in someone's imaginative edifice, not flesh and blood, frail, mortal creatures."

On another occasion, a student retreat, Pekarsky said, "I do not believe we came here to discover what the Sabbath means...We did not even come here to find out what Judaism means. I believe we came here to discover what our lives mean." This was hyperbole, of course, but the point is well taken: we must never lose sight of the student as an autonomous being who brings his or her own life-agenda into the classroom. Pardes, then, was ultimately to be not about books, traditions, or ideologies as ends in themselves but about people – with their questions and frustrations, yearnings and aspirations.

Pardes did not begin with an abstract ideal, however. It was actual encounters with young seekers like myself that got me to start thinking, in the summer of 1971, about an institute of *torah lishma* for adults, one that would have no agenda except the desire of its students to know. There were many such seekers in the Jewish world at that time, with a particular concentration here in Jerusalem. Some of them were taking courses in Judaica at the university, where the more tentative could be sure no questions of personal commitment would ever be raised, but then again, where such questions *could* not be raised even if one wanted to do so. The *yeshivot*, on the other hand – and there were then only a few that catered to beginners, and generally only men – offered a religious environment (of sorts)

According to Aliza, "As we started using the *fallit*, we saw it as an integrative force. Images began to emerge from it so that it was no longer just prayer shawl, but canopy, head covering and tapestry."



"Responses have been very positive," says Andrea. "We express something our audiences are able to respond to emotionally, and space to grapple with issues not usually dealt with in the classroom."

and a wonderfully engaging *mode* of study (the *beit midrash*), but they made rather heavy demands of personal commitment "up front" in terms of observance and were not shy about indoctrination. What was needed was a place that combined the openness and freedom of the one with the spiritual seriousness and engagement of the other, while eschewing the drawbacks of each.

After college, I had myself spent six years studying in an institution that tried to be both a *yeshiva* and a university. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America was, in the sixties, a place that attracted quite a few spiritual seekers, not all of them interested in being rabbis. As a place of scholarship, and especially of fellowship, it was superb; as a place to embark on a Jewish religious path it fell short, mainly, I think, because it combined the *worst* of the two systems of teaching – dry scholasticism and an insistence on observance – and seemed to give little thought to students' growth as human beings or as Jews. This, then, was in some ways a negative model for me.

One thing which both the Hebrew University and the *yeshivot* (and the Seminary, for that matter) lacked was a coherent curriculum by which the beginner could begin to *make sense* of the world of Judaism. Here I had a positive model to draw upon from my undergraduate experience at Chicago, where the notion of a comprehensive, highly structured introduction to the whole sweep of Western knowledge had been elaborated and successfully refined over a period of several decades. What I had seen at Chicago, too, was a great respect for primary sources ("the text") and for the ability of even the rank novice to read and gain insight from them that could not be gotten second hand. This emphasis dovetailed nicely, of course, with traditional Jewish notions of *tabnud torah*.

If the program were to be a coherent one, I felt its overall design should not be left to a committee, much less to the idiosyncracies of individual teachers. A Machiavellian *fait accompli* seemed called for. So with not a little *hutzpa* and naivete (and not a little excitement), I sat down and actually sketched out a curriculum of basic Jewish knowledge based on what I myself had already learned, a curriculum that covered key ideas, key texts, and key periods in the unfolding of the Jewish tradition from the Bible down to the present. For the sake of clarity and maximum immersion, each day in the week in this new program would be devoted entirely to one course (there were five), with a two-hour lecture-discussion given by the course's main teacher and

the rest of the time spent in unstructured text-study with a *havruta*, under the guidance of a tutor.



The next step was to find teachers sympathetic to what I wanted to do and willing to give some time to trying it out. Not a daring person by nature, I nevertheless screwed up my courage and approached some of the most respected educators around, people whose work I knew and who I had reason to think might be on my wavelength. To my astonishment, I was almost never turned down. Part of the trick, I suppose, was not to ask too much: just one course per teacher, to be given in a single weekly session, with hardly any faculty meetings or other obligations outside the classroom. Adin Steinsaltz, David Hartman, Eliezer Schweid, Mike Rosenak,

Aryeh Toeg ^{ב"ר} – all agreed to teach. (Toeg, a brilliant young Sephardic Bible scholar, fell in battle two years later in the Yom Kippur War). Working closely with them as tutors would be gifted younger teachers to whom, I thought, students could more easily relate during the long hours bent over text: Dov Berkovits and Aryeh Strikovsky (whom you all know), Menahem Fromann, Elliott Yagod, and Burton Zeffren. Later, I brought in a number of others as supplementary tutors and teachers of special-interest classes, including Yaakov Rothschild and Golda Warhaftig.

Setting up what became the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies – the name Pardes, suggested by my friend Selma Sage, conveyed both the multilevel character of Torah study and the difficulties and risks it entailed – took me a year of full-time, mostly solitary, often exhilarating work. (Can you imagine the sheer pleasure, after years of dissatisfaction as a student, of creating an educational institution tailored to your own specifications, from the ground up, with hardly anyone looking over your shoulder?) Here I must mention the practical circumstances which made the creation of the institute possible. I had during the previous year been in the employ of the World Zionist Organization's youth department, and it was the sympathetic support of the department's chairman, his willingness to take a chance on me and my idea, that was the real key. I am referring to Mordecai Bar-On, a man of unusual intelligence and breadth who had been the IDF Chief Education Officer and was later to become a Member of Knesset, a leader of Peace Now, and a professor of Israeli history. Though not a religious person, he was able to appreciate the importance of providing young Jews with untrammelled access to the riches of the religious tradition. He released me from my other duties for that year, gave me a building (the Gad Street site of the Machon Lishlihim, which providentially was just about to move to the new Kiryat Moriah), and provided me with a budget to fix it up and maintain it.

There were two processes that went on during the course of that preparatory year in which other people played important roles. One was a series of consultations I had with a number of trusted colleagues and friends, several of whom subsequently took an active part in the life of the institute. I think especially of Steve Shaw (then a Hillel director at Rutgers and now Director of Community Education at JTS), Avraham Infeld (now head of Melitz), and Mike Rosenak (long a Pardes teacher and now a professor of Jewish education at

the Hebrew University). Bernie Steinberg (now director of Jewish programming for the Cleveland Jewish Community Centers) was a particularly valuable kindred spirit who – again, significantly – became one of Pardes' first students and then a member of its faculty.

The other process was that of student recruitment, which entailed preparing and distributing publicity – the all-important task of articulating in writing what we were about – and turning to wonderfully helpful professionals I knew on college campuses and elsewhere for referrals, then screening applications and interviewing candidates. By the opening of classes in the fall of 1972, thirty exceptionally interesting and thoughtful young people had signed on. (They too took a big risk). The buildings had been redecorated and furnished, signs painted, a library acquired and set up – all things I did with relish and anticipation, the way expectant parents fix up a nursery for their first child – and we were ready to begin.

I have already pointed out several things Pardes was not about. Let me mention some others. You will notice I have been using the word "institute," not "yeshiva." Perhaps "academy" would have been better. But the point is, the *yeshiva* was only one of the models on which the idea of Pardes was based, and it was a problematical model at that. Not that I saw the *yeshiva* as in any way illegitimate in its own terms, only that it was not suited to the needs of the particular population I was interested in helping: those beginners who would be daunted by the prospect of overleaping, all at once, the affective and behavioral as well as the cognitive distance between themselves and the world of Jewish spirituality. For these people, knowledge was forbidding enough as a first step; belief and observance, if they came at all, could come later.

Another, even more crucial term that was absent from the early Pardes literature is "halakhic." It was omitted, not only because some of the staff were not fully committed to *halakha* in the Orthodox sense. (As it happens, most were, though not to the point of what my teacher Abraham Heschel ז"ל, himself an Orthodox Jew, once decried as "pan-halakhism," the tendency to reduce all of Judaism to *halakha*). Rather, we would have wanted to avoid any label that remotely suggested sectarianism or polemic. Pardes' goals were assertively modest ones: to help Jews learn, not to *make* Jews of them. Becoming Jews was a lifelong process that could be pursued individually alongside and beyond Pardes, along many different paths. (Tellingly, one of the first Pardes publicity brochures

was to bear the title "Our *Goal* is Jewish Learning").

By the same token, the question of "community" within Pardes' walls was intentionally left open. Knowing that students would come with very diverse backgrounds and views, I saw the struggle they would face each year, to work out a new *modus vivendi* among themselves over issues such as public prayer and Shabbat, as part of the educational experience Pardes would provide, an initiation, in microcosm, into the heterogeneity and strife of the larger community. The intensity of that struggle was heightened the first year by the fact that we had a dormitory, in which about half the students lived. Because of the danger that a certain kind of community would congeal prematurely under the sheer pressure of living together – having to make decisions about Shabbat observance, for example – I closed the dormitory at the end of that first year.

There is a certain irony here, one that affects many high-minded and successful educational institutions. They begin as training grounds for life in the larger society, initiating their students into the texts, ideas, and values on which that society is supposedly predicated. Yet a truly fresh look at sources, in a controlled, pristine environment, leads all too easily to a radical critique of the ways in which the fundamentals are inevitably compromised out in the real world. The result is that the institution, in its purity, comes to be viewed, not as an antechamber, but as an altogether superior *alternative* to the larger community, thus in a real sense subverting its own purposes.

I got my first vivid glimpse of this dynamic – what one might call inadvertent utopianization – as a teenager at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, an institution which produced such strong Jewish commitment in its graduates that they could not feel at home in the community they were

Pardes was predicated on the notion that the Torah is the inheritance of every Jew, regardless of where he or she stands on the spectrum of observance or belief.

expected to go out and lead. My secular alma mater, more of whose graduates choose academic careers than those of any other American university, provides another outstanding example. And judging from the frustrations with "life after Pardes" that have been expressed in this magazine over the years, the same thing has happened here. What was at first carefully circumscribed as a "beginning" becomes an "end."

Another phenomenon common to the "utopian" institutions I have mentioned is that their students invariably harbor a kind of nostalgia, not only after leaving but even while they are still there, a nostalgia for the institution itself as they think it once was, in the "good old days" before they arrived. I sometimes wonder if this curious line of thinking might not represent a displacement, onto a target close at hand, of the resentment students so often feel at the larger society for its betrayal of ideals. I am frequently asked if Pardes has changed over the years, by which people usually mean: changed for the worse. While it is true that institutions may have a "heyday" – a magical time when a vision comes into focus and captures the imagination and energy of students and teachers alike, followed by blurring, coasting, drifting, perhaps dissolution – I do not have the impression that this has been Pardes' fate. Pardes has weathered some difficult periods, but it seems to have learned from them and grown and prospered. It has surely changed, but so have the times. An institution which does not adapt to new needs and ideas becomes a prisoner of its origins, rather than being sustained by them.

A final word: meeting Pardes students and alumni, as I do week in, week out, I feel, even now, a deep, if usually unspoken, kinship with them and an enormous sense of gratitude that my destiny has in some way been linked with theirs. Over the years I have devoted myself to other Jewish educational pursuits and experiments, some more successful, some less, but all aimed at helping Jewish human beings "connect," vertically and horizontally, with their brethren and their God. Through all this I have remained myself a seeker, and it is good to know there are still others. More than this, as I talk to these earnest men and women, so palpably vitalized and deepened by their Pardes experience, I am strengthened in my sometimes shaky faith that the Torah can still sustain us today, can still be a source of living waters. For this, my thanks.

MICHAEL SWIRSKY is the founder of Pardes. He lives in Jerusalem.



Karin Kalkstein



Carl Messineo



Julia Fayngold



Mark Ivker



Aliza Geretz

law school in order to do family or public interest law. He has completed his first year at the University of Pennsylvania to which he returns after this year as a Dorot fellow.

"When I saw the Dorot Fellowship announcement and heard about Pardes, it sounded to me as if Pardes was a place where I could feel at home. This feeling was confirmed not only when I got to the classroom but also during our first *shabbaton* where I had an opportunity to see the teachers interacting with their families. I felt these were individuals from whom I could learn a great deal, and who had many attributes worthy of emulation. My internship is at the National Council for the Child, a national advocacy organization for children's issues. I'm working on a project concerning surrogate motherhood, putting together a detailed summary of what's going on in the world judicially and evaluating what the options are for Israel. As a social activist, I have always been frustrated when involved in issues concerning minorities and women. I felt that as a white Jewish male I was not only suspect, but also limited in the contribution I could make. With the new enrichment I have gained Jewishly, however, I expect that my future political and social activism will be channeled through Jewish organizations, where I feel I have a more natural and legitimate concern for the issues."

Mark Ivker is from New Orleans. He graduated from Princeton in 1991 with a major in physics and plans to go on for his M.A. in Israel. He spent the year between high school and college in Israel on the Young Judea program. His internship is with a physicist at Hebrew University.

"The idea behind the Dorot Fellowship program is to stem the growing gap in understanding between Americans and Israelis. To be an effective lay leader, one must have an understanding of Israel combined with a solid Jewish background. I am concerned about the American Jewish community. I feel strongly that the absence of textual knowledge among the vast majority of non-Orthodox Jews is extremely problematic. Until two-hundred years ago, the Jewish heritage was textual. The substitution of Jewish culture is not sufficient to preserve Jewish identity. I'm very pleased with Pardes. Since I hope I'll always be able to make time to learn, the focus of my efforts this year has been on acquiring the skills necessary to continue on my own."

DOROT FELLOWS

Dorot Fellowships are designed to foster Jewish lay leadership by providing for a year of study and work in Israel. Fellows are expected both to gain a grounding in the study of traditional texts and to work as an intern in their fields of interest. They may choose to study at Pardes or at one of several universities. Eight of this year's twelve fellows are at Pardes.

Carl Messineo is from Pittsburgh. After graduation from Carnegie Mellon in 1988 with a major in economics, he worked for Merrill Lynch in New York and Tokyo. While in New York, he became involved with AIPAC. During this same period, he volunteered with homeless children in the Bronx, which led to a decision to enter

Karin Kalkstein is from Staten Island, New York. She graduated from Brown in 1991 with a B.A. in psychology and will be returning to the States to enter medical school.

"Although I attended an Orthodox Day School until eighth grade, learning was never really a part of how I've been Jewish. Pardes has given me an appreciation of the importance of learning and enabled me to reconnect with Jewish study as an adult. I hope I will be able to continue learning when I'm in the States. As a result of living here this year, I feel much more knowledgeable about both Judaism and Israel and confident of being able to communicate this to others. My work is teaching English to Russian immigrants at a battered women's shelter. One of the benefits is that my Hebrew, which I have been using on a regular basis, has undergone much improvement."

Aliza Geretz is from Minneapolis, Minnesota. She majored in communication and marketing at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and got her B.A. in 1991.

"I had been thinking about coming to Israel after graduation and couldn't believe the opportunity afforded by the Dorot Fellowships. I plan to return to the States and work in international marketing, hopefully involving Israel. My internship is at a business consulting firm in Tel Aviv called Ya'ad Business Development. I'm an assistant researcher with responsibility for helping to develop internal business contacts that will assist Israeli companies interested in exporting. At Pardes I've become a literate Jew. I can go into a *beit midrash*, pick up a book and read it. It has been difficult being part-time in both the business world of Tel Aviv and the Anglo-Jewish world of Jerusalem. Juggling the two, however, has provided me with a more complete view of Israel."

Julia Fayngold was born in Kiev and in 1979, at the age of 9-1/2, moved with her parents to New Jersey. She graduated from Harvard in 1991 with a B.A. in government and will be attending law school at Yale University after studying a second year at Pardes. During her junior year she spent a semester at Hebrew University.

"I came to Pardes for hard-core intensive text study, with the goal of acquiring exposure to texts and the skills to continue learning on my own. Despite the fact that I did not come to Pardes for an "experience" or to partake of a halachic lifestyle, my consciousness has definitely been altered. I've acquired a

whole new set of categories to define reality. This year has also given me a unique and crucial capacity to fulfill the function of being involved in lay leadership. For my second goal is to be able to disseminate to others both my love of texts and the knowledge I have gained here. I believe inadequate education is at the root of the problem of assimilation among American Jewry. My internship is at Hebrew University's Soviet Research Center where I do research on issues dealing with Russia and with Russian and Eastern European relations with the Middle East. I'm also one of the editors of a monthly journal, for which I read, summarize, analyze and translate into English articles from the Russian press."

Jonathan Fuchs is from Old Bridge, New Jersey. He graduated from Brandeis in 1991 with a major in biochemistry and neuroscience and entered the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of Rutgers University this Fall. Jonathan spent a semester of his junior year at Hebrew University where he began learning in its *beit midrash* program. Following this he was a fellow in a summer program sponsored by the International Center for Jewish Leadership.

"My internship is at Brookdale Institute researching health care policy for the Ministry of Health. I am working on data collection and analysis of an experiment on privatization of government hospitals. When I finish medical school, I think I would like to return to Israel to practice medicine and do research. I want to be involved in community work with American Jews wherever I am, and feel I can do that here as well as in the United States."

continued from p. 1

the same one they had moved into when they came on *aliya* in the early 1950's, and in which they had raised their three children. They never complained about their straitened circumstances. Rather, their lives were filled with love for Israel, for the Jewish people and for life. The joy that accompanied their arrival in Israel remained with them throughout their lives.

I gained a tremendous amount from my experience with this family. They not only inspired me, but helped me to learn more about myself, particularly that giving of myself makes me open to new dimensions of thinking, feeling and caring.

Encouraging students in the performance of *gemilut hasadim* is something Pardes does well. I know that. In my own case, for all the wealth of learning I acquired during long hours in the *beit midrash*, my life was even more fully enriched by those few hours a week that I was required to spend away from it.

Jane Kimchi

For information on programs, please contact Pam Skopp, 106 John St., Clark, N.J. 07066. Telephone: 908-499-8480.

Checks for tax-deductible contributions should be made out to: American Pardes Foundation, c/o Susan Gottlieb, P.O. Box 926, Avon, Connecticut 06001, or Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, POB 8575, Jerusalem, Israel.

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Yes, I too want to make a contribution to Pardes.

Enclosed is my contribution for \$_____ (or its equivalent).

Name: _____

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

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PROGRAM NEWS

Summer Success

One hundred and fourteen students from six countries, including Israel, participated in the eighth year of Pardes' Summer Program. During each three-hour morning session students analyzed traditional texts with a study partner before convening for a lecture/discussion. Afternoons were devoted to one-week mini-courses on a range of topics, examples of which were: Jewish Sexual Ethics, Modern Medical Dilemmas and the Halacha, Foundations and History of the Arab-Israel Conflict, Images and Realities of Women: Halachic Reflections. For information on the 1993 Summer Program, contact Pam Skopp, 106 John Street, Clark, N.J. 07066 (908) 499-8480 or The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, Box 8575, Jerusalem, Israel, (02) 895-155/6; Fax 972-2-895-189.

Rabbinical Student Dialogues

Pardes is continuing to bring together rabbinical students from all denominations in a program designed to enable them to meet with future colleagues, become exposed to each other's thinking and contribute to intellectual and spiritual cross-fertilization. The rabbinical students are expected to bring their diverse viewpoints and commitments to bear in a series of discussions with seminal thinkers on the Jewish and Israeli scene.

Evening Courses

Pardes continues its tradition of offering evening courses for three terms throughout the year. Courses offered for the Fall term are: *Parshanut*, Philosophy of *Mitzvot*, Strange Encounters: Perceptions of Reality in the Bible, *Pirkei Tehilim B'Tefilah*, Famous Controversies in Rabbinic Literature, Talmud, From Judges to Kings, The Significance of Gender in Jewish Tradition, *Pshat vs. Halacha*, *Parshat Hashavua*, Torah Study and Understanding Pshat. For information, contact Assistant Director Gail Resnick during office hours Sunday-Thursday at (02) 895-155/6.

Jewish Thought Lecture Series

On Sunday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Pardes offers a lecture series on various aspects of Jewish thought. Open to the public, the lecturers are individuals prominent in Jerusalem's academic and religious communities. Pardes students follow up each lecture the next morning in small group discussion with their teachers.



THE PARDES CONNECTION

news of classmates and staff. . .

Cecil Rimer '84-'85, his wife Sara Cohen and daughter Yasmin are on leave from Kibbutz Ketura for the year and living in the States.

Pam Skopp '91-'92, is the new North American Alumni and Recruitment Coordinator, taking over from **Beth Newmark** '83-'84. Pam lives in Clark, New Jersey.

and their weddings...

Doug Abrams '89-'90, to Rachel Carlton. They are living in Berkeley, California.

Sarah Casse '88-'89, to Larry Krauss. They are living in Toronto, Ontario.

Alison Grishman '90-'91 and **Glen Rosenbaum** '90-'91. They are living in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

Gordon Kunin '85-'86, to Dina Bernat. They are living in Los Angeles. Gordon received his ordination from Jewish Theological Seminary and is working at the Stephen S. Wise Day School.

Moshe Pilser '91-'92, to Suzie Zerobnik. They are living in Jerusalem.

and their babies...

Jeff Allon '79-'80 and **Shelly Rifkin-Allon** '82-'83, are the parents of a son, Neveh Yisrael Tohm. They are living in Jerusalem.

Ann Angel '84-'85, and husband, Paul Fertig, are the parents of twin sons, Ilan and Yuval. They are living in Haifa.

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

Noga (Wendy) Brachman '83-'84, and husband, Warren Fisher, are the parents of a daughter, Eliraz Zippora. They are living in Efrat.

Anne '84-'86 and **Aryeh Breslow** '81-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Merav Bela. They are living in Jerusalem.

Yael Brozowski '89-'90, and husband, Urie

Goldblatt, are the parents of a daughter, Eden. They are living on Kibbutz Merav.

Ruth Bloch-Dym '81-'82, and husband, Fredi Bloch, are the parents of Jona (four years old), and Jael (one year old). They are living in Zurich, Switzerland.

Marilyn (Holzer) Cohen '86-'87, and husband, Shmuel, are the parents of a son, Na'or Zeev. They are living in Jerusalem.

Susan '80-'81 and **Yedidya Fraiman** '78-'80, '82-'83, are the parents of a son, Boaz Benjamin. They are living in Jerusalem.

Michael Friedland '84-'85, and wife, Elizabeth Fagen, are the parents of a daughter, Avital Batsheva. They are living in Appleton, Wisconsin where Michael is rabbi of the only synagogue.

Sharon Levinson, Director of North American Activities for Pardes, and husband, Jay Berkowitz, have adopted a daughter, Rachel Elisheva.

Philip Miller '86-88, and wife, Ruth Greenfield, are the parents of a son, Tuvia Aaron. They are living in Fair Lawn, New Jersey.

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

Susan (Lieberman) Oppenheimer '82-'84, and husband, Shmuel, are the parents of a son, Iddo Yonatan. They are living in Jerusalem.

Margorie Newman Revah '81-'82, and husband, Nissim, are the parents of a daughter, Dafna Rachel. They are living in Oklahoma City.

Tamar Lange Schriger '80-'81, and husband, Alan, are the parents of a son, Yonah Bracha. Tamar is a dietician in Jerusalem.

Meir and Malka Schweiger are the parents of a daughter, Chana Adi.

Abe Socher '89-'90, and wife, Shoshana, are the parents of a son, Roby. They are living in Allston, Massachusetts where Abe, a Wexner Fellow, is beginning his doctorate in Jewish Studies at Harvard.

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