

THAVRUT

No. 12 Winter 5750—1990

A PARDES
LEARNING
COMPANION

NEAR THE GREAT SQUARE OF ROME • Linda Pardes

Linda Pardes grew up in Ocean, New Jersey, majored in political economy at Barnard, A.B. 1985, worked three years at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, went to Pardes ('88-'89), spent this past summer in Italy working with Soviet Jews and is now finishing her MBA at the Baruch Graduate School of Business (July '90), after which she plans to return to Israel.

Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, "If a man should ask you, 'Where is God?', tell him in the Great Square of Rome."

JERUSALEM TALMUD

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's words sound less ironic to me now, having spent last summer among the Jewish transmigrant population of Ladispoli, Italy, 45 minutes by car from the ancient capital. I was on the staff of a summer camp set up by the Israeli arm of the Joint Distribution Committee. It was there that 250 Russian Jewish children began to discover the positive side of their Jewish heritage and to learn about life in Israel. Ironically, part of my assignment at Ladispoli was to teach English to the parents in the afternoons in preparation for what they hoped would be their future lives in America. The following journal entries capture a part of that experience.



Kaitana kids on steps of Rome synagogue

Tuesday, July 11, 1989 8:45 A.M.

Aboard El Al

Images of assorted T-shirts and sweaters still fill my mind — to take or not to take? But moving beyond the well-dressed Israeli and Italian businessmen that crowd the cabin, I am excited to be on this plane — excited and optimistic, even while anticipating the probable negativism of the people I am about to meet regarding things Jewish. Conversations with my mostly Russian-born, secular Israeli co-workers made me realize what I would be up against.

COMMENT | One of the positive aspects about having been on a leave-of-absence from Israel this past year was the opportunity it afforded to meet and talk with the many Pardes alumni living in the New York area. With our Pardes background in common, it is not surprising that conversations inevitably turned to what it is like to live Jewishly in America. Those discussions usually began by focusing on the ease or difficulty of remaining ritually/halachically observant and on opportunities for experiencing spiritual renewal. They invariably ended expressing a deep-seated need for community, and a longing for Zion.

For myself, after six years of living in Jerusalem, where one tends to take a Jewish lifestyle for granted, this year in New York, meant making a deliberate and ongoing effort to remain Jewishly

involved. This endeavor was greatly aided and abetted by a warm acceptance from Rabbi Jacob Kret's Old Broadway *minyán*. Nevertheless, I found myself challenged by having to live once again in a world in which, outside of the Jewish neighborhoods, competing values vied with those necessary for sustaining a full Jewish existence. Among the middle classes, life is organized primarily around the demands of one's professional and business life. Individuals seem to have less time for the amenities (and for the *mitzvot*) that help to create not only a real-life community, but also that *sense of community* that we take for granted in Jerusalem. One is less apt to take time off for *bikur holim* or to attend one another's *smachot* unless they happen to fall on the weekend. This may be the result of demands made by a more intensely felt

work ethic, or due to the logistics required for living and working in a large metropolitan area.

This is not to say that extra-professional concerns do not beckon continually. Causes that make demands abound in New York, but they are not specifically Jewish ones. One is confronted by the homeless, by the ravages of AIDS, by neighborhoods overflowing with crack dealers, by concern about the ozone layer, divestment, and drought. Being North American means having the luxury to pick and choose which cause to support. The result is often a subtle diffusion of one's Jewish focus. In Israel, by contrast, the most pressing issues all seem to have something to do with us as Jews, which tends to keep our Jewish consciousness raised to a fever pitch. Each of the seven Bonei Pardes whose

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NEAR THE GREAT SQUARE OF ROME

Linda Pardes



Debbi Cooper

9:50 P.M.

Hotel Villa Margherita, Ladispoli

Ladispoli is tree-lined, picturesque, and our hotel is right on the sea. I am reminded a bit of Netanya. Crowds of perfectly tanned Italians fill the streets at night with their bicycles and Jaguars. I just imbibed my first heavenly strawberry *gelati* (Italian ice cream). No wonder the Russians don't want to leave.

Wednesday, July 12, 1989 6:30 P.M.

The Shuk

I glimpsed the "other half" of Ladispoli tonight, during my first stroll through the Russian "shuk." Monday through Saturday, rain or shine, about 200 vendors are there, selling their scarves, dolls, samovars.

I was fascinated at first by their resourcefulness — but as I walked on, these feelings turned to sadness, even dismay. I began to feel angry when I realized that instead of opting to begin new lives, these people choose to sit in Ladispoli month after month, living a hand-to-mouth existence as if they had no other choice. They manage to live off pipe dreams of their future in America even though many of them are near desperation.

The Hebrew letters on my shirt attracted attention. "Shalom, shalom!" one Iranian Jew approached me. He says he wants so much to come to Israel. His brother is already there. But his wife and kids want America. What can he do (shrug)?

I was also approached by Marina Rosinski, age 20, who has a sister in Tel Aviv. Marina is concerned that her sister is struggling financially, so Marina is on her way to relatives in Elizabeth, New Jersey. She seems to understand though, when I describe the sense of completeness, and challenge, that I feel living in Israel. She appreciates Israel's "preoccupation" with children, family, history, the land. I try to tell her that America may give her better physical comforts, but then what? She is young and I want her to know what she is missing. Otherwise, she may never know.

Wednesday, July 12, 1989 4:30 P.M.

English class

I led my first two adult English classes this afternoon, both ses-

sions packed to capacity. My students have been waiting in Ladispoli from one week to fourteen months, all pining for Boston, Chicago, Toronto, Australia. But some also want to hear about Israel. "That is where I'll take my first vacation," I overhear someone saying.

Many introduced themselves as "refuseniks" — refused by the American immigration authorities from entering the United States. When I reminded them of the origins of the term and suggested that their usage cheapened it just a bit, some of them nodded and smiled cynically. Living in limbo, they speak their own language of visas, "transports" (transportation stipends), HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) and Joint (Joint Distribution Committee).

Against all this cynicism there is Boris, swept along in the immigration wave to America but harboring a Zionist soul. He requested at the end of class that I tell him all about Israel, and intimated that if he had more concrete information, "I would go to Israel tomorrow..." Clearly an exception, but comforting.

Saturday, July 15, 1989 10:00 P.M.

Synagogue

I was overcome with emotion Friday night when I first entered the synagogue and saw the table ablaze with Shabbat candles, many of the old women standing around with tears in their eyes. When the *tefilot* began, I realized, however, that most of these people sit in the synagogue with the same sense of quiet desperation and helplessness as they do daily in the shuk. We tried to sing a bit to dispel the gloom. Where are all the kids?

Monday, July 17, 1989 8:00 P.M.

Summer camp

The *kaitana* (summer camp) began today, after an exhausting week of preparation. I began by teaching about the Jewish calendar. The symbols of the holidays are so foreign to all but a few of these children. They colored and pasted *shofarot*, *lulavim*, Shabbat candles, *hanukiot*. We have six weeks now to bring it all to life.

Friday, July 21, 1989 12:30 A.M.

The Piazza

We sang for two hours out on the piazza tonight. In addition to the crowd of curious Italians, scores of Russian Jewish parents and grandparents gathered to watch the spectacle: proud, happy, young Israelis, singing our hearts out in Hebrew, their children belting out the few songs they've learned in camp, right along with us. Jews of the shuk, lift up your heads!

Monday, July 24, 1989 6:00 P.M.

English class

Ah, the parents. I got back some interesting English compositions today:

"What Israel Means to Me" (Natasha)

First of all, I'm a Jew and I'm proud that in the world there is an independent Jewish state such as Israel. As all states,

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stories are told here is to some extent torn by his or her decision to juggle living in the States with a fondly remembered experience as part of the Pardes community in Israel. They may be said to represent seven different points on a continuum. In all but one instance we see expectations with regard to Jewish community — expectations that were partially the product of deeply cherished experiences while at Pardes — unrealized in the lives of these former students. What, if anything, does this say about Pardes, about the individuals who attend it, about

life in *golah*, about the notion of community? Chana seems to have come the closest to finding what she is looking for. For her, Jewish community is supplied by the fabric of life in Crown Heights as a Lubavitcher *hasid*. Barbara assumes that living in *golah* is going to mean living with compromises. Stephanie is not yet willing to compromise and continues to search for a community compatible with her religious and intellectual outlook. Rona seems to have as both a professional and a personal ambition the creation of a community patterned after what she

experienced at Pardes. Yoni feels he is in a holding pattern, his Jewishness unable to take root and flourish without the support system provided by community. Richard sees the levels of his Jewish observance and involvement drastically affected by the lack of community in his life. For Jeffrey, the concept of community appears to have the least relevance to his sense of Jewishness. Yet he, too, regards his Jewish experience in America as a prelude to a richer, fuller one in Israel.

Jane Kimchi

Israel has both positive and negative sides.

I came to Ladispoli from Riga. I haven't any relatives in Israel but I have a lot of friends there ... Jews live on all continents, in all countries of the world. Our religion and languages (Yiddish and Hebrew), our blue-white flag, the David's star, and our songs unite us all. So if we say on Passover, "Next Year in Jerusalem," it means (to me) that our hearts are always with Israel.

But our dreams and being practical aren't always the same thing.

"What Israel Means to Me" (Anna)

To speak frankly, I believe that Israel has more pluses than minuses. I have nothing against going to Israel. It is a politically and economically developed country, with comparatively high living standards and many different nature conditions.

I think that most people are happy, because it is a real Jewish native state. Anti-Semitism is eliminated there. I don't see any negative factors, besides a number of Arabs. But it isn't a very dangerous factor.

Anyway, I go to America because there are family reasons for such a decision. I'd like to go to Israel at least as a tourist, and then if I like it there very much, I'll live there.

"The most beautiful thing I ever saw"

The celebration of Pesach in Ladispoli for the first time in my life. Jews acting proud of their nationality openly on Saturday. (Maya)

A baby's face when he or she is sleeping. A Jewish man who doesn't try to make much more money. (Masoud)

I am here about nine months with my two children. I passed many problems and a difficult life. Every day I think about the future. I didn't think that I'd stay here a long time without my husband. You know, living in a foreign country has many problems, especially to be alone. All the time I wait to hear something about my husband. Yesterday I had a telephone call, but I don't know why *he* didn't call me. Now I am very worried. The most beautiful thing is that I would hear that my husband can get a passport from the Iranian government and come here. I hope. (Jilla)

"The happiest thing that ever happened to me" (Alex K.).

This thing was my arrival abroad from the happiest country in the world — the USSR. I've been waiting for this event since my childhood. In one Soviet song there are such words: "I don't know another such country where so freely can breathe a man..." But I think that such a country is present on the earth. This country is the USA, and I hope that I'll be able to get there, if I'll be permitted. I'd like to live in a really, indeed free country.

Wednesday, July 26, 1989 11:00 P.M.

Summer camp

The kids learned about Pesach this week. We ate *charoset*, read from Russian/Hebrew *haggadot*, and discussed the following, very relevant "*drash*:" Four sons, four generations ... the wise (educated, educating) grandparent, the "evil" parent, who is unwilling to possess or pass on the gift of Judaism, the simple (uneducated) child, and the whole next generation of children — these kids' kids — who will not even know enough to ask a question. Unless, of course, they decide to allow this amazing era of transition and exodus to change more than their addresses. I think some of them understood. Their faces sometimes...in every group there are a few that make it all worthwhile.

Tuesday, July 31, 1989 9:30 P.M.

Summer camp

We celebrated Yuri's decision to make *aliya* Friday night, only to hear him pour out reason after reason yesterday, real rea-



My 3:00 p.m. English class

sons, why he can't go through with it: his grandmother, who will die if he goes, his parents, who will never forgive him, his seventeen-year-old girlfriend in Russia whose family is also headed for America. I understand, but it hurts me the way he's listening to everyone but himself.

The kids drowned me out singing "Shema Yisrael" and "Lo yisa goy" today. And to think that until last week they didn't know a single Hebrew song.

Twenty-year-old David (Dima), who has been helping us in the camp, is flying to Israel tomorrow, to enroll in kibbutz ulpan and start Hebrew University in the fall. He has decided that he identifies more with the fifteen of us from Israel than with 95% of the Jews wandering these streets. I think it will be better for him there, and I am happy for all of us.

Monday, August 7, 1989 10:15 P.M.

The sukkah

The *sukkah* collapsed twice on me this morning, before Igor, our guard and resident fix-it-man, came to my rescue. I will never forget the expressions on the faces of the kids when they began hanging up the decorations and realized what they had made them for. I'm afraid my impeccable Russian explanation must have eluded them for a change.

Sunday, August 13, 1989 6:00 P.M.

Synagogue

I felt complete exhilaration in the synagogue Friday night as about thirty of the kids helped us to entertain the adults. Three weeks ago, they knew none of these songs, none of this joy.

And on Shabbat afternoon, I watched twelve-year-old Karina, Yulia and Yanna berate two cynical old ladies, friends of their parents who were discouraging them from thinking about *aliya*. "We are going to Israel when we get older," they asserted, and then they whispered to me, "don't listen to them, they will never understand!"

Sunday, August 20, 1989 6:30 P.M.

Summer camp

This morning was fantastic — a day devoted to the Jewish holidays. Every group of children represented a different holiday, decorating their rooms, dressing themselves up, preparing the traditional food, learning the songs. Some kids painted their faces for Purim and handed out *mishloach manot*. Others fried *levivot* for Hannukah. For *Yom HaAtzmaut*, we prepared hummus and tehina from Rome, and made *felafel* on an open fire. Plates full of dried fruits and nuts filled every corner of the building, including the *sukkah*, and the atmosphere was pure celebration!

Monday, August 21, 1989 6:00 P.M.

English class

Hundreds of conversations echo in my head. In class, on the street, at the beach (while trying to relax) — most of these

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Richard Schuldenfrei '82-'83, grew up in the Bronx, did his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh and has been a professor of philosophy at Swarthmore College since 1966. He is presently on a two-year leave, taking care of his two-year-old daughter and helping his wife, Helen Plotkin '82-'83 in her business

When I came back from Pardes, I used to describe myself as a somewhat unusual Orthodox Jew, a bad one in fact, but an Orthodox Jew nonetheless. I guided myself by the standards of Orthodoxy. I didn't live up to them, but I regarded the differences between Orthodoxy and the way I lived as by and large a mark of my own failures.

I went to Pardes because for years it had been dawning on me that my Jewishness shaped my life more than I had realized. I thought of its Jewish aspects as hollow residues of once genuinely valuable Jewish characteristics abandoned by my parents. In my family we knew we were Jewish but were completely non-observant. My father was a "lefty." When I announced I wanted to be bar mitzvah because all my friends were, which of course meant going to Hebrew school, my father said he preferred my going to the socialist Workman's Circle. In the end I went to the religious school and learned the mechanics necessary for the bar mitzvah ritual.

For a number of years after that, Judaism played no role in my life. Then, in my early thirties, I started to reflect on the meaning it held for me. I believed I had to give Judaism a serious shot, and that it had to be Orthodoxy. Before, during, and for several years after Pardes, I never took seriously forms of Judaism other than Orthodoxy. I had been looking for homogeneity in Judaism, and the other denominations seemed like hybrids. I didn't want compromise, but integrity. I needed to understand and

give a try to a pure form of Judaism, even if I couldn't live it. By this time I was involved with Helen, and Pardes was available for both of us. In fact, I think I worried about its being too liberal.

Beginning the process of living an observant life seemed to be the route to personal wholeness. God didn't speak to me. I was simply torn between the Jewish and non-Jewish aspects of my life and knew I'd have to make a choice. Pardes made possible the option of molding my life around Judaism, rather than around its assimilated American parts. I believed the religious dimension was essential to a coherent Judaism and necessary to sustain a person. I opened myself to the sources of Judaism which I thought were religious and found enough sustenance to adopt this project of trying to become observant.

I thought of myself during Pardes, and the first years after, as taking three steps forward and two back with regard to observance. Yet I always maintained a plateau beneath which I never sank. I never really submitted myself fully to the "yoke of the kingdom of heaven," but I did put myself in situations where I could see its value and where I was influenced enough in fact to change my lifestyle. These changes included judging our lives by the standards of our Pardes friends, rather than our gentile ones. We started keeping kosher and didn't answer the phone or drive on Shabbat, though we were never totally *shomer Shabbat*.

I imagined that the spiritual aspect of Judaism would be a by-product of observance and study and that practice would yield access to genuinely spiritual dimensions. This might have happened if I could have stayed at Pardes beyond one year. But we had to come back. At that time my profession was my anchor. I wasn't ready to give it up and live in Israel. Unfortunately, we returned to a place where no one was observant. Outside the influence of Pardes, the Jewish aspects of my life were unable to grow. Practical considerations overwhelmed us and in the end, the energies required for parenthood diverted us.

When our daughter was born, it increased my motivation to be Jewish, but also made it practically impossible. Our most regular observance was Shabbat attendance, but this took place at a time when our daughter took her nap. The rewards seemed fewer because there was no community with which to share things. We tried to sustain a regular program of study, and even brought Regina Stein down from New York on a regular basis to teach a class.

I remember Dov [Berkovits] saying when you leave Pardes you may not find

it easy to fit in any place. It's true. We only fit in with other Pardes people, with their complicated respect for Orthodoxy and their tolerance of the non-Orthodox.

I also noticed recently a change occurring in my basic attitude towards Judaism. For years, whenever I was in a bookstore, I would look in the Jewish section for books to speak to my condition. But two weeks ago I realized that my looking in the Jewish section was perfunctory. I didn't really expect to find books that would help me understand my own life. What I'm finding is that as the practice of Judaism has dissipated, the importance of Judaism as a unifying principle has receded. Judaism plays increasingly less of a role in areas where I hope to find illumination, whether in resolving moral dilemmas or in raising my daughter. But I'm not about to abandon Judaism altogether. Right now, what I used to think of as the watered down, or hybrid, forms have more to say to me. I've found out that I'm as much an American as a Jew and that what I previously called homogeneous or pure forms of Judaism are much too self-contained to be a guide for me. This brings me to the one major dissatisfaction I left Pardes with.

I was generally very happy with what I was learning at Pardes. I believed it opened the door to a certain level of understanding and enabled me to make sense of my own Judaism. But I couldn't see it as Judaism with windows to the world. I had the feeling that it was too self-contained, impermeable. At the time, this was not an obstacle to my moving forward. Now it is, and has somehow become irreconcilable with commitment to a certain openness.

I'm not closing any doors. Pardes taught me to appreciate Judaism in a way you can't if you have never studied. I aspire to study that way and with those tools, and I would like to see how much of a Jewish life I can live. But I expect to guide myself less and less by a form of Judaism to which I was once attracted precisely because it seemed so consistent and changeless.

We still observe *kashrut*, but it's more a residual thing, a barrier against losing what we had, rather than a step toward greater involvement with Judaism. We live with a tension between trying to make our lives Jewish and being unable to abandon what makes it so difficult, such as dealing with our gentile relatives or our pluralistic commitments.

Having abandoned Orthodoxy, I'm not saying I've abandoned Judaism. I still have an interest in and energy for trying to make my life as Jewish as possible. It's just that there are no bottom lines.

Yonatan Barnhard '78-'79, grew up in the San Fernando Valley in California. He did his B.A. in history at Columbia College in 1983, his M.D. at Tel Aviv University Sackler School of Medicine in 1988, and is currently resident in OBGYN at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He and Shari Rosenfeld '82-'83, were married in 1987.

I have no doubt when I look back on the past decade that my sense of myself as someone choosing to live deliberately and purposefully as a Jew was born in Jerusalem. For this reason, I associate being Jewish with being in Israel. I remained in Israel for two years after Pardes, wearing a *kippa*, davening and learning Torah. But when I returned to the States, I felt all this beginning to slip away from me. Even if people around me were leading Jewishly meaningful and observant lives, I wasn't able to find this sufficiently relevant to me personally. Nevertheless, ever since Pardes, even at times when I've tried to shirk being Jewish, I always find myself coming back to it. When I returned to Israel to attend medical school, I resumed learning and started to become somewhat observant again.

When Shari and I got married we both wanted to live a more conscious Jewish life than we were at that time, one that, if not more observant, was at least more deliberately responsive to the challenge of *mitzvot*.

Living in the States doesn't have to dissipate one's Jewish focus, but it often does for us. This is partly due to the logistics of a residency that requires working 110 hours a week. My days are so packed and hours so long that I have little freedom of movement. Therefore, if we do have a couple of hours on Shabbat, I think we're more than likely *not* to pick up the *parsha*. Of course, I haven't yet written the final chapter.

When I conjure up images of the future, it involves living in an observant community in Israel. I know we don't have to wait until we get back to Israel.



We could be doing more Jewishly now. The key thing missing here is a community within which we can learn. It's been so long since we've been in an environment like Pardes. We left too soon, with only the sparks which we haven't been able to fan into a blaze. I yearn to be once again in a community which is observant, where the whole week revolves around Shabbat and *Hagim* and where you have the full flavor of everyone participating. Being part of this kind of community in our lives at this time would help us to build a stronger Jewish life.

I think becoming a Jew is more difficult and takes more time than becoming a doctor. So far, I haven't put as much time into becoming a Jew, which could at some point prove to have been a mistake. Even when I'm at work, I still hear the echo of Pardes, the same voices that got me rolling Jewishly, reminding me about being accountable to the Jewish people. And then a still small voice asks whether I'm doing something about it.

Rona Shapiro '82, '84-'85

grew up in Huntington, Long Island. She has a B.A. in English from Harvard University (1984), and is currently in her last year of rabbinical school at The Jewish Theological Seminary. She married Judah Mandelbaum in 1987.

I was at Pardes twice. My first stay came after six months of kibbutz *ulpan*, which was my first exposure to secular Judaism. Even at home, on Long Island, we fasted on Yom Kippur, had a family Seder, and went to synagogue on the High Holidays. But on kibbutz, it was not unusual to see people barbecuing on Yom Kippur. I would get into arguments with kibbutzniks who couldn't understand my concept of God. They had only one view in mind, the Orthodox one which they rejected. I tried to organize Friday night services, but realized I didn't know enough. That's when I decided to spend the second half of that year learning. I wrote on my application to Pardes that I was neither *shomeret mitzvot*, nor did I have any intention of becoming so, but just wanted to learn.

At Pardes I was excited by the people, by Shabbat, by the learning and by the teachers. I decided to make my home kosher and to observe Shabbat. I didn't make this commitment out of a sense of God commanding me, but because it was a ticket of entry into the Pardes community which I found to be so beautiful, and because it seemed fitting in Jerusalem. I think I became fixated that year



with the notion of community and interested in whatever created a context for it.

After that first year at Pardes, I went back to the States to finish college and had two good years sorting out what I had done at Pardes. I was *shomeret Shabbat* and *kashrut*. I found a *minyan* I liked (Conservative and egalitarian) and found myself fitting into the world of Harvard Hillel. Academically, however, I was frustrated. I was studying literature, but it rang hollow. In English literature all we seem to learn about the human condition is that we're stuck with it. At Pardes, I had also been studying literature, but the latter held precepts that guided my life. Torah always holds out the possibility that if you do certain things you'll find joy, God, community; rise to a higher plane.

In the back of my mind, since adolescence, was the idea that I wanted to be a rabbi. But at Pardes this desire seemed to make less sense. The only rabbinic avenue open to women at that time was Reform, a niche in which I no longer felt comfortable. Then, in 1984, during my last year at college, The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) opened its doors to women, and rabbinical school became a real possibility. Still, I felt I needed more knowledge of texts and more time in Israel before applying, so I decided, after graduation, to return to Pardes for another year. At the end of that year I went to JTS, where I was among the more traditionally observant students. Belief was another matter. I believed God revealed Himself to Moses at Sinai in some mystical event beyond the realm of description and that Moses, or Moses and friends, wrote down an interpretation, a human understanding of God's will.

Unhappy with the seeming dissonance between my belief and my observance, I sometimes felt at odds with myself in rabbinical school, but I've stuck it out at JTS because I want to be a rabbi. I've come to realize, however, that I'm not

Orthodox; I preserve too high a degree of autonomy in my life. My criterion for halachic observance is based on what I've decided makes my life best. My concept of God is of one who neither commands nor punishes, and I view *halacha* as a human (and therefore imperfect) attempt to strive for a way to live with God. Yet I believe it is a system of considerable beauty, strength and integrity and has great power in the context of community. At present, however, I stand outside of it, my submission only partial. For I am carrying my baggage of concerns for feminism, ecology, and appreciation of secular culture, some of these reconcilable with *halacha*, some not.

For a long time, I believed Jews needed to follow *halacha* and that my mission as a rabbi was to get as many as possible to accept that. But I see this now as only one avenue. I also find myself drawing from traditions and religious ideas other than Judaism, though I believe my role as a rabbi is to help people find truth in a Jewish context. Sometimes I wonder whether the rabbis of the Talmud intended us to take their work as seriously as we do, reconciling every contradiction. They themselves accepted contradictions as notes for the journey. I think they wanted us to write our own notes.

There are many times in the city when I wake on Shabbat and wish I could do something other than "keep Shabbat." In Israel, Jerusalem kept Shabbat. Here I go around encased in a Shabbat bubble which isolates me from everything around me. In Jerusalem, Shabbat connected me to everything. The longer I'm in the States, the harder it is for me to be observant. I feel that if I'm here, I should make concessions to my community, and here that includes non-Jews as well as many who are non-observant.

The longer you stay here, the longer you run the risk of staying forever. So I don't like to say we're planning *aliya*, but we definitely talk about it. Saying we'll do it and not being there makes me feel uneasy. If we wanted to go, I suppose we could now. But the plan is for me to finish school and work a few years and then go. We are also afraid of the stresses of living there — the army, the small salaries, the religious-secular divide, fear of always being an American and never fitting in, and of being without our families.

But the fact is I don't want to raise children in New York where each family seems to be going it alone. Judah and I spend most of our pipe-dreaming time talking about the shared community we'd like to have in the foot-hills of Jerusalem, built around a Torah-study center. Only in such a way do I think I could find a way to make God, Torah, and community come together for me. 🐾

Chana Shloush (Nancy Forse) '73-'74,

grew up in Portland, Oregon, received her B.A. in Judaica Studies at Brandeis in 1973, and lives with her husband and three children in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn.

For me, becoming a *hasid* was in a way like becoming religious all over again. Once more, there were major questions to grapple with: 1) Changing my view of *halacha* from something like, "If there is a lenient opinion or a *heter*, why not follow it?" to "Since a Jew's business is creating a dwelling place for God in this world, why not aim to make it as beautiful as can be?" (e.g. fulfilling *mitzvot* as carefully as possible according to the *Shulchan Aruch*). This doesn't mean it is always best to follow the strictest opinion or that there is never room for a *heter*. But it did mean an end to what I called my "chameleon-like existence," which allowed me to blend in everywhere but which became uncomfortable at a certain point. Accepting this perspective meant that I would forever be identifiably Jewish. 2) Or, would having a Rebbe mean abrogating my personal choice, freedom, responsibility? Only upon my first face-to-face encounter with the Lubavitcher Rebbe did I realize that to look at him is like looking into a mirror. It put me in touch with my truest self. 3) How should I deal with my own tolerance of fellow Jews, or lack thereof? To admit that I believed I had found the

truth smacked of intolerance, the biggest ideological taboo in my upbringing. Yet I found that certain *hasidim* who held this same belief also exemplified the most profound unconditional acceptance and love that I had ever encountered. It began to dawn on me that tolerance was a state of mind, not a feature of one's brand of Judaism.

These issues might not seem on a par with deciding whether or not to keep kosher, observe Shabbat, and accept the divinity of Torah, which I'd struggled with seven years earlier. However, the inner experience felt the same. There are new issues today whose growth pains leave me just as spiritually exhilarated.

Pardes was a very intense experience for me. I had already become observant when I was in college and chose Pardes because I knew I would be treated with respect as an individual, allowed to develop religiously at my own pace, and not be spoon-fed *talmud-torah*. I learned a tremendous amount that year. In addition, much time was spent wondering whether something approximating the close-knit religious community that was Pardes could be reconstituted in *gahut*.

I came back to New York and tried to get into Jewish journalism. Finding the right job was not a problem, but finding the right social niche was. I tried to fit into the modern Orthodox upper West Side. I shared an apartment with several modern Orthodox women, did some learning, went *steibel* hopping, but somehow never really felt at home. There were a lot of singles, but no sense of community. I heard a great deal of Torah, but the issues with which I was concerned were not dealt with. I didn't find the concern for and continued development of the spiritual dimension.

It was about this time that I met a *baalat teshuva* (newly observant woman) who had joined the Lubavitcher (Chabad) community and was living in Crown Heights. Through her I began learning *hasidus* and going to *fabrengens* (gatherings with the Rebbe). In fact I had done a project on *hasidus* when I was at Pardes and had long maintained an interest in it.

At that stage, I knew I wanted to marry, but people on the Upper West Side in the late seventies didn't seem to be marrying. I also wasn't meeting the right person. I felt I needed more preparation for marriage through seeing appropriate role models, attuning my expectations of a husband and marriage with reality and getting help in finding an appropriate mate.

I was attracted to the models of family life I saw in Crown Heights, but I felt at first an impenetrable barrier to ever becoming Lubavitcher. Gradually, however, I began to see that if it were possi-



ble for my friend, it could also be possible for me. Perhaps I should say that I was forewarned against jumping in too suddenly and decided first to attend a Chabad school in Minnesota for the newly observant. After that, I came to Crown Heights to live, found a wonderful apartment and commuted daily to Manhattan to my work with Women's American ORT and Young Israel.

In 1981 I took a break and went back to Israel for a visit. I stayed for seven months and worked for the periodical *B'Or Ha'Torah*, published in Hebrew and English by Russian *baalai teshuva*. Upon my return, a *shidduch* was arranged through a friend of mine. I met my husband right before Pesach in 1982.

I've embraced Chabad because it spells out many of the answers to basic spiritual questions, and there's a great comfort in that. When I was at Pardes, the philosophy was to let the Torah give its own message. There was no indoctrination, but neither was there help toward attaining *yirat shemayim*. I think it was because the teachers didn't know how to do this without alienating students.

I needed a place where I belonged. In Chabad, after a certain amount of initial discomfort, I found that I enjoyed the consistency of tradition, everyone doing everything in the same way. Yet I don't want to make Chabad sound monolithic. Different rabbis in the community have slightly different *shitot* (methods).

Do I feel I've had to sacrifice anything by becoming a *hasid*? I can understand why someone who is unfamiliar with life here might have this impression, but the answer is "no." I feel I'm living in the "larger" world. Of course, I still thirst for art and culture. It's just that my sustenance and excitement derive exclusively from Jewish themes, whether in art, music or literature. At the moment I find Shakespeare too Christological. It jars with the life I'm building. I satisfy my cultural yearnings in my enjoyment of *baalai teshuva* artists who combine art and *yiddishkeit*.

While I may be living physically isolated from much of the rest of the world, I'm not unaware of needs outside of my community, or even outside of the Jewish community. It helps to relate to the rest of the world by reminding oneself that even in the far corners of the globe one can probably always find a handful of Jews. A Jew cannot abandon the world, but his acts of *hesed* should never detract from the priority of Torah education.

It is personally painful to me when people regard all Jews with black hats or *sheitls* (wigs) as being identical. It reminds me of a comment by a *hasidic* man I overheard some years ago: "All those kids out there on the streets in blue

jeans and T-shirts — they're all the same." What he didn't, or couldn't have realized was that one was a Wall Street executive and another a panhandler. We are as varied a population here. Most important, all of us have the opportunity in a community like Crown Heights to use our God-given resources creatively to serve God and our fellow man. ■

Barbara Gochberg '80-'81

grew up in Stamford, Connecticut, completed a B.A. in history at the University of Pennsylvania, is working on her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at New York University and is married to Steven Pretsfelder.

I did not grow up in a religiously observant family, although I became observant in early adolescence. At that time Judaism filled many needs for me, providing structure and a sense of identity. Thus, when I came to Pardes, I had been living halachically for many years. Yet I had no Jewish education to speak of and no broader religious framework within which to place all the do's and don'ts that I knew. I went to Pardes to explore the spiritual side of Judaism, and to see whether I could ground my early interest in Judaism in a more mature understanding. Pardes was a pivotal experience for me because it taught me the richness and depth of Jewish life and how I could gain access to it.

Probably no single concept was more discussed at Pardes than the idea of community. As someone who had always approached Judaism as an essentially solo enterprise, it was probably one of the most valuable and difficult concepts for me. While it was relatively easy to accept some of the positive obligations of communal life, such as *tzedaka*, it was (and remains) a constant source of tension to be bound halachically to a community that is in certain aspects so vastly different from me. It has taken me some time to realize that the ideal community discussed with such longing by Pardes students probably does not exist for me. What I've tended to do is adapt the concept of community I learned to cherish at Pardes to my family and friends.

Viewing community in a broader sense, Pardes deepened my awareness of the centrality of Israel in Jewish life, through learning, community service projects and the teachers' personal commitments to living in Israel. Jewish life outside of Israel always seemed to be lacking the spiritual edge that appealed to me so much. When I first returned to the States, I could not understand or accept the established observant community's supportive yet distant relation-



ship with Israel. Eventually, I learned that Judaism does not stop when you get off the plane. In fact, I learned that although Jewish life is not the same as in Israel, the beauty of Judaism is a beauty found wherever there are Jews, in a way that transcends the specific place. A *huppa* or a *seder* table have the same potential for beauty wherever you are.

The question of *aliya* is far from settled for me, and it is difficult for me to admit my ambivalence. With each year here, it is harder to leave. Life is easy and known here; family relationships are not strained by long distances; career and family options seem plentiful. Also, I've become used to the fact that in America Jewishness is a personal matter rather than a national one. This gives me the freedom of being able to choose my own particular form of Judaism.

For me, impetus for *aliya* comes from the positives that Israel has to offer, rather than any negatives in American Jewish life. Ultimately, living in Israel is a chance to participate fully in the most significant, positive experience in recent Jewish history. This ideological belief has some specific practical implications for me. While the Jewish calendar is full of holidays to commemorate wherever you are, there is a difference. Although it is not difficult to take off for holidays or *Shabbat*, the concept of *erev Shabbat* and *erev* holidays is not operative here, and preparing for *Pesach* is not a nationally recognized process as it is in Israel. There is almost no such thing as *hol ha moed* (the intermediate days of *Sukkot* and *Pesach*) in other than a strictly halachic sense. I miss the benefits of elevating the celebration of Jewish holidays to national prominence.

There is another, even more striking difference. *Yom Ha Atzmaut* (Independence Day), *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day) and *Yom Yerushalayim* (Unification of Jerusalem Day) are not commemorated in America with the same

depth and focus, if at all. In fact, here all we can do is remember, but not celebrate. To me, holidays such as these form an integral part of the contemporary Jewish calendar. And it is on days such as these that I realize how out of step I am with American Jewry.

There are other complicating factors, such as the current political situation in Israel, which makes me wonder for the first time whether I can participate in events so contrary to my beliefs. But I've always felt it better to disagree and fight from the inside, rather than take potshots from the sidelines. I believe it all comes down to the idea that sometimes the most important thing in the world is to be involved with immediate family. At other times, I think it is to move to Israel and serve the larger community. Most often I feel it is impossible to choose.

Jeffrey (Tzvi) Stern '83-'84, '85-'86,

grew up in Mount Kisco, NY. He has a B.A. in music from Harvard (1983) and is currently in his last year at Columbia Law School. He and Frances (Avital) Rodriguez '85-'86, were married in 1986.



Debbi Cooper

I was first confronted with my Jewish identity as a young adult in college. After more than four years of dating my non-Jewish, high school sweetheart, my parents' anxious and tender questions faced me with issues, which in some vague and instinctual manner, compelled me, but with which I had no tools to grapple. "If you plan to marry, what about the Jewish question?" I realized that my Jewishness was indeed a question, one which I was destined to ask but had yet to formulate. In response, I began to take courses in Jewish history and attended an egalitarian minyan at Harvard.

At the time of graduation, I felt that there was much I had not yet accom-

plished. As a music major, most of my energies had been devoted to developing my craft as a musician and composer. As a result, I felt somewhat dissatisfied with the depth of my own intellectual development. It was then that I decided to go to Israel and learn Hebrew to set the foundation for a deeper Jewish learning. I enrolled in Pardes that Fall. I soon discovered that Pardes was a perfect match for me: it at once fed my emerging spiritual self and disciplined my intellect. I ended up spending three years in Israel, two at Pardes separated by one at Hebrew University.

My first semester at Pardes, I found the coherence of the Jewish moral world view so captivating it was difficult to relate to it in a critical posture. Instead, I took up my instructors' views as monoliths. In this perhaps too eager initial acceptance, I was responding not only to Judaism's intellectual appeal, but also to a call within myself to address my untended spiritual personality. I found Judaism to be more a way of being than a way of thinking, an emotional posture, yet linked to the intellect. Thus, while I bring a lot of analysis to bear upon my Judaism, I find it equally a physical and non-intellectual activity.

Even though I'm not a person of simple faith, I do feel that I have a relationship with God; yet I'm not sure what people mean when they say they believe in God. If I ask non-believers just what it is they don't believe, I usually end up in complete agreement; often, the people who profess non-belief have properly rejected mere youthful notions. Conversely, the language of the believers is not necessarily reflective of their faith. In order to truly understand the nature of a person's belief, I need to look at how she/he lives and prays and at what gives body to a living relationship with God. I define my own relationship with God through the character of my prayer and the delight I take in moral questions. My belief is also manifest in my willingness to set aside the analytical person in me when I engage in certain activities, such as prayer.

During my second semester at Pardes, I began the process of thoroughly examining the monolithic Judaism I had adopted. In order to arrive at the truest expression of Judaism for me, I needed to develop my own understanding of Jewish issues and their significance in my life as a member of the Jewish community. I came to the realization that my relationship with *halacha* had to be a dynamic one, involving tensions and constant re-evaluation.

Now that I'm back in the States, I find that being in law school, rather than being away from Pardes or from Israel, has been the biggest challenge to main-

taining religious discipline. Law school is a brutal regime, the amount of work is staggering. As a result I've had to fight to make time for religious activity. Yet I do not think there have been great changes in my way of thinking or living as a Jew. I have found in Columbia, and in New York generally, a supportive and stimulating Jewish community. It's an environment in which I find it natural and comfortable to wear a *kippa*.

For both Frances and me, returning to Israel is still part of our plan. I want to work for a few years to develop some expertise and to pay off my debts. One thing that has somewhat dissipated since Pardes is my previously clear sense of life in Israel.

Stephanie Ellman '82-'84

grew up in Palo Alto, California, received her A.B. in history of science from Princeton in 1982 and her J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1987. She is currently in the Manhattan law firm of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen and Hamilton.

My interest in Judaism awakened during my last two years of college. After graduation I came to Pardes with the idea that I would try to live the Orthodox lifestyle, commit myself to halachic observance and view the world through the eyes of tradition. It was a time of major transition for me. I remember feeling for the first time at Pardes that what I was learning was in harmony with the way I was living.

I love Pardes as a place for people unafraid to think openly or to confront tradition on a personal level. I also appreciate that people come there with diverse lifestyles and go away to take up lifestyles equally diverse.

But now that I'm away myself, I begin to realize that the attributes that make Pardes unique also remove it from the Jewish mainstream. Because Pardes leaves one free to draw one's own conclusions, it is easily assumed that the *frum* (Orthodox) community is generally characterized by intellectual openness and tolerance. The fact is, however, that the combination of Pardes' philosophical commitment to pluralism and tolerance, together with its dedication to Torah values, is hard to find elsewhere. In America, one may find one or the other, but seldom both together.

Perhaps I'm atypical of Pardes students in feeling not only a deep-seated need for community, but an especially strong pull to the *frum* community. Yet I feel a sense of conflict between a desire to be accepted by a community — experiencing the reassurance it offers of living where nearly everyone looks and believes



similarly — and the realization that I'm out of step with most mainstream Orthodox communities. I worry that if I reveal what I really think, people won't accept me. What I've managed to do at the same time as I try to make friends and find ways to be comfortable within the Orthodox community, is to create my own little community of individuals with whom I am able to identify.

For me, halachic commitment has meant making certain choices, in some instances sacrifices. It has certainly not made it easier for me to find a mate. I find that individuals *frum* from birth cannot identify with the life upheaval I went through in becoming observant. Yet most *baalai teshuva* (newly observant), though they might be able to identify with that transition, take a non-intellectual approach to their religious commitment. They do what the rabbi tells them. Seeming to lack a critical sense, they cling blindly to whatever they are told and choose an ultra-religious lifestyle as if it were a life preserver in an ocean of uncertainty.

I have a modern outlook. I believe in the importance and value of secular education and culture and in women learning. I think a lot of *baalai teshuva* want a wife who is bright, educated, dynamic, and talented and who will give it all up to sit rapturously at their feet.

For me, halachic commitment has also created certain difficulties in dealing with my family. It has certainly made it awkward for me to be with them. Nevertheless, I have been fortunate because my parents, although almost totally non-observant, are unusually tolerant. They respect me and regard me as autonomous when it comes to religious observance. In the end, I think they're proud of me and of the commitment I've made.

I've never regretted my choice. I believe the halachic system is valid in today's world. It has authenticity, truth and meaning for modern people and can provide a lot of answers. I deeply believe it is right for me. ■

A REJOINDER by Levi Lauer

I wish to respond to the interviews with Bonei Pardes in the New York area conducted by Jane Kimchi, and address some of the problematic issues that I think emerge from them.

1) The absence of any theological component in these discussions, with the exception of the one with Chana Shloush, leads to a situation in which community seems to be the sole criterion by which the seriousness of Jewish life and commitment is measured. There seems a profound lack of theological basis in the thinking of these Bonei Pardes, and I question how well a Jewish life can be lived in the absence of serious theological reflection and consideration. All of the discussion seems to relate to the horizontal mode — relationships *בין אדם לאדם* (between any two human beings), *בין יהודי ליהודי* (between Jews), *בין הפרט לצבור* (between private and public selves), *בין היחיד לקהילה* (between the individual and the community). There is no mention of the vertical dimension *בין אדם למקום* (between wo/man and God), *בין היחודי לבורא* (between the Jew and his/her Creator), *בין היחיד לעולם* (between an individual and the natural ordered world).

2) If the search for community really is the crucial element in the lives of Bonei Pardes, and the absence of adequate community leads to frustration, even guilt, that they are not leading lives as authentic or "frum" as they think they should be, or as grounded in continued learning, why have these individuals not made that search for community the primary focus of their decision as to where to live? For example, would that not have led more of those students to remain in Israel, or more specifically in Yerushalayim, which, with all of its problems, at least presents models that deal well with some of the dissatisfactions described? Moreover, it would seem that the intense dedication demanded by their professional lives, particularly as indicated by Yonatan Barnhard and Jeff Stern with regard to medicine and law, disinclines one to take community seriously. How can one engage in a viable supportive community if there isn't even a modicum of time to make contribution to that community? Should one choose a course of professional living which makes the needs of community peripheral?

3) Why can't "community" consist of a small number of people, or even of a *havruta*? Why can't there be a community which makes *Shabbos* together in one

another's living room, the *havura* model that increasingly informs some congregational life in North America? Has Yerushalayim, or Pardes, presented itself in such a way that anything less intense, less all-encompassing, is disparaged or rejected out of hand?

4) How much of this dissatisfaction with community is really projection of an unwillingness to assume the heavy burden and responsibility of *קבלת עול מלכות שמים* (acceptance of the discipline of Jewish law and divine authority)? What if some of this is, pardon the expression, a dodge? What if, in the end, the life of halachic commitment and intense Jewish devotion presented by some of Pardes' faculty as a model proves too difficult? Are these Bonei Pardes saying, "I can't find anybody else to do this with," or "I don't find a community sustaining of these claims on body and soul," rather than saying "I don't want to give myself over to that kind of demand?"

5) Finally, I think that what emerges here is a confrontation between the extent to which our former students feel themselves compelled and moved by primarily Jewish concerns and ways of living, learning and thinking, and by those of the general culture which surround them. I think a battle is being waged for the devotions and energies, the minds and souls, of our students. I don't think the resolution is a matter of "all or nothing." It is clear there is a hunger expressed by these Bonei Pardes and that their Jewish concerns and commitments remain firmly intact. But I think we must also be honest and say that these Jewish commitments are in significant part losing out to the demands of the North American street, the demands of its professionalism, the way in which it reorders time, the manner in which it leads to highly fragmented or non-existent community.

It would be helpful to know, very specifically, what features of the American social and cultural milieu these Bonei Pardes find appealing in a way which leads them away from Jewish commitments. What do they find in "America" that they don't find in "Torah," or in a very different vein, in "Yerushalayim?" Is the tone of guilt ("I really want to be doing more Jewishly"), which seems to mark some of these interviews, an expression of a sentimental longing for the life encouraged by their Pardes days; or is it affirmation of a profound disparity between the labor of their hands and the predilections of their hearts? ■

OUTREACHING INTO THE COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

SEMINARS

Pardes is offering, together with CLAL, three, week-long seminars open to both the Pardes community and the public: Public and Private Lives of a Jewish Woman: Halachic Perspectives (Jan.28-Feb.1); The Divine Image, Human Integrity, and Relations with the Non-Jew in a Sovereign Jewish State (Mar.18-Mar.22); The Persistence of Evil in God's World (May 13-May 17).

EVENING CLASSES

An intensive evening program is being offered for the first time at Pardes. Designed primarily in response to interest expressed by Bonei Pardes, classes are open to the public. They include: The Twelve Prophets: A Message for Our Time; The Book of Exodus: Concepts of Freedom; Talmud Study for Beginners: Tractate Brachot; Mishnah Study: Tractate K'tubot; Talmud Study for Interme-

diate Students; and Contemporary Issues in *Halacha*.

KFAR SABA

In cooperation with the municipality of Kfar Saba, Pardes is sponsoring an evening program in which Pardes faculty teach traditional texts (Humash and Gemara) to high school students and adults from non-observant backgrounds.

"SPECIAL NEED" CHILDREN

Pardes is providing assistance to families of handicapped children by helping to support the work of Rachael Konigsberg ('80-'81) who is coordinating a city-wide project. Rachel matches volunteers (including Pardes students) with individual children and/or family members requiring special attention.

MACHANAIM

Pardes is providing teachers and administrative assistance for *Machanaim* [two camps], a cultural-educational program for Russian *olim*. Living simultaneously in two worlds — Moscow and Jerusalem

— the men and women of Machanaim are Soviet Jews, some of whom, after years of learning and struggle, have finally been allowed to leave the Soviet Union and come to Jerusalem. Here they have devoted themselves to creating a Jewish heritage and Torah center designed to provide spiritual and material support for Russian *olim* as well as for Jews remaining in the Soviet Union.

REGINA STEIN IS WEXNER FELLOW

Regina Stein, teacher of Tanach and Jewish History at Pardes, 1980-1986, has been appointed a Wexner Heritage Foundation Fellow to CLAL (The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership). The grant enables her to study, teach and travel throughout the United States in preparation for joining the Wexner Heritage Foundation and CLAL as a full-time teacher. The Foundation's efforts are devoted to creating Jewishly knowledgeable and sensitive lay leaders.

THE PARDES CONNECTION

news of classmates and staff ...

Mark and Josepha Banschik '85-'86, are living in Westchester where Mark is medical director of the young adult unit of Four Winds Hospital in Ketonah, NY. Mark is a psychiatrist with specialty training in childhood and adolescence. Josepha is director of design for *Spotlight Magazine*, an entertainment weekly.

Sami Barth '81-'83, is the assistant dean of admissions at The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in Manhattan.

Shmuel and Sara Birnham '85-'86, are living in North Carolina. Shmuel received his rabbinical ordination from JTS (and a Lamport Homiletics Award for his senior sermon). He is now rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Asheville. Sara is teaching children with learning disabilities.

Karen Brenner '84-'85, is living in New York where she is working for the architecture firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill on a New York City project designing housing for the homeless.

Vicki Brower '78-'80, is living in Manhattan where she is teaching Jewish studies and Hebrew and working as a free-lance journalist.

Judy Colen '85-'86, received her Master's of social work from Rutgers University and is living in New Jersey.

Mara Fox '86-'87, graduated from Princeton University and has received a Fulbright fellowship to study in Israel.

Stacy (Meira) Gall '78-'79, is living in St. Louis, where she teaches American history in junior high school and designs *ketubot* together with Joyce Cohen-Olshan '78-'79.

Sarah Jamison '85-'86, received an MSW from Columbia University and is completing a second Master's in Jewish Studies at JTS.

Yehudit Keshet, formerly in charge of public relations at Pardes, is now Central Regional Director of AACI (Association of Americans & Canadians in Israel) in Tel Aviv.

Gordon Kunin '85-'86, is the recipient of a Wexner Foundation fellowship. He is a student in the rabbinical program at JTS and is currently spending the year in Israel.

Phil Miller '86-'88, is the recipient of a Wexner Foundation fellowship and is now in his second year in the rabbinical program at Yeshiva University.

Carolyn Peltin '86-'87, received a double Master's degree in social work and Jewish communal service from Hebrew Union College and the University of Southern California.

Gila Rayzel Robinson '83-'84, received a Wexner Foundation fellowship to enroll at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Raphael Schutler '85-'86, is living in New York City where he is setting up a computer automated marketing company.

Michael Swirsky, Pardes founder, has assumed the post of development officer for the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), a non-partisan organization analogous to the American Civil Liberties Union. He invites those interested in getting involved in the work of ACRI to contact him directly at (02) 666-448.

Dave Warren '86-'87, graduated from the University of Connecticut Law School and is working for a law firm in Hartford.

Eliot Zimelman '82-'83, is currently serving 1-1/2 years in the Israel Defense Forces.

... and their weddings

Marjorie Abend '87-'88, to Joel Wein. They are living in New York.

Zahava Aroesty '78-'79, to Michael Stroud. They are living in Los Angeles.

Shira Bar '87-'88, to David Goodman. They are living in Jerusalem.

Ditza Eshed '76-'77, to Shimon Shabtai. They are living in Jerusalem.

Leah Forman, Pardes faculty, to Yoav Rosenthal.

Michael Friedland '84-'85, to Elisabeth Fagen. They are living in New York.

Sheldon Gellar '88-'89 and **Bakol Ruben** '88-'89. They are living in Jerusalem.

Carol Glass '73-'74, to Michael Swartz. They are living in Silver Spring, MD. Carol is Hillel Director at the American University in Washington, DC.

Asher Goshen '85-'87, to Nitzhia Benditcha. They are living in Jerusalem. Asher is an attorney with a Tel Aviv law firm.

Betty Hilton '81-'82, to Joel Feinglass. They are living in Maryland.

Elissa Kaplan '84-'85, to Howard Sherman. They are living in Brooklyn. Elissa is working on her doctorate in neuropsychology at Columbia University.

Yosef Leibowitz, Pardes faculty, to Joan Sofer.

Ed Mann '75-'76 and **Beverly Ricki Gross** '88-'89. They are living in Jerusalem.

Rachel Newman '84-'85, to Mike Cornell. They are living in Rochester, NY. Rachel has an MBA and works as a professional recruiter.

Merle Osher '79-'80, to Mark Schlachet. They are living in Cleveland where Merle is a case worker with the Jewish aged.

Debbie Pinto '84-'85, to Bob Cohen. They are living in Jerusalem.

Sharon Pollin '87-'88 and **Marshal Spector** '87-'88. They are living in Manhattan where Sharon is working on an M.S. in supervision and administration at Bank Street College.

**Linda Beltz:
From Student
to
Staff Member**



When you ask some people about Pardes, they rave about the learning, the excitement of delving into Jewish texts and piecing out the meaning. When you ask me about Pardes, I talk about the people. I talk about the teachers and staff, their wisdom and kindness, their humor and humanness; I talk about the students, their questions, their friendship, their frequent and beautiful singing.

I took the job as American Pardes Coordinator out of selfishness. I didn't want to give up those Pardes people — and it's worked. I've been able to keep in contact with the folks I knew from my year ('86-'87) and to meet dozens of new people. The best part of my job is having to make a Pardes business call and finding a friend on the other end of the line.

I work in three specific areas: recruit-

ment, alumni organizing, and development.

Recruitment involves responding to the inquiries that come in from all over the United States and Canada. It's gratifying when I can "make a match" for Pardes. Sometimes I feel like a proud mother, advising students on what kind of shoes to bring to Israel, whether to close their bank accounts, or how in the world to find an apartment in that strange country across the sea.

My role as "information central" continues when students return from Israel. I coordinate information about lectures, meetings, *shabbatonim*, and any other Pardes activities held in North America. The number of activities has steadily increased in the past year. It's exciting to help alumni re-establish their links with one another and with Pardes. I'm happy to say that we now have an American alumni newsletter, *Chevra*, and we have alumni coordinators in major cities.

Much of my work over the past year has focused on financial development. Although the hard work of many people

has resulted in funding for this year and next, we will soon again be responsible for our entire operating budget. We must now build a secure financial base so Pardes can be as independent in budget as in ideology.

A crucial part of this effort is the alumni campaign. This campaign will have a significant impact on Pardes' future because alumni support is the foundation which will attract other support. As one donor put it, if not alumni, who? And if not alumni, why me?

Much work is still to be done. I'm encouraged by the many people who have rallied around Pardes in its time of need. I thank all of you who have worked and are working to help Pardes.

Each of your contributions, financial and otherwise, makes a real difference. Pardes gave us so much, taught us so much about giving — it's our turn now to give to Pardes.

Submissions to Chevra or other inquiries should be sent to Linda Beltz, 2408 N. 3rd St., Arlington, VA 22201, (703) 527-9246.

Marshal is staff attorney for the New York office of the Anti-Defamation League.

Susan Rosen '84-'85, '88-'89, to Chaim Yitzhak. They are living in Ganei Tikva. Susan teaches English at Bar Ilan University.

Deena Rosenfeld '87-'88, to Jeffrey Friedman. They are living in Jerusalem where Deena is working in marketing and sales for Gessen Publishing.

Carolyn Shaeffer '88-'89, to David Schwartz. They are living in Jerusalem where Carolyn teaches ballet.

Claire Sherman, summer '87, to Ed Adisman. They are living in Berkeley.

Mark Siedler '83-'84, to Susie Black. They are living in New York. Mark completed rabbinical school at JTS and his Master's degree in computer science at CCNY.

Ruth Toffer '84-'85, to David Rosenberg. They are living in Melbourne, Australia.

Tova Yehudit Weiss '83-'84, to David Tzvi Dreyfus. They are living in New York.

... and their babies

Joel Aaron-Fish '81-'82, and wife Devora are the parents of a son, Eliezer Yaakov. They are living in Philadelphia.

Yochanan Ben Avraham '84-'85, '87-'88, and wife Michal are the parents of a son, Daniel. They are living on Yitzhar, a settlement in the Shomron.

Anita Besdin '83-'84 and Eitan Cooper '81-'82, '83-'84, are the parents of a son, Michael David. They are living in Jerusalem where Eitan is education director of Young Judea Year Program and Anita is a social worker.

Eudice Biner '82-'83 and Ricky Bloomberg '82-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Avigail. They are living in Baltimore and will be returning to Israel this winter.

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

Jill Cohen-Bateman '85-'86, and husband Danny are the parents of a daughter, Dafna Ruth. They are living in Jerusalem where Jill is a social worker at Alyn Hospital.

Joyce Cohen-Olshan '78-'79, and husband Robert are the parents of a daughter, Yonit. They are living in St. Louis.

Susan Fraiman '80-'81 and Yedidya Fraiman '78-'80, '82-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Darya Efrat. They are living in Jerusalem where Susan is working on a Master's degree in Art History at the Hebrew University and Yedidya is developing his music business.

Moshe Gresser '83-'85 and Ruth Stoll '81-'83, are the parents of a daughter, Tamar Liorah. They are living in Hamilton, NY where Moshe is faculty member and Jewish Students' Counselor at Colgate University.

Bonna Haberman '78-'79 and Shmuel Browns '78-'79, are the parents of a son, Bezalel. They are living in Jerusalem.

Bracha (Stein) Heskell '80-'82, and husband Baruch are the parents of a son, Elyashiv. They are living on Moshav Keshet in the Golan.

Sharon (Hastings) Jacobson '86-'87, and husband David are the parents of a son, Adam Daniel. They are living in Princeton, New Jersey.

Tina (Goldman) Lehrer '80-'82, and husband Ya'akov are the parents of a son, Yonah Ariel. They are living in Holon where Tina is working in interior design and graphic arts.

Aryeh Meir '83-'84 and Shoshana Meir '83-'84 are the parents of a son, Rafael Dov. They are living in Ottawa where Aryeh is director of community planning with the Jewish Community Council of Ottawa.

Leslie (Levy) Mirchin '86-'87, and husband David are the parents of a daughter, Maayan Levy. They are living in Massachusetts.

Naomi Kroll Moss '84-'86 and Steven Moss '83-'86, are the parents of a son, Naphtali Zvi. They are living in Jerusalem.

Tina Nachmani '85-'86, and husband Gabi are the parents of a son, Ariel Beneyah. They are living in Tsfat.

Susan Lieberman Oppenheimer '82-'84, and husband Shmuel are the parents of a son, Arie Michal. They are living in Jerusalem where Susan is a social worker at Hadassah Hospital.

Marjorie (Newman) Revah '81-'82, and husband Nissim are the parents of a daughter, Yael. They are living in Oklahoma.

Tammi Rossmann-Benjamin '82-'83, and husband Elan are the parents of twins, Joel and Daniel. They are living in Santa Cruz, California.

Tamar (Lange) Schriger '80-'81, and husband Alan are the parents of a daughter, Efrat Leiba. They are living in Mevasseret Zion.

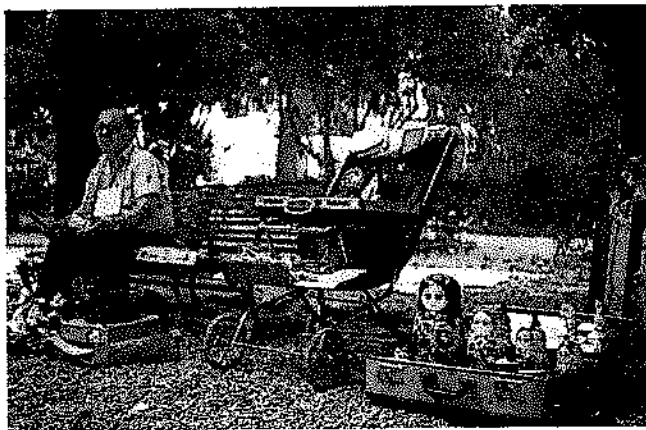
Randy Shiff '86-'87 and Donna Starkman '86-'87, are the parents of a daughter, Davida Eliana. They are living in Toronto.

David Shire '88-'90, and wife Miriam are the parents of a daughter, Ortal Flora. They are living in Jerusalem where David is a landscape gardener.

Tsippi Sandler '87-'88, and husband Harvey Sher are the parents of a son, Yonatan. They are living in Jerusalem.

Eric Slaton '80-'81, and wife Kim are the parents of twin sons, Even Yakov and Seth Aharon. They are living in Lexington, Kentucky where Eric is rabbi of a congregation.

Michelle (Grey) Thaler '85-'86, and husband Manny are the parents of a son, Yitzhak. They are living in Jerusalem.



The Russian "shuk"

people simply cannot fathom how I could have left America to live in Israel. While I'm uncomfortable with what appears to be a general infatuation with Americans, I'm still gratified for the opportunity to be able to tell them about Israel.

This afternoon I had my last conversation with 20-year-old Mikhail before his departure for Israel. He wants to be a doctor and was concerned that because of Israel's small size, his talents might not be sufficiently rewarded there. He and his family have decided to take the risk, however. It seems that at least from Ladispoli, we are getting the best.

Tuesday, August 22, 1989 11:30 P.M. Synagogue

The older people weep when the rabbi speaks about God hearing their prayers on Rosh Hashana. Yet they themselves do no more than sit in that gloomy synagogue Shabbat after Shabbat, month after month, waiting for their visas to America.

After partaking of the standard, synagogue lunch of potato

"cholent" on this our last Shabbat in Ladispoli, we once more tried to rouse them with a round of "Hinei Ma Tov." But I could only sit there and weep from frustration. No, it is not "good" and "pleasant" to sit together like "brothers" in Ladispoli when I feel that their future, and especially that of their children and grandchildren, could be so much brighter in Israel.

We are living through strange times. Less than fifty years after the Shoah and forty-one years after the creation of the Jewish State, thousands of Jews seem to covet the title "refugee."

Friday, September 8, 1989 1:20 P.M.

Aboard El Al

I just lifted off from Leonardo DaVinci Airport. I fly alone, despite cheerful promises to bring a plane full of Russian Jews home with me. But some have already made it there, and I have a date with Inna, in front of Richie's Pizza in Jerusalem in May, 1990, when she'll be eighteen and independent.

After two weeks of touring Italy, I returned to Ladispoli yesterday to say good-bye. They washed down the outside walls of the summer camp while I was away; gone are the chalk flowers, the fantastic pink elephant, the Maccabiah decorations and logos of each of the groups — Galil, Rakefet, Netanya, Yerushalayim. The kids sit in classrooms now studying English, math, Hebrew, Jewish history and many of the faces are new.

We sang one last time on the Piazza last night. Inna has been out there every night with the younger kids practicing her new repertoire of Hebrew songs. This morning, about ten of them accompanied me from the school to my cab. "Lo alecha hamlacha ligmor" they sang. "Lo alecha ligmor. V'lo atah ben chorin lehivatei mimenu." (It is not upon you to complete the task, but neither may you desist from beginning it.)

And this is all that I can hope for, that we began something, that these kids will feel the pull of Israel, and Judaism, wherever they end up.

And maybe, one day, they will find their way back to us. 

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

Haskell Lookstein, rabbi of Manhattan's Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun and principal of the Ramaz School, received both his rabbinic ordination and his Ph.D. in modern Jewish history from Yeshiva University. Among his many professional and communal activities, Rabbi Lookstein is professor of homiletics at Yeshiva University, chairman of the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, vice chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and vice president of UJA-Federation of New York. His activity on behalf of Soviet Jewry has taken him to the Soviet Union three times. Immediate past president of the New York Board of Rabbis, he has also served as chairman of the UJA's National Rabbinic Cabinet. Author of *Were We Our Brothers' Keepers? The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust, 1938-1944* (1985), Rabbi Lookstein continues to publish widely in Jewish periodicals. Rabbi Lookstein has used the many means at his disposal, from his voice in the pulpit to his wide-ranging influence

in Jewish circles, to gain increased support and recognition for Pardes. He lives in Manhattan and is the father of four children and two grandchildren.

LEV DAVID FUND

A fund benefitting the children at the Jerusalem Shelter for Battered Women has been established by Ann and Aryeh Breslow in memory of their son, Lev David, ז"ל. Contributions may be made out to and sent c/o the New Israel Fund, 111 West 40th Street, Suite 2300, New York, NY 10018, with a letter "recommending" their use for this purpose. In Israel, checks may be made out to: Woman to Woman, indicating that it is for Keren Lev David and mailed to the Jerusalem Shelter for Battered Women, P.O. Box 10403, Jerusalem.

FINANCIAL NEWS

Pardes has received several grants that will help it to meet next year's financial obligations. These include \$20,000 from the Moriah Fund, \$20,000 from the Dorot Foundation, \$20,000 from the San Francisco Federation, \$10,000 from

the Joint Distribution Committee and \$5,000 from the San Jose Federation.

Contributions to Pardes are now tax deductible in Canada. Checks should be made out to New Israel Fund of Canada with a letter stating that the donor "recommends" that the donation be given to the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, P.O. Box 8575, Jerusalem, Israel. Mailing address for checks is New Israel Fund of Canada, P.O. Box 114, Commence Court West, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1E2.

HAVRUTA is published by Machon Pardes — the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, P.O. Box 8575, Tel. (02) 731879, 731880, FAX 732011. If you would like to receive additional copies of HAVRUTA or submit articles for publication, contact Machon Pardes at the above address.

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Checks for tax-deductible contributions should be made out to American Pardes Foundation and sent to: P.O.B. 58, Roseland, NJ 07068