



HAVRUTA

Mendy Shlomo (Summer '15)

"My summer at Pardes was such an exceptional experience and much of what I learned still resonates within me all these months later."

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**RABBIS
WALK
INTO A
BEIT
MIDRASH**

PUTTING
TEFILAH

BACK ON SCHOOLS' AGENDA

**Ruth
& Esther:
GLASS CEILINGS
THEN AND NOW**



Pardes Matters

It mattered in 1972. Then, Pardes was the first beit midrash in the world to open its doors to women.

Pardes mattered in 2000, when with the support of the AVI CHAI Foundation, we opened the Pardes Day School Educators Program, training a new kind of Jewish Studies teacher for North American Jewish day schools. In 2012, our offerings to potential Jewish Educators grew further through the creation of the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators (PCJE) and the launch of the Pardes Experiential Educators Program. These new opportunities for educator training and professional development mattered because we committed ourselves to producing in-demand, passionate and open educators who are both steeped in tradition and able to serve diverse audiences in schools, on campuses and in a variety of other Jewish educational settings.

In 2009, specialty tracks were created as part of the Year Program, beginning with Social Justice, and expanding to Judaism and Conflict Resolution as well as Self, Soul, and Text. These tracks mattered for multiple reasons. Not only did they provide significant and ongoing support for faculty innovation, but it demonstrated that Pardes understood the need to meet students “where they were” and to proactively integrate

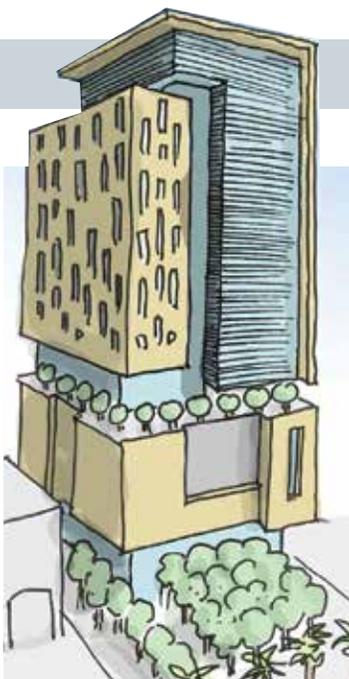
the study of Judaism with the study of those issues and values that many of our students are committed to, such as human rights, social justice, conflict resolution and spiritual practice. The tracks have also pushed us to use Israel as a laboratory for struggling with Judaism and these issues in a direct and important way.

Pardes continues to matter. The Pardes Jewish Spirituality Retreat, now entering its fifth successful year, is a multi-day annual winter event in the U.S. that combines the best of Jewish learning and meditative practice. Trips to Turkey, Germany and Poland add complexity and depth to students’ experience and their approach to Jewish peoplehood. This year, Pardes has spread its wings even wider. Rabba Yaffa Epstein is serving as our first-ever Director of Education, North America, to inspire our alumni and new communities. Elmad, Pardes’s digital learning library, has revolutionized online access to Pardes content.

Pardes matters to the Jewish world because it combines elements that seem mutually exclusive in so many other settings: openness and passion, academic rigor and opportunities for spiritual growth, diversity and warm community. Our students and the wider Jewish world recognize our unique ability to embrace challenging questions and to provide value to diverse students on their unique Jewish journeys.

We are so proud of our alumni and their achievements and so thankful to our supporters for allowing us to continue to matter to the Jewish people and to the world-at-large, next year and beyond.

David I. Bernstein, Ph.D. is the Dean of Pardes.



NEW BUILDING PLANS APPROVED

In accordance with the new Jerusalem Master Plan for Talpiot, Pardes’s application to have its 4.5 dunam (1 acre) property rezoned has recently been approved by the Ministry of Interior and the Jerusalem Municipal Local Building Committee. This will allow construction of an 18 story, state-of-the-art, mixed use building on that site. We will be partnering with a developer to build a new facility. Under the proposed plans, Pardes would

retain ownership of the 4,000-5,000 sq. m. (45,000-55,000 sq. ft.) we need to provide our students, faculty and visitors with an inspiring and exciting environment: ample classrooms and offices, student and faculty lounges, an enlarged beit midrash and an auditorium. Our new home will be four to five times larger than our current space. In exchange for construction, the developer will retain other floors for office and commercial use.

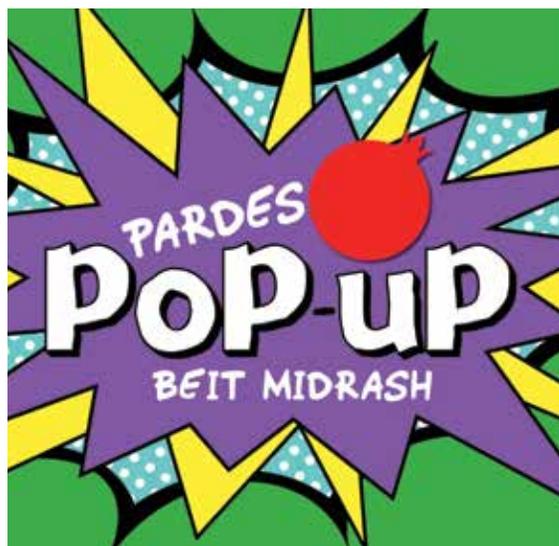
News Updates

REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIVES

Last year the Pardes community engaged in a special seminar, *Jewish Peoplehood: Conversion, Unity, Personal Status, Religion and State*.

It began with personal testimonies from three students about their own Jewish backgrounds or conversion stories and continued with a variety of speakers who represented a range of perspectives including Member of Knesset Rabbi Dov Lipman on the ultra-Orthodox community, Rabbi Seth Farber on the challenge of religion and state in Israel and three guests who represented other denominations, Rabbi Naamah Kelman (Reform), Rabbi Peretz Rodman (Conservative) and Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (Orthodox).

One student shared their thoughts: *"It meant a great deal that Pardes created a space for open dialogue and learning about issues of Jewish peoplehood, conversion and personal status. These topics are often avoided because they are controversial and it was wonderful to have an opportunity to hear a range of perspectives from such distinguished speakers. On a personal note, the way Pardes dealt with these issues has boosted my self-confidence and dispelled many assumptions that I held—for example, my sense that I could never be truly accepted by Orthodox Jews. It was a powerful learning experience for me."*



PARDES PARTNERS WITH MOISHE HOUSE

Pardes students and alumni have played a major part in the expanded Moishe House Without Walls (MHWOW) initiative, which empowers young Jews to create and facilitate events to enrich Jewish experiences and build grassroots community. MHWOW provides grants and guidance to hosts, enabling them to make an impact.

Eleven Pardes hosts engaged hundreds of peers by creating over 40 events worldwide, including a sustainability-focused Tu B'Shvat seder, a hamantaschen-making gathering, new independent minyanim, Shabbat meals, a Talmud circle, a trivia night and much more.

HILLEL PROS JOIN SUMMER PROGRAM



In July, 19 Hillel professionals from 16 campuses across the U.S., Canada and Russia, attended Pardes with the goal of becoming more literate, empowered and confident Jewish leaders. They joined the Pardes Summer Program for classes on Bible, Talmud, Jewish liturgy, Women in Judaism, Hassidic thought and Jewish law.

The Hillel professionals also participated in professional development sessions led by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg and Esther Abramowitz from Hillel's International Center. Shabbat ritual and liturgy were a major focus, and the program concluded with a group Shabbat experience in Tel Aviv, where participants were able to implement their learning through leading Shabbat rituals and sharing Torah with each other.

The group will continue having monthly learning sessions with their teachers from Pardes, part of their commitment to make learning a part of their daily professionals lives.

POP-UP BEIT MIDRASH AT JW3

Pardes continues to grow its presence in the UK and Europe. As part of a new partnership with the Jewish community center in London, JW3, Nechama Goldman Barash and Rabbi Alex Israel taught our first Pardes Pop-Up beit midrash in June, with 75 attendees. The second was held in November with Rabbi Rahel Berkovits and Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield, and a third is being planned for June 2016.

Over the summer, Rabbi David Levin-Kruss taught at the Open Talmud Project in London and at the European Union of Jewish Students gathering in Lisbon, Portugal. Pardes will also be at Limmud UK and touring UK university campuses later this year.

For more information about email louise@pardes.org.il.

Alumni

Check-in

SMALL TOWN, BIG IDEAS



Coming to Pardes from a small town in Montana, and with two adult children, **Laurie Franklin (Year '12-'13)** says that she was not the "traditional" Pardes student. Nonetheless, she says, "it changed my life."

In 2012, Laurie had been accepted into the ALEPH Alliance for

Jewish Renewal rabbinic ordination program and her goal was to jump deeply into the study of Talmud and Torah at Pardes. "I had no idea that I would fall so deeply in love with either Jewish sacred text or Israel. I had wonderful friendships with my regular *havrutas* (study partners) and felt well-received at Pardes... My teachers were passionate, each one a master of their subject(s) and with true generosity of spirit towards their students."

Laurie is the spiritual leader for Har Shalom, a Reform-affiliated community in Missoula, Montana and continues to pursue rabbinic ordination. As spiritual leader she leads services with both traditional and creative liturgies, sings and plays guitar and bagpipes, visits the sick, acts as a spiritual advisor, teaches Torah, helps people on their Jewish journeys and cooperates with local clergy on many initiatives ranging from assisting the poor, re-integrating former prisoners into society and environmental stewardship. She also writes the Religion Page for the local daily newspaper. "I live in a relatively isolated place, far removed from centers of Jewish life. I'm fiercely proud to carry forward the light of Jewish learning, observance and care for community and the earth into this environment," Laurie says.

Over the years Laurie has been very active in many Jewish organizations and programs through the Reform movement, Rabbis Without Borders, Limmud NY, the Shalom Hartman Rabbinic Student Seminar and STorahtelling, and she was very excited to attend her first Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City with an interfaith contingent from Missoula. Laurie is also a board member of the Montana Human Rights Network.



INTERFAITH (LONE) STAR

While he lives in Alon Shvut, **Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger (Year '78-'79)** notes that due to his monthly trips to Dallas, Texas, he spends almost as much time in airports and in the air as he does in Israel or the United States.

Hanan is the Executive Director and Community Rabbinic Scholar for the Jewish Studies Initiative of North Texas, which he founded in 2010. There he teaches classes in the deeper meaning of Jewish texts to Jews of all denominations and creates interfaith programs that bring him into serious and soul-expanding theological discussions with Christian and Muslim clergy members.

He is also the Director of International Relations for Roots/Shorashim/Judur in Israel, the Israeli-Palestinian grassroots initiative for understanding, non-violence and transformation, which he helped found in 2014. There he is in dialogue with Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, and works to introduce Jews to these conversations.

"Both of the things that I do involve delving into the deepest Jewish values and outreach to a wide range of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds," said Rabbi Schlesinger. "I also meet people from around the world of many religions who are drawn to our project of religious and national reconciliation and want to learn about it, support it and become part of it."

While Hanan spent a great deal of time studying at the Har Etzion College of Jewish Studies and Hebrew University, he got his start in many ways at Pardes. "My year at Pardes was probably the most foundational year of my life. The religious and educational philosophy and the personalities and approaches of the teachers fit me like a glove, resonated in the recesses of my soul and whet the appetite of my mind in the most satisfying fashion. I was challenged and I grew like never before in my life. Pardes left an indelible mark upon me and for that I am deeply grateful."

In fact, the Pardes experience was so powerful that he returned later in life as a faculty member. "I was able to fulfill my debt of gratitude and truly felt like I was coming home," said Hanan.

HEALING THROUGH DANCE



French-born Israeli lawyer **Jean-Marc Liling** (Year '95-'96) reflects warmly on his time at Pardes. "Pardes takes Jewish sources, texts and traditions seriously but also allows for students to chart their own paths and keep on searching for their own authentic Judaism."

Jean-Marc's path was deeply influenced by the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*, which led him to become an expert in refugee law. Over the years, he has worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Israel's Justice Ministry and the Minister for Diaspora Affairs. He currently works as a consultant for the JDC in Jerusalem.

Jean-Marc continues to fight for refugee rights through organizations such as Aid Organization for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Israel and as a guide, educator and speaker exposing Israeli, Jewish and other groups to the complexities of non-Jewish migration to Israel.

A year ago, Jean-Marc initiated a project that provides assistance to hundreds of African refugees who come to Israel as unaccompanied minors and study in Israeli boarding schools and youth villages.

Jean-Marc manages to combine his Jewish values with another of his passions – dance. Active in the prestigious Israeli Vertigo Dance Company, he is also involved in "Between Heaven and Earth," a growing Jerusalem cultural and artistic institution that provides a meeting point for religious men, Jewish exploration and study, and the world of contemporary dance.

WOMAN AT THE WALL



If **Andrea Wiese** (PCJE '11- '14) looks familiar, it's probably because you've seen her before. While studying at Pardes, she unwittingly had her face plastered across the internet and newspapers for wearing *tefillin* (Jewish phylacteries) and *tallit* (prayer shawl) while praying in the women's section of the Kotel with other members of "Women of the Wall" in 2013. The photos often made Andrea the target of intense hatred from people opposed to the group. She was spit on, shoved and even called a Nazi. Nevertheless, Andrea stood her ground.

"I believe that all people have the right to be individuals and to cultivate and deepen their relationship with Hashem in the way that they choose," says Andrea. "The most holy site for the Jewish people cannot be exclusively controlled by one faction, especially if that group doesn't allow for any type of prayer expression different from their own."

Today, Andrea teaches Rabbinics at Frankel Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit and encourages her students to make choices of their own accord and be open to different ways of living and thinking. She is also in charge of the academy's Zionist club, coaches girls varsity tennis and runs an all women's *tefilah*, among other responsibilities.

"I am the only Orthodox woman at my school, and I feel a lot of pressure and that eyes are on me at all times," says Andrea. "Students ask me many questions, and it is a huge responsibility, but I feel honored to be in this position. It is a blessing to be here to answer them as best I can."

LEADING POLISH JEWISH REVIVAL



Rabbi Michael Schudrich (Year '75-'76) is the Chief Rabbi of Poland and a symbol of the remarkable revival of Jewish life there, having previously served as a rabbi in Tokyo (1983-89).

While studying at Hebrew University Michael took a Talmud course at Pardes. Coming from a yeshiva background, Pardes enabled him to continue studying Talmud in a *beit midrash* setting.

In 1992 Michael began working for the Ronald

S. Lauder Foundation in Poland and returned in 2000 as Rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz, excited by the opportunity to help people who had recently discovered their Jewish roots.

In 2004, he was appointed Chief Rabbi of Poland and has been a central player in Poland's Jewish renaissance ever since.

Michael is focused on developing innovative Torah learning, community building and connection to Israel.

Havruta Masterclass



Did Esther & Ruth break the glass ceiling? What glass ceilings still exist?

This year three female faculty were awarded *smikha* (rabbinical ordination). **Rabbi Dr. Meesh Hammer-Kossoy**, *Director of Admissions & Director of the Social Justice Track*, and Rabbi Rahel Berkovits completed their studies at Beit Midrash Har'el in Israel and received ordination from Rabbi Herzl Hefter and Rabbi Daniel Sperber. **Rabba Yaffa Epstein**, *Director of Education, North America*, received ordination after her studies at Yeshivat Maharat in the United States. Here Meesh and Yaffa discuss modern day perceptions of two biblical heroines.

Meesh: Back then, the ceiling was not glass, and I don't think Esther or Ruth made any attempt to break it. Esther and Ruth symbolize the most disempowered of our society. In addition to being women, Esther is an orphan, Ruth is not only a widow and foreigner but also a Moabite, the most alienated of the gentile nations. Significantly, even these disenfranchised women are able to bring redemption to the Jewish people: *"the stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."* (Ps. 118:22) This reflects the great egalitarian power and responsibility that each of us, no matter our "station," has to contribute to our nation.

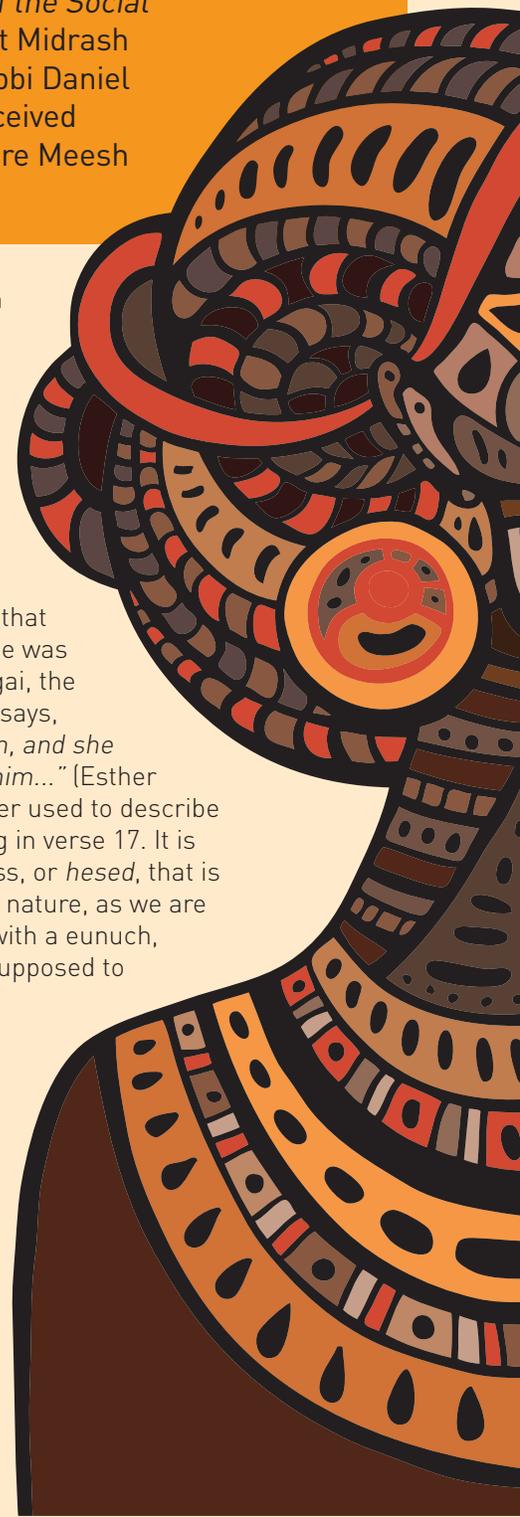
But their achievement does not mean that women are empowered. Esther and Ruth used the limited tools in their arsenal to bring redemption to the Jewish people – first and foremost, their sexuality. What is remarkable is that despite the refrain *"all the honor of the princess is within"* (Ps. 45:12) so frequently cited in our day, the Bible and the Rabbis celebrate this blatant use of sexuality when necessary. This complex relationship is important for us as moderns as well.

After their heroic acts, both women return to their confined roles. It is Mordechai who becomes Achashverosh's right-hand man, and in classic levirate form, Naomi rather than Ruth seems to get the credit for parenting Obed, as Ruth retreats to the background. Fortunately, I don't see that retreat as necessary for women in today's world.

Yaffa: I must disagree with my esteemed teacher and havruta Meesh. In my opinion, both Esther and Ruth showed incredible leadership skills, and did not simply use their sexuality to save or advance themselves.

In Esther's case, we are told that as she entered the palace she was taken into the custody of Hegai, the king's eunuch. The Megillah says, *"And the maiden pleased him, and she performed kindness before him..."* (Esther 2:9). The same words are later used to describe her relationship with the king in verse 17. It is very unlikely that the kindness, or *hesed*, that is described here is of a sexual nature, as we are discussing her relationship with a eunuch, which is, at least in theory, supposed to be platonic.

In other words, Esther was charismatic and politically savvy. The fact that the text later describes her relationship with Achashverosh in the same way signals that there was some kind of political and emotional wherewithal to Esther that went far beyond the bedroom.



In the case of Ruth, while I agree that she used her sexuality with Boaz, her real moment of triumph does not come from her relationship with a man. Ruth's real self-awakening happens when she refuses to turn away from her mother-in-law. It could be out of deep love and respect for Naomi, or it could be her understanding that there is nothing for her back in Moab, but when Ruth declares "for wherever you go I will go; and wherever you lie, I will lie; your nation is my nation and your God is my God" (Ruth 1:16) she is effectively taking her life into her own hands, and as Rav Soloveitchik said, becoming a "person of destiny" rather than a "person of fate."

I would argue that both Ruth and Esther broke the glass ceiling, in that they both took matters into their own hands, knew themselves and their capabilities, and refused to simply accept what the world told them to do and who to be.

While today the world seems to be completely open to women, many still choose to take the roles that are auxiliary rather than central. The world will change when more women stand up, recognize their power and take matters into their own hands – refusing to be defined by those around them – following in the footsteps of our matriarchs Ruth and Esther.

Meesh: I certainly agree that Esther had cunning and savvy and Ruth sheer dedication and love. Esther and Ruth did not *just* use their sexuality. But they *also* used their sexuality, and shamelessly

to boot. When Esther puts on her finery and stands at a distance before the king to find his favor, she is using her sexuality (Esther 5:2). When she refrains from making her plea directly and invites the king, not once but twice, to a banquet together with Haman, eliciting jealousy and an air of mystery and unavailability (Esther 5:4-9), she is using her sexuality with genius. I don't think we should whitewash or apologize for this! Recognizing women's sexuality as a blessing rather than something that needs to be cloistered or shunned would be an important step in many modern Jewish communities.

Similarly, we should celebrate Ruth's very feminine dedication to her fellow women (her mother-in-law no less!). Women's special capacity for love, loyalty and nurturing are among the feminine

tools that need to be welcomed with open arms in today's Jewish community.

Today's female leadership has a much larger toolbox to contribute to the Jewish world, including unprecedented levels of Torah scholarship, economic power and official recognition. However, as the Jewish world formally embraces women's leadership, we are not just more equitably sharing power and stepping into traditionally male roles, but we must also welcome and integrate a new set of uniquely female talents and perspectives, be they female sexuality, love or the ability to cajole with words rather than fear.

I am filled with wonder and thankfulness as I see what newly ordained Maharats have brought to the Orthodox world. Once congregations hire female authorities they are quickly coming to wonder how they ever managed without them. It is thrilling for me to watch this process happen in our lives as well. Although I have been teaching at Pardes for 15 years before being granted a formal title of religious leadership, I am amazed to discover the ways that title has changed peoples' perception of me. I don't know if it is giving me the power to break through the glass ceiling, but like the grapevine in my garden, I do think we are managing to reach the roof garden by way of the open window.

Yaffa: I appreciate that sexuality and femininity are important tools for women to inhabit and utilize. And I am grateful that the toolbox has grown so greatly for Jewish women, and that women's learning, legal reasoning and analytical skills are being lauded in our world.

However, I must take issue with the idea that there are "uniquely female talents and perspectives." I am wary of limiting deep friendship, sexuality and love to women, and thinking of them as female characteristics. Indeed, I long for a day when both men and women are able to think deeply about sexuality and relationships and are truly able to inhabit their own unique strengths irrespective of sex or gender.

As the Talmud says, "*Blessed is He who is the wise-knower of secrets, for the mind of each is different from that of the other, just as the face of each is different from that of the other*" (Bavli Berachot 58a). Each one of us has a unique gift to give to the world and has our own set of strengths, talents and skills.

Thank God, the world is starting to recognize that women are among those who can lead us and teach us how to be better Jews and better people. But we cannot be complacent. We must continue to tear down the barriers that keep both women and men trapped in gender stereotypes and encourage everyone to find the fullest expression of themselves.

Ruth & Esther: From Rags to Royalty is the theme for the summer Pardes Executive Learning Seminar, July 2 - 6, 2016 in Jerusalem. To book visit www.pardes.org.il/executive.

Student Lives

Four Rabbis Walk into a Beit Midrash...

Among our alumni, Pardes boasts more than 365 rabbis across (and beyond) all denominations. For the final *shiur clali* (school-wide class) of the year, four Pardes students spoke about their choice to attend four very different rabbinical schools. The students reflected on their choices and anticipated challenges serving their future Jewish communities. The panel highlighted the diversity of the student body and Pardes's role in giving students the skills to become future Jewish leaders in a diverse Jewish world.



Myra Meskin

Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies (Conservative)

Pardes has taught me a number of things that I'll take into my rabbinate, particularly about what it means to build community. The Pardes student body is unique in so many ways, and something I've learned here is how impactful it can be to learn with a group that is both diverse as well as united, primarily by their desire to learn and engage.

So when I was looking at different rabbinical schools, I looked at their student bodies, looking for peers whose Torah compels me and who could also be my teachers. Pardes taught me about building a community that inspires active participation with the understanding that what you receive is dependent on what you give. These lessons will inform whatever communities I lead, build or am a part of in the future.

Myra Meskin is from Los Angeles, CA. Before coming to Pardes she received a Masters in Experiential Jewish Education from JTS.

David Curiel

ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal (Renewal)

Reb Zalman z"l talked about breaking the "sefer barrier" as an important way to connect and to access Jewish wisdom. As a future rabbi, this will be particularly important in the context of people who are less Jewishly literate but are interested in Judaism and the Jewish spirit. It's important for me as a Jewish leader to make that connection for people, to help them access the deep treasure of our textual tradition and that's what I had to do first for myself. These are the skills I came to Pardes for and this is exactly what I got.

The other piece I got at Pardes is the tremendous range of people willing to walk through the door and give us an hour of their time to talk to us about their incredible work in so many areas of interest. This is because of the Pardes reputation, because of its stellar name. I never took it for granted that I got to learn from people of great caliber because I learned at Pardes.

David Curiel was born in Venezuela and is most recently from Boston, MA.



(From left to right) Myra Meskin, David Curiel, Jennifer Mager and Jeremy Borovitz speak about their choice of rabbinical school and how their year at Pardes prepared them to be Jewish leaders



Jennifer Mager

Hebrew Union College (Reform)

The Pardes Year Program has been transformational and a strong foundation for further learning in rabbinical school. My time in the beit midrash enabled me to develop familiarity with Jewish sources and the ability to think critically about important issues within the framework of Jewish tradition. Living a Jewish life in Jerusalem enriched by the learning about holidays and issues facing Israel enabled me to develop a deeper connection with Israel and the cycle of the Jewish year.

Prior to coming to Pardes, my only exposure to Judaism had been within the Reform movement. Being a part of this community has given me insight into a diversity of perspectives, traditions and practice. I am so grateful for the chance to be challenged and inspired by my teachers and peers in an environment that encourages different views and constructive, respectful conflict. I struggled with a range of issues, from personal practices to inter-denominational understanding and cooperation, but I was pushed to learn more and develop an intelligent, thoughtful position.

The Poland trip in conjunction with the Turning Points in Modern Jewish History class and family genealogy project was meaningful to me in understanding family history and identity. The Social Justice Track was an outstanding combination of learning traditional sources, speakers and trips on a wide range of human rights issues in Israel. This course, along with my volunteer experience, fostered my passion for social justice work as an expression of Jewish values and helped me pursue a fellowship with T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

Pardes has been a supportive community and learning environment for me through a year of significant transition and growth. It has been a true blessing to be here.

Jennifer Mager is from Peoria, IL. Before coming to Pardes, she worked as an engineer.



Jeremy Borovitz

Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School (Orthodox)

Pardes faculty have been an incredible example of what it can mean to be Orthodox on the one hand, but very open and understanding to all kinds of people on the other. I'm not sure this model of Orthodoxy exists very far outside of Pardes or outside of a limited part of Baka, but it has certainly given me an example of an Orthodoxy that could exist. This is undoubtedly what I'll take with me into my rabbinate.

Jeremy Borovitz is from Paramus, NJ. Most recently he served as the European Director of Jewish Education for Moishe House.

Leading *the Way*

Putting *Tefilah* Back on Schools' Agenda

By Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield and Dr. Susan Wall



Tefilah (prayer) is one of the most challenging (and neglected) aspects within Jewish day schools today. Students are often zoning out or misbehaving, and many teachers would prefer to be elsewhere. How can Pardes help improve the situation?

We know a lot about this issue because with 141 graduates of the Pardes Day School Educators Program (PEP) since 2002, Pardes hears what is happening in scores of day schools across North America. While PEP students are trained primarily as Bible or Rabbinics text teachers, most PEP graduates are also asked to take on *tefilah* leadership roles within their schools. Even first year teachers have been asked to facilitate school-wide *tefilah*. Often schools have few options when seeking staff to take on roles with *tefilah*, and little to no training is available.

To address these issues, in July 2015, the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators brought together 17 successful day school educators, rabbis and administrators to think more deeply about *tefilah* in schools. This six-day intensive symposium, entitled *Aleinu Le'shabeach* (our duty to praise), drew a diverse group from Community, Orthodox and Conservative schools spanning grades K-12.

There were many takeaways from this program. However, we want to focus on what we saw as the central and most significant finding: the need to develop and professionalize a *field* of *tefilah* education. All the rest is commentary.

“The immediate results were beyond what we could have hoped for.”

What does it mean to have a professional field?

1 First and foremost, it means that teachers are trained. Our *Aleinu Leshabe'ach* participants were far from representative of most who lead *tefilah* in day schools. Each participant brought a strong background in prayer knowledge and skills, coupled with personal charisma and creativity. Nevertheless, almost all admitted to having no formal training in this area. A *tefilah* facilitator needs a wide range of knowledge and skills and a broad toolkit of experiential education. Importantly, to successfully lead *tefilah*, one needs to be both connected to and inspired by it.

2 *Tefilah* educators need colleagues from diverse backgrounds. The diversity within *Aleinu Leshabe'ach* allowed our participants to bring a range of perspectives, which stimulated new thinking, challenged old ideas and encouraged creativity.

3 Professional fields sponsor conferences and gatherings to bring people together to engender new ideas, build new relationships and foster advocacy to keep the field fresh and cutting-edge.

4 We need a repository of best practices. What songs, stories, films and themes can enhance the *tefilah* experience for students? How can we teach them to pray and prepare for the experience on a daily basis? A website with lists is insufficient. A number of curricula are available online, yet it is the training that accompanies those materials that makes the difference.

5 A professional field has clearly articulated goals. These goals will differ from school to school, but there needs to be a well thought out process for arriving at those goals and for identifying what it would take to achieve them.

6 All professional areas within our day schools assess student achievement. That needs to be true for both the cognitive and affective areas of tefilah education.

7 There is a need for a recognized body of literature deemed essential for literacy in the field. Those who oversee tefilah education need to be familiar with how one applies what we know about child development and social-emotional learning to tefilah education and the decisions we make.

8 Serious research needs to be undertaken. While synagogue attendance is down, wouldn't it be interesting to learn why the people who do come to pray, come – beyond a halakhic imperative? Are there similar characteristics in their development that led them to become *daveners* (people who pray)? Is there a formula we need to follow? What happens with our day school graduates vis-a-vis tefilah in the long run? Opening up these questions is a scary proposition, but it needs to happen.

9 A professional field has shared terminology. What do we mean by tefilah education, by *keva* (routine) and *kavanah* (intention), by spirituality, by emotional dispositions and meaning-making, for example. We can only successfully share with one another once we are clear about the terminology we use.

All of the above constitutes a tall order, but we need to get started. Some schools devote as much, if not more, time to tefilah education than any other area of the curriculum, if one includes services, blessings one recites throughout the day and tefilah learning that takes place in a classroom. What currently exists is far from a field. Pardes faculty, together with a few theorists and a group of amazing educators, have taken the first steps toward creating this field.

Lisa Exler, Director of Jewish Studies at Beit Rabban Day School, New York, NY, reflected on the experience, "I am so grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in this program... It felt like I was on the ground floor of something special and important, maybe even revolutionary, in tefilah education. It truly felt like the early steps of creating a field – thoughtful and reflective practitioners learning and thinking together about our visions and goals for prayer education."

We came away inspired by our program and ready to bring the best of what we learned about tefilah to others in the field. We are already planning a training seminar for teachers next year and hope that this will only be the beginning.

Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield and Dr. Susan Wall are faculty members of the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators.



Thank You

This listing includes Annual Campaign donations to Pardes from September 2014 through the first week of September 2015. If one or both donors are alumni, they are listed in red. We apologize for misspellings, omissions and other mistakes. Please send corrections to info@pardes.org.

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"Learning in Jerusalem with fabulous teachers has made Pardes an important priority in our giving. At the end of the program it was moving to hear how Pardes was a turning point in students' lives. Some would go on to graduate school, some were beginning new jobs,

others were getting married and some had decided to make *aliyah*. Clearly Pardes makes a difference in the lives of young people at a critical time. For adult learners like myself, the Pardes experience strengthens what we already knew was important."

Susan Ain, West Newton, MA (Summer '03, '06)
has contributed to Pardes for ten consecutive years.



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“Soon after reconnecting with Pardes, I decided sponsoring a Day of Learning on my late husband’s yahrzeit was a wonderful way to honor his memory. It was particularly meaningful because Pardes asked me to share a few words with the students about the amazing man he was. I have subsequently dedicated two more Days of Learning on the occasions of the *yahrzeits* of each of my parents.”

Carole Daman, Scarsdale, NY (Year '73-'74)
 has participated in twelve Pardes programs.

To sponsor a Day of Learning at Pardes, please email Jamie Bornstein at jamie@pardes.org.

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"Leaving Pardes can be a tough transition, and joining other alumni as a donor felt like a graceful, natural next step of the journey. I believe in giving back, especially for an experience as wonderful as

learning at Pardes. Less important than the amount given is the act of giving itself; this connects one to the countless alumni who have learned in the same beit midrash and have also returned to their communities equipped with so much more to share."

Shira Sacks, New York, NY (Year '14-'15)
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Pardes would like to acknowledge and thank **Masa Israel Journey** for its ongoing partnership and support, including scholarships and grants that assisted more than 40% of students studying in Pardes's academic-year programs. This support provides key assistance that enables Jewish young adults to engage deeply with Jewish texts and explore Israel within Pardes's unique, diverse and supportive community.



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Last Word



by Rabbi
Daniel Landes

One can only speak of the Pardes faculty with pride. They teach with excellence and a sense of humor. Generally their admirers point to three additional factors.

First is the Pardes openness to differing opinions even (especially!) to the unconventional and unexpected students' interpretations.

Second is the faculty's sensitivity to where students are coming from, an empathic identification even in times of stress that the encounter of such difficult material as Torah text may joltingly provide.

Third, the faculty have a passion for the material. The passion never ceases to amaze their students, which is there even when the teacher assumes a critical distance in order to assess how an argument or narrative proceeds and to judge its effect, logical consistency or adequacy. Honesty and love bond in a dance of holy amazement.

All this is true and even an understatement. But it still shortchanges the strengths of Pardes teachers. They are all creative scholars who bring various, differing, yet overlapping perspectives to their Torah study and teaching. Each one applies several different perspectives – "lenses" if you will – to Torah investigation.

They are experts in classical analytical Talmud methodology (Brisk) and in academic scholarship, with deep understanding of the Hebrew Bible, integrating medieval commentators with informal and contemporary literary approaches. They are teachers who also utilize comparative new tools and deep penetration of Hebrew language and its grammar. They are teachers who bring social action concerns and conflict resolution expertise to Talmudic debate, utilizing psychological perspectives and coaching ideas to uncover what happens behind a Biblical or Midrashic

episode. Knowledge of and affinity for Jewish philosophy, forms and mysticism, mixed with disciplines such as architecture and poetry, can unpack the page with impressive results. Add to this mix expertise in scribal arts, trope and even circumcision, and the full gamut of Judaism is opened to our students via our faculty's Torah interests. And the beit midrash experience is further enriched as our teachers' passions continue to broaden, open and deepen.



And this deep, plural-minded and endlessly fascinating, intoxicating and synthesizing brew of live Torah sets the tone for Pardes in all that we do. It cancels out fanaticism of any nature as it immediately rejects simplemindedness. And it also sets a pattern for Pardes's highest skill set students, who study in the Kollel.

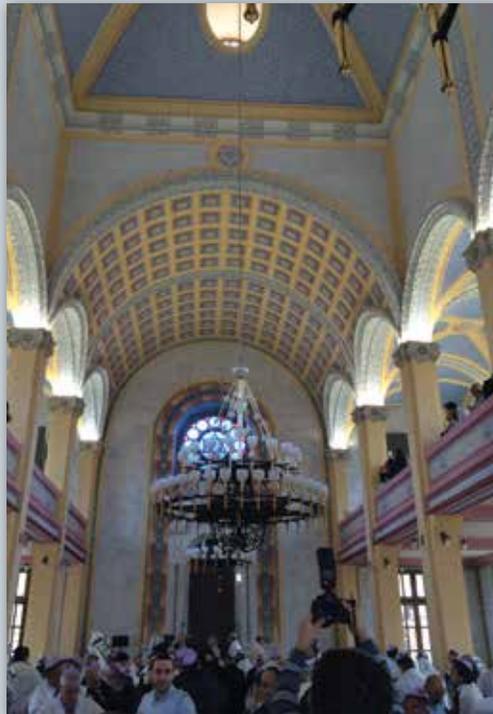
The Kollel has included not only students who have spent years in Talmud learning, but also current and future educators (some via the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators), engineers (including those with valuable high tech experience), graduate students (some with doctorates) in law, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, gender studies, Eretz Yisrael expertise and the list goes on. This allows for fascinating "lenses" to be shared in understanding the page. It has always amazed and inspired me to be on my game.

As my high school coach instructed – at Pardes the faculty and students go wide and go deep. And we keep our eyes open to follow the ball!

Rabbi Daniel Landes is the Director of Pardes.

Teaching in Turkey

In March, Rabbi Dr. Levi Cooper led a group of students to Turkey to work with the Jewish community for five days. The experience deeply touched students and the local community alike. Read more at www.theseandthose.pardes.org/turkey-2015



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