

**50 Years of Pardes Celebration  
Dedication of the Day of Learning  
September 19, 2022**

*Read on behalf of Rick Zitelman, President of The Zitelman Family Foundation*

Boker tov! My wife Cindy and I are so sorry we could not be with you in person to celebrate this very special occasion of 50 years of Jewish education at Pardes. We appreciate the opportunity to sponsor Today's Day of Learning and thank Josh for his persistence and Jackie for the suggestion.

Fifty years ago, Michael Swirsky set forth the vision to provide a non-denominational, open, and intellectually challenging yeshivah, teaching traditional Jewish texts. Pardes has executed exceptionally on that vision...and today is the beginning of the next 50 years of Your Torah, Your Journey.

The mission of the Zitelman Family Foundation is *"to support the unity and continuity of the Jewish people through relevant and meaningful Jewish wisdom and education"*. There is no better match than Pardes.

We are all on journeys through life. Where will that journey take *you*?

Jewish journeys begin at different times and for different reasons. Like many of our generation, Cindy and I were both raised with limited to no Jewish education after our Bar/Bat Mitzvah years. We were not engaged Jewishly nor in the Jewish community.

We began our Jewish journeys about 35 years ago. We began to learn and see the wisdom and relevance in Jewish texts. Since that time, we have re-defined our life goals, purpose and priorities. Without a Jewish education, we would likely have been leading very different and less meaningful lives.

The first step was to enroll our three daughters in Jewish Day School, where they found life-long friends and we found Jewish community. We are all active in our respective communities and giving back with our resources - both time and money. Their children are now getting a Jewish education. We credit much to our Jewish learning.

At Pardes, it is ***Your*** Torah and it is ***Your*** Journey. What will *you* learn and where will *you* go?

Our Sages teach us in Pirkei Avot 3.17 that "...one whose deeds exceed his wisdom, to what may he be compared? To a tree whose branches are few, but roots are many; so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they cannot move it out of its place".

You all have an opportunity to learn much, and our hope is that you use this wisdom:

- to build strong roots,
- to do good and do your part of being a "Light Upon the Nations", and,
- inspire others to do the same.

### **In closing...**

Wherever you are on the ladder of your Jewish Journey, keep going up.

Use your time wisely at Pardes. We hope each day provides you with a deeper and stronger Jewish foundation to help you on **your** journey...

We applaud and support Pardes, all of its leaders and faculty, and wish all students much success!

Thank you.