

Pardes Fellows: Educating for the Future

Since the moment I began at Pardes as a teacher for the second-year students, many of those familiar with Pardes have asked me the following question: Why do students need a second year? Given the incredible growth our students experience in one year of study, the increased knowledge of Jewish texts, stronger commitments to Jewish practice, and a deepened sense of attachment to Jewish community, why do we see a second year of learning as so critical? Consistent with age-old Jewish practice, allow me to respond to that question with another one: Why is there a separate Mitzvah of Talmud Torah, Torah study? If one is studying to know how to behave, either ritually or morally, then the need to study is already implicit in the Mitzvah itself. If my desire to study emerges from a heartfelt need for spiritual growth and closeness to God, than the Mitzvah of Torah study would be subsumed under the commandment to love or fear God.

Maimonides implicitly addressed this question when he included the laws of teaching, schools, role models, and curriculum in his Laws of Torah Study. For Maimonides, Torah study needed its own Mitzvah, because we are commanded to learn not only to observe the commandments or grow spiritually, but to become carriers, transmitters, and innovators of Torah. The building of schools, training of teachers, and hiring someone to escort young students to and from school are all part of the Mitzvah of Torah study. It is not enough to develop ourselves. We must equip ourselves to develop others. Our own study must include an eye towards our friends, community, and future generations.

Now we can return to the question raised at the beginning. A second year of study at Pardes accomplishes more than enhanced knowledge, growth in skills, and deeper analysis and involvement with texts and ideas, although this alone would make the endeavor entirely worthwhile. Maimonides set a high standard to which we are proud to aspire. Our success in providing students with a transformative experience in one year of serious engagement is only a beginning. We have committed ourselves to producing students who can transform others.

Hal Hirschfield, Pardes Fellows Program Coordinator

A Fellow's Personal Perspective

Nearly a year and a half ago, I stood before my 1997-98 Pardes class and spoke about a year of learning from texts and from teachers that truly changed my life. Amidst the emotional farewell, I felt strongly that the end of that formative year was also a beginning. After a year of getting my foot through the door of learning and living

Torah, I made the difficult decision to return to Boston and took the risk of stunting a very natural growth process at a crucial time in my Jewish development. Unclear about my professional future, I returned to Boston to the next best thing to a second year at Pardes – the most exciting and

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Pardes is excited to announce that the Roseman

Louisville, KY has made a generous

Foundation of

donation to the

Pardes Summer

Program, in memory of Dr.

Ephraim Roseman.



Pardes Fellows 1999-2000

Arieh Leib Taurog, Harvey Mudd University; Evan Wolkenstein, University of Wisconsin; Veronika Dubova, Charles University, Prague; Julie Sussman, University of Michigan; David Hart, University of California; Marc Baker, Yale University; Kate Berkowitz, Brandeis University; Jill Rosenfield, Columbia University; Yonina Dorph Rose, Barnard University; Alicia Rabins, Barnard University; Elizabeth Green, University of California

Staff in Picture: Top (third from the left) Hal Hirschfield Bottom Row: Director Rabbi Daniel Landes, Board Member Ruth Cummings Sorensen, Dean Dr. David I. Bernstein, Chairman of the Board, Zvi Inbar

For over 25 years, the **Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies** has set the standard for creative Jewish learning by offering a mix of intellectual openness, rigorous textual analysis and opportunities for personal spiritual growth. Pardes provides adults from a wide variety of backgrounds with the tools to gain access to the classic texts of Jewish tradition and fosters the desire to claim this tradition for themselves.

Most Successful Summer in Pardes History

The 1999 summer program, directed by **Rabbi Aryeh Ben David**, was the most successful in Pardes history. For the first time, students enrolled in the summer program got a taste of the Pardes experience by participating fully in a month long program rather than just taking individual courses. Over 150 students from more than 10 countries learned, toured, questioned and challenged each other. Students from across the spectrum of Jewish life came together

in an atmosphere of intellectual excitement and genuine respect. As Aryeh reflected, the strength in the program is the Pardes philosophy that the Torah belongs to and should be accessible to all Jews, whatever they think or believe, whereever they may be on the religious spectrum. One participant in the program echoed these sentiments by mentioning that the word diversity seemed to be the key to understanding the uniqueness of the program:

- diversity in age from 20 something to 60 something
- diversity in origin from over 10 countries
- diversity in religious identification covering all of the denominations
- diversity in levels of learning from minimal background to advanced
- diversity in goals from wanting to improve textual skills to looking to clarify issues of Jewish identity.

The Pardes Summer Program 2000: Sessions are June 12th through July 5th and July 11th through August 3rd. For more information, contact Rabbi Aryeh Ben David directly at abd@pardes.org.il



I must confess
I felt a trifle
nervous
coming into
what I
perceived as
an Orthodox
learning
environment.
I hesitated to

learn from people whose value system, I worried, would be so different from my own. As a person who places herself in

a progressive community in the U.S., I was concerned that I would not be able to be both honest and respectful.

What a difference a month makes! To my surprised delight, I have not only watched my textual skills increase, but my personal connection to the sacred texts as well. I found that I entered a community in which Jewish dialogue is encouraged and fostered. What an honor it has been to learn in a community of people who teach so beautifully,

not only through knowledge but through example.

Teachers at Pardes are role models. They handle heterogeneous student populations with gusto and aplomb. They explain without flinching the flexible and inflexible aspects of the halachic system. They infuse the legalistic questions with spiritual meaning without diluting the intellectual intensity. And they open up their personal lives to share their stories of growth. I feel honored to have learned from them in all these ways....

Rebecca Lavine

Rebecca Lavine is a student at the Harvard Divinity School and was given the opportunity to study at Pardes by the generous help and support of Professor Jon Levenson and the Betsee Parker and Irwin Ulwan Scholarship Fund.

This summer seven Columbus, Ohio educators participated as full time students in the July session of our summer program. At a meeting summarizing their experience at Pardes, the educators stressed a two-fold benefit from the program: deepening of their Jewish identities, which will directly impact upon their teaching responsibilities in Columbus, and new sense of community. Many of the participants work for different organizations and did not know each other before the trip. This experience will enable them to work together, creating bonds throughout the Columbus Jewish community



In general, this has been a thought-provoking experience. When I return home in the evening, I find that I have many thoughts to

record and explore in my journal. There were two stages in which I came to

appreciate Pardes. The first related to the faculty — they are open-minded and capable of addressing even the most difficult (and perhaps even iconoclastic) of questions. They make known to us their own internal struggles with the sources, and thereby allow us to feel as though our struggles have legitimacy and should not be a source of embarrassment. They shy away from judgments and didacticism, preferring to lead by example in their love of Torah. The second phase in which I came

Pardes related to the students —they are dedicated to learning but equally dedicated to raising challenges and criticisms. Their courage with different theological and intellectual problems is an inspiration. I have enjoyed their company very much.

There is a comfort with the tension and uncertainty — more than that, these things are harnessed as fuel for further explorations in Torah. That is critical.

Joel Pollal

Joel Pollak graduated from Harvard University, and came to Pardes for a summer and a semester of the Year Program. He is now in South Africa doing work in environmental studies.

"Stepping Back in Time to Touch Our Roots"

For one entire day last fall, a group of Jerusalemites were swept away in place and time, back to the Jewish study houses, markets and homes of 10th century Babylonian Jewry.

Built around the theme of the teachings of Saadiah Gaon, the seminal Jewish thinker of that community who strove to fuse rationality and spirituality, the Pardes-sponsored "Day Away" presented an opportunity for participants to grapple with the issues facing Jews at the end of the first millennium — issues that are still relevant to us today.

Professor Uriel Simon, Professor of Bible at Bar Ilan University, began the day with a riveting lecture on Saadiah Gaon as a pioneer of Biblical interpretation. Rabbi Daniel Landes, Director of Pardes, later led a learning session on Saadiah Gaon's views on the interplay between knowledge and law.

The over 150 Jerusalemites, aided by students in our Pardes Second-Year Fellows Program, participated actively in Pardes-style learning throughout the day. They experienced the interactive approach Pardes takes towards study of the Jewish sources, as they discussed the issues that Saadiah faced -- the same issues that Pardes students confront in their daily meetings with classical texts.



Interwoven throughout the day were elements that spoke to all the senses: lunch and dinner with authentic Iraqi foods, musical interludes of synagogue chants and secular melodies, dramatic presentations of Saadiah's life and teachings, a spice market, and a spell-binding storyteller, all within the Oriental setting of the Shulkhan David halls in Jerusalem. Even the tasteful invitations (literally, as they were adorned with mint and cinnamon-scented leaves) reinforced the day's theme.

Pardes' first fundraiser in Israel was successfully orchestrated by indefatigable Pardes Board members Ida Hoffmann and Audrey Kaplan Scher, working closely with Elyssa Rabinowitz and Board member David Moss, who developed the concept of the "Day Away".

When the final strains of the kanun, od and tof instruments faded away in the evening, everyone agreed that the Pardes "Day Away" should become an annual event – and looked forward to hearing the theme for next year's happening!

The "Day Away" was generously supported by Micha, Yael and Deborah Taubman; Hutti and Jay Pomrenze; Rabbi Joe Schonwald and Rolinda Rochlin Schonwald; Toni and Peter Wiseburgh; Moshe and Libby Werthan; Sol and Julia Green; The Larry and Marsha Roth Family; Ruth and Conrad Morris; Ruth Cummings Sorensen; and Sodaclub Ltd.



Saadiah Gaon

the Biblical Translator and Interpreter

"If, as often happens, the words of the Bible seem to contradict what we assume as true on the basis of any of the other three sources of knowledge, it becomes our duty to submit the assumed truth to careful examinaton. For it may be found that it is based on an imaginary experience or false reasoning. But if, after examination, we still feel convinced that the Biblical word is in conflict with experience or reason, then we are duty bound to interpret the Biblical passage allegorically, so as to bring it into harmony with the accepted truth."

from the Book of Beliefs and Opinions

Israel Board of Directors



Pardes is pleased to welcome Zvi Inbar as incoming Chairman of the Board. Zvi assumes the position from Moshe Werthan, who served as Chairman of the Pardes Board for the last two years. For the past 27 years, Zvi has worked at the Jewish Agency in various roles of leader, educator and trainer. In his most recent position as Deputy Director General, Zvi has been involved in directing innovative educational projects worldwide. A native of South Africa, Zvi joined the Pardes Board three years ago, serving as Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee last year. Zvi's goals are to elucidate and promote Pardes'

Welcome to the following new Board Members in Israel: Ian Brown, Mickey Freidson, Jill Levenfeld, Zvi Nixon and Toni Wiseburgh.

mission, highlighted this year by the implementation of the new Pardes Fellows Program.

Two Pardes alumni have recently joined the Pardes team of teachers. **Mick Weinstein**, originally from Wilmington, Delaware, received a degree in English Literature from the University of Michigan and experienced teachers who are aware of the world views of the students." Mick says that both studying and teaching at Pardes has helped him to develop his skills as a teacher of Torah.

punishment system and did not comply with the Biblical specifications concerning punishment. Meesh is a Dean's Dissertation Fellow, a program through the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. Meesh lives in Jerusalem with her husband and daughter.

Alumni join Pardes Faculty

in Ann Arbor. Mick, who resides in Jerusalem with his wife and son, is currently engaged in full-time Jewish study at Yeshivat Har Etzion. According to Mick, "At Pardes you have to teach well. It is not enough to have knowledge. At Pardes students demand top, well-prepared, open,

Michelle (Meesh) Hammer - Kossoy is a graduate of Jewish Studies from Brandeis University, and was a Pardes student during the 1991-1992 school year. Meesh is currently doing graduate work at New York University in Talmud, focusing on why Rabbis reinvented their own criminal Rabbi Daniel Landes notes, "Having our students come back to Pardes as our faculty is the greatest testament that Pardes can generate the kind of charismatic, dedicated and learned teachers that Pardes students demand when they come to study with us."

in & Labout

Birthright Israel and Pardes

Pardes, with the support of Birthright Israel, is hosting a 10 day living and learning experience for 40 college-age students who have not visited Israel before within the framework of a peer group educational trip. Of the 40 students attending Pardes this January through the Birthright Program, half of them are from Yale University.

- Los Angeles alumni are invited to participate in an open shiur once a month.
 For info, contact Bruce Ellman at Bellman@compuserve.com.
- Pardes Dean Dr. David I. Bernstein attended the General Assembly in Atlanta where, among other activities, he participated in a reunion for Pardes alumni.
- Pardes faculty have begun teaching at the new Makor Center in New York City. To

find about about classes, contact **Paula Steisel** at Paulaapf@aol.com.

- The Pardes High School in Cleveland, Ohio and Pardes have started a monthly open beit midrash for parents, faculty, students and the general public.
- Pardes held a three day seminar for Pardes students entitled "Holy Books and Sacred Texts: On Torah and Torah Study." The Seminar was planned by Pardes faculty Leah Rosenthal ane Kalman Neuman.
- Pardes faculty Marcie Lenk and Mick Weinstein attended the Limmud Conference in England where over 1,000 British Jews gathered for an intense week of Torah learning.
- A fund has been set up in memory of Pardes alum, **Ken Gerber** 5"7 92-93. Anyone wishing to make a contribution in his honor can contact **Rebecca Shargel** at rebecca@pipeline.com

American Pardes

Foundation

New Executive Director



Pardes is pleased to announce the appointment of **Jayne Rosengarten** to the position of Executive
Director of the American Pardes

Foundation. Jayne comes to APF from the American Sephardi Foundation,

where she served as National Executive Director. Prior to that she served for four years as National Director of Hadassah, where she oversaw program development for the 385,000-member organization.

Jayne's vast experience will help Pardes further its goals, including the expansion of the role of the Board of Directors, the strengthening of ties between the American and Israeli Boards, and the development of a broader role for Pardes alumni in learning and administrative capacities.

Jayne takes over from **Rae Janvey**, who established the APF office in New York four years ago. We wish Rae much success at the Wexner Heritage Foundation, and look forward to her continued input as a member of the APF Board.

Welcome to the following new APF Board Members: Avi Lewittes and Rae Janvey.

Coordinator for Alumni Activities

Sharone Baskin, Pardes alum 1998, has been appointed Coordinator for Alumni Activities for Pardes, working at the APF offices in New York. One of her first tasks will be to expand our e-mail address database. If you know of any Pardes alumni who are not receiving our monthly e-mail newsletters, please send us their e-mails today, to pardesusa@aol.com.

Sharone Baskin

Julie Potiker

Julie Potiker recently agreed to assume the position of President of the American Pardes Foundation Board, taking over from Selig Sacks.

I was first exposed to Pardes when I was a student at the Wexner Heritage Foundation in San Diego. When I first



heard Rabbi Landes teach, I was immediately struck by the impact of his message. Here was a man who combined the best of Torah study and learning with an

understanding of modern culture and American values. He was "with it" in a way I had not experienced with any other teacher from the Orthodox end of the religious spectrum I had studied under. Rabbi Landes has a unique ability to appeal to contemporary Western Reform and Conservative ideals, while still preserving his dialogue with the Orthodox. He is a visionary. I subsequently participated in the first Pardes Executive Seminar two

new President of APF Boa

years ago, together with several other San Diego Jewish lay leaders.

I have been a lay leader in the Jewish community, serving in various capacities at the United Jewish Federation, the Jewish Community Center and the Agency for Jewish Education, among others. I was also the 1999 recipient of the UJF Young Leadership award for our community.

Pardes has helped to give me the foundation I need to incorporate Torah and halachic reasoning into my own community work, and it was with this realization that I decided to create a local Pardes Institute for Jewish learning in San Diego (now in its second year). I'm pleased to say that both the first-year class and the Pardes Executive Seminar helped to create a strong "Friends of Pardes" organization in San Diego which has taken up the challenge of not only continuing, but expanding the local Pardes Institute. This year we have over 65 students, almost three times the number last year. I know that with continued dedication this number will grow even larger in San Diego and that the American Pardes Foundation Board, working in concert with the Israel Board,

can establish similar organizations in many other cities throughout the United States.

I feel strongly that Pardes has the potential to set its place as the "gold standard" for Torah study in the United States. While many other learning institutions exist in both the US and Israel, none has the same breadth of doctrine, depth of unity and sheer excellence as Pardes.

When I stop to think of the potential that unfolds before us, I can visualize a time in the not too distant future when we will have a beautiful new institute in Israel. From there, leading Torah scholars can teach to both a large dedicated class and also the whole community in an "easy access" manner. From this platform we will also create an American presence which will fill a needed place in the American Jewish community.

We can bring this exciting vision to fruition through a partnership of the American Pardes Foundation, and the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Israel. We are working together on a strategic planning process that will set our direction for the coming years. With this "blueprint" in place, the real work will begin. But so will the excitement, and the reward.

With Thanks..

Pardes wishes to express its thanks to the following foundations who support our efforts at enhancing Jewish life and learning: AVI CHAI Foundation, The Helen Bader Foundation, The Hyman Jebb Levy Foundation, The Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Foundation, The Arie and Ida Crown Memorial Foundation, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The Dorot Foundation, The Eden Foundation, Ellman Sibling Foundation, The Everett Family Foundation, The Fig Tree Foundation, The Grinspoon Foundation, The Leo and Julia Forchheimer Foundation, The Jesselson Foundation, The Joint Authority for Jewish Education, The Lindenbaum Family Foundation, The Abraham and Sonia Rochlin Foundation, The Ephraim Roseman Foundation, The Robert Russell Memorial Foundation, The UJA Federation of New York, The Stanley Wolfe Foundation, The Low Wood Foundation, The Yoreinu Foundation, and Yad Shlomo.

Pardes Fellows

Program

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challenging professional and personal, not to mention Jewish, experience I could have asked for. Blessed with the opportunity to help build one of

America's newest Jewish high schools (and to spend time in the same city as my family for the first time in many years), I worked day and night as teacher, coach, informal educator and administrator at the New Jewish High School in Boston. As during my year at Pardes. I interacted with passionate and talented educators and students, teaching and learning from those around me about Judaism, education and my own goals and passions. After very little time, I knew this was it - my career, my life. It became obvious to me that I want to spend my life as a Jewish educator, helping to build a community around a serious commitment to, and love of, Torah.

With a sense of where I was going, the question followed naturally - how would I get there? At the beginning of the year, I realized that I wanted to continue my Jewish learning. I struggled with where I would learn upon returning to Israel. On the one hand, I desired the intensity and the total immersion in Torah learning of a traditional yeshiva, but on the other, I felt very strongly that my teachers are at Pardes. Moreover, Pardes' educational approach most fit my own philosophy about Judaism and education.

During the winter, an incredible opportunity seemed to drop into my lap like manna from heaven. I received a letter describing Pardes' plan for a second year program. It would focus on more intense text learning, as well as be an opportunity to learn about Jewish education and to play a leadership role in the Pardes community. I filed away the letter for more serious consideration after another year in Boston.

After a long winter and a much-needed Passover break, something almost miraculous happened. A month earlier I had written a letter to a very close mentor of mine asking for advice about my future. One morning, out of the blue, I received a response to my letter that deeply impacted my life. The response to my letter asked the poignant question - if you know what you want to do and Pardes is offering you a fantastic starting point, why not now?

Why not now? Three simple but powerful words are the reason I am in Israel learning Torah right now. The truth is, I would not have returned to Israel this year if not for the Pardes Second Year Fellows Program. Pardes offers me the opportunity to continue my learning at a more advanced level with teachers who truly live what they teach and who invest themselves deeply in their students. Moreover, the Fellows program gives the Pardes Fellows the chance to play a new and exciting role in a community of students who approach Torah and Judaism from a diverse range of perspectives and ideals. What continues to amaze me about Pardes is that the openness to diversity and willingness to question are not simply necessary responses to an existing reality. Rather, teachers and students alike challenge themselves through their interactions with such a diverse range of dynamic individuals. To me, encountering "the other", in the form of new and different ideas about life and about Judaism, is a central component to the learning and personal growth that make Pardes such a unique and special place. As much as I want to be learning Torah this year, I want to be learning Torah here.

I think Pardes' commitment to developing a Second Year Fellows Program is critical for two essential reasons. First, while the newness of Jewish learning for most of its first-year students creates a vibrant and open community of exploration and personal development, a core of returning students adds a tone of experience and focus to the learning at Pardes. For me, my first year of learning was the "crush" stage of a relationship, when I was driven by the newness of learning Torah more than by a genuine sense of where it would take me. Now, I return to Pardes in a more committed relationship of demands and expectations. I spend interminable hours in the beit midrash, struggling to understand the language and the reasoning of the people who formed our tradition. It is here in the beit midrash, pushing myself to learn for a little longer, to take a text a little deeper, where I begin my endeavor to become an educated Jew. I think the experience and enthusiasm with which the other Pardes Fellows and I embark on this endeavor elevate the overall learning environment at Pardes.

The second critical reason for a Fellows Program benefits me, as a Fellow, directly. Put simply, the people I trust most with my Jewish education are at Pardes. To a certain extent I have been spoiled by a year at Pardes and at the New Jewish High School in Boston. Both of these institutions very much promote the rare phenomenon of, as Rabbi Daniel Landes describes, "k'lal Yisrael Judaism." I am blessed to be able to learn in a place where every Jew has the right to learn Torah by virtue only of being a Jew, and where pluralism means respecting every individual as a Jew and as a human being, without sacrificing the integrity of one's own beliefs. As I continue along my path, I will inevitably face the lonely situation of"I can't pray with the people I can talk to, and I can't talk to the people I can pray with." For now, I will cherish my year of serious text study, complemented by talking to, praying with, and learning from the outstanding human beings who surround me.

Marc Baker graduated from Yale University with a degree in Religious Studies. He attended Pardes for the first time in 1997-1998 and is now a Pardes Fellow.

"Helping to Build the World around us"



On November 17, 1999, The Ha'aretz Newspaper reported the following facts about the Ethiopian Community: 45% of the parents of school age children are unable to pay their children's school expenses; 40% of Ethiopian families do not possess heating units in their residences; 10% of the families do not have refrigerators or means to heat water. Over 1000 Ethiopian families still live in caravans or absorption centers. Pardes students are doing their part to help those Ethiopians still living in the Givat HaMatos caravans in Jerusalem.

Gemilut hassadim, an act of giving that benefits another person, is a focus of the Torah from beginning to end. In Genesis, God sets the model for these acts of loving kindness, when he clothes Adam and Eve; it is written: "And God made for Adam and his wife skin-tunics" (Genesis 3:21). As students of Torah at Pardes, empowering other people through our community service projects has been an amazing opportunity to infuse what we are learning in the classroom with real-world, hands-on experiences.

Three months into the learning at Pardes, students are actively engaged in various community service projects. One of the projects is working with families living in temporary caravans at Givat HaMatos, Jerusalem's only absorption site for Ethiopian immigrants. Thirteen Pardes

students have been paired with individual families. As one of these students, I find my work at Givat HaMatos very rewarding, yet also challenging.

Those living at Givat HaMatos must constantly learn how to adjust to Israeli culture, and our job as volunteers is to help them with this process. Each week, the children in "my family" are waiting at the bus stop for me, anxious and enthusiastic for our arrival. Playing soccer with the children, painting and coloring, helping both the parents and children with ulpan homework, and talking with the families about their experiences in Ethiopia, are all part of our weekly activities. Helping the children in my family with their homework is also a great opportunity for my partner and me to work on our spoken Hebrew.

Our work is often also difficult because many of the 225 Ethiopian families living at Givat HaMatos have become used to ramshackle caravans and fear the unknown of leaving the absorption center. As we help them understand the daily tasks of living in Israel, we decrease their anxiety and help prepare them for the larger steps, such as buying an apartment and moving into mainstream Israeli society.

Just as I learn through Torah, so too I learn through each visit to Givat HaMatos. Through studying at Pardes, I am not only learning to build my own knowledge, but also to build the world around me through gemilut hassadim.

by Leah E. Stern, M.S.W.



Pardes Community Service Coordinator Debra Weiner-Solomont and Pardes students invited over 40 Ethiopian families to celebrate the Hannukah holiday at Pardes with donuts, games and dreidel playing. A bazaar of clothing and toys was also held for the families.

The Pardes Community Service Project is made possible by the generous support of the Edith and Henry Everett Foundation.



HAVRUTA

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Please send us your e-mail address and the year you were at Pardes. pardesinst@netmedia.net.il

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Executive Seminar in Jerusalem July 11-16, 2000

July 11-16, 2000
Love: Lost and Found
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The Shabbat Parsha Quiz, written by Moshe Werthan, former Chair of the Pardes Board of Directors and alumnus of Pardes 97-98, will be appearing on our Web site each week. WWW.PARDES.ORG.IL