



HAVRUTA

Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies | Winter 2005 | מכון פרדס 5766

IN THIS ISSUE: Rabbi David Ellenson and Rabbi Daniel Gordis at Pardes
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STUDENTS SPEAK WITH EVACUATED PARDES ALUM AT BENEFIT FOR HURRICANE VICTIMS

Over forty Pardes students and faculty members came together to eat breakfast for dinner as part of "Southern Comfort," a student-led and initiated fundraiser to raise much needed assistance for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

During the event, students took part in a conference call with an alum of the Pardes Executive Seminar of 2002, Julie Wise-Oreck, who was evacuated from New Orleans. "The phone call was a truly powerful moment," said committee co-coordinator Laurie Jagoda. "To hear a first-hand account of the trauma and ordeals that people went through was really eye-opening and made us feel even more grateful to be able to offer assistance to our communities back home."

Students who attended the fundraiser were able to eat homemade French toast and other delicious breakfast foods prepared by the student volunteers.



Pardes student Jessie Mallor, organizer of the dinner raising funds for U.S. hurricane victims

Developed by a committee of Year Program students, and hosted by Rabbi David Levin-Kruss, Pardes Director of Special Programs, the event raised over \$500 for organizations providing direct aid to refugees and victims of the September



Pardes students at the "Southern Comfort" event to help U.S. hurricane victims

disaster. "Helping the wider community is an integral part of Torah study," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss.

"We are all really thrilled at the amount of enthusiasm and support the Pardes community displayed to help our brothers and sisters in America," said student and committee co-coordinator, Jessie Mallor. "It's such an important way to exemplify and put into practice the lessons that we're learning from our tradition of Gemilut Chasadim (lovingkindness) and Ma'asim Tovim (good deeds). We are really happy to make a contribution to help in whatever way we can."

HESED EVENT COMBINES LEARNING WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION

Pardes students cleaned up the neighborhood streets as one of the Hesed event options. Others included packing food for distribution to terror victims, visiting residents of a center for adults with mental disabilities, tutoring in an English enrichment program for neighborhood youth, and mitzvah clowning at a senior citizens home. The projects were part of the third annual Pardes Yom Iyun Shel Hesed, a student-initiated day of learning and community service inspired by the lives of Pardes Educators Program students Marla Bennett, z"l and Ben Blutstein, z"l, killed in the 2002 Mt. Scopus terrorist bombing.



K L A L Y I S R A E L

REFORM, CONSERVATIVE AND ORTHODOX SCHOLARS

In opening the cross-denominational event celebrating the Israel launch of Rabbi David Ellenson's new book, **After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity**, Pardes Director Rabbi Landes lauded Rabbi Ellenson's work. "It combines a rigorous engagement with the texts of Rabbinic culture, the discovery and examination of core issues, and their

JUDAISM RESURGENT? AMERICAN JEWS AND THE EVOLVING EXPRESSION OF JEWISH VALUES AND JEWISH IDENTITY

By Dr. David Ellenson

The twin trends of renewed emphasis on ethnic-religious expression and pride on the one hand, and the ever-growing attenuation of such attachments, on the other, have been promoted by larger societal trends.

The modern condition of choice – particularly the displacement that marks the upwardly mobile as they move about in search of career and opportunity – has left many persons without a secure sense of roots. Many have been liberated from "tribal brotherhood," but still more have experienced the anomie and alienation of "universal otherhood."

Many people are anxious to perceive a sacred vitality at the core of both their nation and their own private worlds. For these reasons, religion continues to play a crucial role – even in a country like the United States with its constitutional wall between religion and state – in promoting social cohesion as well as group and individual identity.

Contemporary American expressions of Jewish tradition are viewed by many as bearing an affinity to the positive moral values bequeathed by Enlightenment rationalism to the modern world, while at the same time offering a corrective for the fragmentizing effects of that secular tradition. Such Jewish expression, promoted by trends in the larger world, is attractive to many persons both within and beyond the Jewish community.

Nevertheless, any triumphalist conclusion concerning Jewish life and values in contemporary America must be tempered. As Charles Liebman pointed out more than a decade ago, Jewish religious erosion threatens to overshadow the achievements of the committed elite of American Jewry. In a world where the political parameters that formerly preserved the pre-modern Jewish community have been dismantled, Jewish commitments and knowledge have become so attenuated that a diminution of Jewish life in this country is taking place despite an efflorescence of Jewish culture and values.

By and large, modern Judaism has been taken out of the home and placed in public, institutional settings. Liebman does not dispute the accuracy of observations about the pro-religious achievements of

some American Jews. Yet, for him, this reflects no more than "the capacity of a minority to sustain and even strengthen their Jewish commitments despite the tendencies of the majority."

This essay demonstrates the ways in which American attitudes toward ethnic identity and public manifestations of faith have evolved greatly over the past century, with significant implications for the way in which Jewish faith and culture are today expressed. The ideal of the melting pot, dominant at the beginning of the twentieth century, was surely rejected by many beginning in the 1960s, at which time a greater appreciation of ethnic values and identity began to emerge. Yet even as such a groundwork was being laid for a resurgence of Jewish expression, it was being done within the embrace of a larger American culture from which American Jewry was not prepared to retreat.

All of this must be borne in mind in assessing the renaissance of Jewish life in contemporary America. Jews in the United States are overwhelmingly universalistic, and particularistic affirmations are made in the service of universal moral and spiritual values. For Jews, as well as for members of other U.S. ethnic groups, the question that therefore remains is whether such affirmations will prove strong enough to sustain a broad cultural and communal identity. Jews have been blessed with freedom in America. Such blessing has allowed for the strengthening of Jewish commitment, values, and identity. At the same time, it has proven to be the solvent in which a distinctive Jewish identity and values often dissolve. The resiliency of Judaism has been challenged on American shores in a variety of ways, and the Jewish response to the American crucible has been textured. The story of Jewish resurgence in the United States during the twentieth century is multivalent and complex, and the adaptive capacity of the Jewish people will surely continue to be tested in the future.

*Excerpts from Chapter 1, "Judaism Resurgent? American Jews and the Evolving Expression of Jewish Values and Jewish Identity," in **After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity**, by David Ellenson, 2004, Hebrew Union College Press, pp. 27-50. Rabbi Ellenson is President of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion.*



I N A C T I O N

EXPLORE JUDAISM AND MODERNITY AT PARDES

placement within their social reality. All this, combined with both an objective stance and an empathetic, scholarly temperament, leads us to the one-word description of the gift which is David Ellenson's work: understanding." A packed Beit Midrash heard Rabbi Landes and Rabbi Daniel Gordis respond to Rabbi Ellenson's comments. Excerpts of their remarks are reproduced here.



Rabbi Daniel Gordis, Rabbi David Ellenson and Rabbi Daniel Landes at Pardes for the Israel launch of Rabbi Ellenson's new book.

A MULTI-PRONGED STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO ASSIMILATION AND ISOLATIONISM

By Rabbi Daniel Landes

David Ellenson points out that Jewish values are identified, in ways both blunt and subtle, with the best values of Western civilization. When that happens, the latter tend to absorb the former, leaving them as rather lifeless vestiges of a dying, if once proud, culture. Judaism is diminished and the Jews begin to vanish. For those of us who reject both assimilation on the one hand, and isolationism on the other, a multi-pronged strategy should be adopted. This would include:

a) a nuanced approach which would first emphasize the areas that we share and that we have taught Western civilization – for example, our respect for human beings created in the image of God – and the crucial importance of a just law. At the same time, we should point out where our values rub up against current

DEFINING THE CONCEPTION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JEW

By Dr. Daniel Gordis

David Ellenson's scholarship demonstrates, with creativity and ingenuity, that Jewish law is more than a matter of jurisprudence. The world of Halakhah is also a world of identity – identity formation, and identity definition. In deciding the law of matters of personal status, Ellenson has shown us, Posekim are doing more than wrestling with the precedents with which they are faced – they are defining their conception of what it means to be a Jew, what it means to be a part of this unique people.

For that reason, Halakhah is not, and cannot become, the purview of any one denomination alone. It is a dimension of the Jewish tradition with which every Jew must wrestle, regardless of the "ground rules" that she or he employs. It is for that reason that an evening celebrating Dr. Ellenson's work almost had to consist of representatives of three denominations. For Dr. Ellenson's work defies pigeon-holing, and demands the serious attention of Jews across the denominational spectrum.

Rabbi Daniel Gordis is Vice President of the Mandel Foundation Israel and Director of the Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem.

Western values – as in Jewish insistence on an integration of sanctity within body, soul and community;

b) a seeking out of Jewish values that we all can share, so that we feel a common home within the cold and fragmenting world outside;

c) a return to a true Jewish literacy derived from our classical sources, so that our moral and spiritual gifts to humanity and to ourselves can be properly articulated and creatively expressed and lived. The study of Hebrew Bible, Talmud and Jewish thought can make us at once more human and more Jewish, more particular and loyal to our heritage and people, as well as committed to the betterment of the universal condition of man and woman.

Rabbi Daniel Landes is the Director and Rosh HaYeshiva of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies.

F R O M T H E P A R D E



WORLD OF OUR SAGES: ROAR LIKE A DOVE

By Rabbi Levi Cooper

The Mishna defines the latest appropriate time for the recitation of Shema in the evening, according to Rabbi Eliezer, as "sof ha'ashmora harishona" – the end of the first watch.

The opinion of the sages who propose midnight as the latest time is, however, accepted as the Halachic ideal, while the opinion of Rabban Gamliel who permits the recitation of Shema throughout the night until the light of dawn is accepted as a post factum position (Mishna, Berachot 1:1).

Despite this normative ruling, the ensuing discussion in the Talmud (B. Berachot 3a) attempts to clarify the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, namely when is the end of the first watch. The Talmud concludes that there are three watches, thus the end of the first watch occurs after a third of the night has passed.

Recalling the biblical verse: "The Lord will roar from on high, from His holy abode He will utter His voice, He will roar a mighty roar over His habitation (Jeremiah 25:20)," and noting that the term "roar" is used three times, Rabbi Eliezer adds that at each watch God roars like a lion.

Further in the Talmud, we are told that God roars like a lion crying out at each of the three watches: "Woe to the children because of whose sins I destroyed My Temple and burned My Sanctuary and exiled them among the nations of the world."

Immediately following this passage, Rabbi Yose recounts his meeting with Elijah the Prophet in a dilapidated building in Jerusalem. After scolding Rabbi Yose for choosing to pray in a dangerous place, Elijah asks: "My son, what sound did you hear in this ruin?"

We may be inclined to explain Rabbi Yose's entry into the ruin as an attempt to find a place for praying that is free from the distractions and interruptions of passersby. Elijah, however, understands that a *hurva*, a ruin, is a particularly auspicious place for prayer. Rabbi Yose's sincere, heartfelt prayer in the *hurva* may have merited a glimpse of some hidden realm.

Indeed, Rabbi Yose answers, "I heard a Heavenly Voice cooing like a dove and saying, 'Woe to the children because of whose sins I

have destroyed My House and burned My Temple and exiled them among the nations.'"

Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira of Piaseczno (1889-1943), writing during the Holocaust, referred to this Talmudic passage. The Piaseczno Rebbe told his followers on January 20, 1940 of the value of prayer that comes from a place of ruin. Drawing on the reality of life in the Warsaw Ghetto and connecting this harsh existence to Rabbi Yose's experience in the *hurva*, the Piaseczno Rebbe implored his adherents to redouble their efforts in prayer – prayers that would come from a place of destruction.

"The sages present us with two paradigms, of which both are divinely sanctioned. Both public and private articulations of a desire for change and improvement are valid and important for society."

Returning to our Talmudic passage: Elijah responds to Rabbi Yose's report by revealing more details of God's grieving. Elijah gives his solemn word that the Heavenly Voice resounds in this fashion three times daily. Furthermore, even when the Jewish people enter synagogues and study houses and respond to the Kaddish prayer exalting the great name of God, God says: "Fortunate is the King who is praised this way in His House" – bemoaning the fact that such praise is not being said in the Temple but only in exilic places of worship – "What is there for a Father who has exiled His sons, and woe to the sons who have been exiled from their Father's table."

The story of Rabbi Yose in the *hurva* is perhaps cited because, like in the previous discussion, we find God grieving over our yet-to-be redeemed state of existence. However, a striking difference between the two Aggadic passages jumps to the fore: In the first description, we find God roaring like a lion and in the second



S B E I T M I D R A S H



account, we find God cooing like a dove. What can we draw from these vastly different portrayals of lamentation?

We might suggest that in this Aggadic passage we are offered two paradigms for anguish over the exilic reality we live in. We may roar like lions with fearful voices that resound in the streets and alleyways, heard by all and sundry. All who hear the roar may be shaken, but as the echo of the roar grows fainter, the impression fades until it is only a memory. Alternatively, we may coo like doves, barely audible and easily ignored, yet always there in the background of our consciousness.

In many areas of life, we have the choice of how we will express ourselves. People unhappy with the social injustices of our time can shout from the rooftops, post signs on every street corner, organize mass demonstrations. Alternatively, they may express their feelings in the privacy of their own homes, educating their family and community about the importance of social justice, and making their small contribution to better the world.

What is the difference between these two avenues? Each path lacks what the other has. The roar of the lion may keep the issue in the public eye, but it does not necessarily ensure that the

individual will internalize the values expressed. On the other hand, actions that may be relatively insignificant in the home may leave an indelible impression on the family, though there is no guarantee that the message will permeate beyond the confines of the individual's home.

Which paradigm is the appropriate way to recall our unredeemed state of existence and transmit the desire for better days to the next generation?

Perhaps we could suggest that herein lies the key to understanding the juxtaposition of these Talmudic passages. The sages present us with two paradigms, of which both are divinely sanctioned. Both public and private articulations of a desire for change and improvement are valid and important for society. Neither expression alone can achieve the lofty goal of internalizing values while sending a strong message to our surroundings. Improving our society can only be achieved by a combination of the roaring of the lion and the cooing of the dove, by public proclamations and by private internalization.

This article was reprinted from The Jerusalem Post, where Rabbi Levi Cooper, Director of Advanced Programs at Pardes, writes a weekly column on Talmud.

SACKS TORAH FOUNDATION HONORS PARDES FACULTY MEMBERS RABBI MEIR SCHWEIGER AND RABBI LEVI COOPER

Rabbi Meir Schweiger, Mashgiach Ruchani, and Rabbi Levi Cooper, Director of Advanced Programs, were each awarded a prize recognizing outstanding achievements in bringing Jews of all walks closer together through Torah study from the Sacks Torah Awards Foundation, in memory of the late Rabbi Menachem and Rabbanit Hannah Sacks.

"We are immensely proud of our faculty members' wide range of knowledge and abilities," stated Rabbi Daniel Landes, Director of Pardes.

"It was a tremendous honor to receive this award. It gives my wife and me strength as we continue working for the Jewish people," said Rabbi Cooper. In his keynote address at the awards ceremony, Rabbi Schweiger stressed that, in an age of rampant assimilation and alienation from traditional values, it is critical to bring Torah to people "where they are at," to explore creative ways of making Torah accessible and meaningful, and above all, to embrace, love, welcome and accept all Jews, regardless of their beliefs and practices.



Pardes Mashgiach Ruchani Rabbi Meir Schweiger and Director of Advanced Programs Rabbi Levi Cooper

S U P P O R T P A R D E S

SPECIAL BEQUEST MATCHING FUNDS CHALLENGE!

Long-time Pardes Board members and Continuing Education students Moshe and Libby Werthan have pledged up to one million dollars to Pardes in matching Legacy funds. Through their generosity, you have the opportunity to double the gift that Pardes will receive through your last will and testament. All bequests that have been pledged by the end of the calendar year will be matched through this special offer. Because this a new matching fund for Pardes, you can make a significant difference even with a small gift. Contact Joshua Chadajo at joshua@pardesusa.org for further information.

Joshua Chadajo Joins Pardes as APF Executive Director


Joshua Chadajo is the first Pardes alum to be Executive Director of the American Pardes Foundation. He attended the Pardes Year Program from 2001-2002 after having received an MBA from the Yale School of Management. Joshua previously served as Executive Director of Amcha – The Coalition for Jewish Concerns, the activist organization led by Rabbi Avi Weiss; and as Research Coordinator & Director of Campus Programs of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), the Boston-based media-watch organization. "I am extremely excited about joining the Pardes team," said Joshua. "On a personal level, the Pardes experience changed my life. I look forward to the growth of Pardes in all aspects so that the Pardes combination of Israel, Jewish education and Klal Yisrael can impact even more Jewish lives."

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PARDES WELCOMES OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Audrey Kaplan Scher, Incoming Israel Board Chair



Audrey, a Pardes Board member since 1997, has contributed to Pardes in a number of ways, including serving as the first co-chair of "A Day Away," co-founder of Friends of Pardes and most recently as Israel Development chairperson. In addition to Pardes, Audrey is involved in Chelev Ha'aretz, a grass-roots social welfare organization serving disadvantaged youth. Prior to making Aliyah with her husband Harvey and youngest daughter in 1993, Audrey worked in management and sales training at Xerox Corporation, served on the boards of Jewish Family Service and Jewish Federation in Rochester NY, and as vice-chair of the Gross Schechter Day School in Cleveland Ohio. Audrey is a graduate of Smith College. "I feel that all the professional and lay strands of my life have come together in my service to Pardes – my commitment to Jewish education everywhere, my love of Klal Yisrael and my background in training in Jewish leadership and in development. My goal is to help Pardes continue to be a model of Jewish learning that brings passion and knowledge to Jewish life abroad and in Israel."

Monica Handler Penner, APF Board



Monica is a recent graduate of the Wexner Heritage Foundation program. She is a proponent of Jewish day school education, and currently holds numerous positions in the San Diego Jewish community, including Vice President, Planning and Allocations, United Jewish Federation of San Diego County; Vice President, Community Advocacy Initiatives, Agency for Jewish Education of San Diego County; and Co-chair of the Every Child Campaign, San Diego Jewish Academy. Monica received her M.D. from Cornell University Medical College, and did her residency in pediatrics at both Cornell and University of California, San Francisco. She currently lives in San Diego, California with her husband Amnon "Ami" Gires and three children.

Dubbi Rabinowitz, Israel Board

A Pardes alum, Dubbi sold his Bloch Supermarket chain prior to making Aliyah from South Africa with his wife in 1997, and helped form a trademark owning company which is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Dubbi served as Honorary Treasurer and Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the United Herzlia Schools in Worcester, South Africa, and played an active role in his shuls in Worcester and Durbanville where he later moved. Dubbi completed a B.Sc in Electrical Engineering and a M.Sc in Nuclear Physics at the University of Cape Town. Dubbi and his wife Lies attended Pardes in 1986, they have three children and now live in Jerusalem.

Darell Krasnoff, APF Board



Darell is currently a Managing Director of Bel Air Investment Advisors. Darell previously was a Managing Director of Goldman Sachs and served as a trustee and chairman of the Stanford Graduate School of Business Trust. Darell is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of the Center Theatre Group, the operating company for the Ahmanson Theatre and Mark Taper Forum; past Chairman and current member of the Board of LA Team Mentoring; and is on the investment committee of the Board of Trustees of Occidental College. Darell, who lives in Los Angeles with his wife Elizabeth and two sons, received his BA from Occidental College and an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Management.

Debbie Abramowitz, Israel Board



Prior to moving to Jerusalem with her husband Chaim in 2003, Debbie worked in publishing, marketing and communications. A native Houstonian and graduate of Rice University, she worked in New York, Houston and Austin, Texas, as a magazine and newspaper editor and as Assistant Publisher of Texas Monthly magazine. She was a co-owner and president of Westside Tennis Club in Houston and consulted and worked in marketing and communications over a period of 20 years with communal organizations in Houston, including The Jewish Federation of Greater Houston and Seven Acres Jewish Geriatric Center. She was Vice President of The Hebrew Academy (now Robert M. Beren Academy) in Houston and a founding board member of T.O.R.C.H., the Houston kollel. "Pardes is truly among the most impressive organizations in a country of impressive organizations! It is my privilege to join with the talented, dedicated people here who have made – and continue to make – this so."

Suzanne Fried Singer, Israel Board



Suzanne and her husband Max first lived in Israel with their four young sons from 1973 until 1977. Returning to the US in 1977, they made their home in Chevy Chase, Maryland where Suzanne continued work begun in Israel on the editorial staff of the recently launched Biblical Archaeology Review (BAR). Until 1997 when she and her husband made Aliyah, she worked as a Managing Editor and writer for BAR and, later, Managing Editor of Moment Magazine; she continues as Contributing Editor to both magazines. Suzanne, a graduate of Swarthmore College, with an M.A. from Columbia University in Education, lives with her husband in Jerusalem, near their children and grandchildren. In 1987, after the death of their son Alex z"l in battle in Lebanon, the Singer family established the Alex Singer Project, a non-profit foundation to continue Alex's life work through his writings and art.



"PARDES FROM JERUSALEM" PODCAST SERIES

At left, Rabbi Daniel Landes records a shiur for the podcast series "Pardes from Jerusalem." The podcast is an ongoing series of recorded talks by the teachers of the Pardes Institute. Each talk is about 30 minutes in length and can be automatically downloaded to the listener's iPod or similar music player using easy-to-use and freely available software. The podcast is available now, see www.pardes.org.il/podcast for instructions. Thank you to Larry Kluger, Pardes Year Program ('98-'99) and APF Board member, who initiated the podcast project.

PARDES SUMMER PROGRAM EXPANDS TO THREE SESSIONS

Session I June 6 – June 27

Session II June 30 – July 20

Session III July 28 – August 17

In response to growing demand, the Pardes Summer Program is adding a third session, offering sessions in June, July and August. Each session runs for three weeks, and features an intensive morning Talmud or Chumash class five days per week as well as the usual array of electives ranging from Rav Kook, Chassidut and Philosophy, to Jewish History, Jewish Law and Scribal Arts.

The Pardes Summer Program attracts nearly 200 students each summer. Recent programming additions include a beginners' ulpan, a "Tour with Text" course that includes local touring, and expanded Shabbat programming. "We want this experience to include meaningful social and cultural programs in addition to our text study," explained Rabbi David Levin-Kruss, Pardes Summer Program Director.

SPIRITUAL RETREAT JULY 23-26

An opportunity to leave the noise and distractions of the city and spend a few days in the desert focusing on our inner lives.

EXECUTIVE LEARNING SEMINAR JULY 2-6

"Relationships" will be the theme of this year's Executive Learning Seminar, a special program geared to business executives, professionals and community leaders.

TASTE OF PARDES WINTER LEARNING SEMINAR JANUARY 3-4

A new program for alumni and others who want to experience Pardes for two days.

PARDES SHABBATON JUNE 9-11

Mark your calendar now! Plans are in the works for the biennial Pardes Shabbaton to be held Shabbat Nasso, June 9-11, 2006, on the East Coast. Stay tuned for more information.

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Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies

HARRY H. BEREN CENTER
FOR JEWISH ETHICS

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