

Summer 2026

Alumni Impact Study

Learning. Leadership. Legacy.



**Pardes Institute of
Jewish Studies**

About Pardes

The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies is an open, inclusive, and intellectually rigorous Jewish learning community based in Jerusalem with programs worldwide. Pardes cultivates a lifelong love of Jewish learning, the Jewish people, and Israel, inspiring engagement in Jewish life as leaders, educators, and active participants.

Pardes is a place where serious Jewish text study takes place in a pluralistic and challenging environment, shaping alumni who bring that learning into communities, institutions, and everyday life around the world.

At Pardes, learning becomes leadership, community, and lasting influence.

Across decades, alumni carry the influence of immersive Jewish learning into classrooms, institutions, communities, families, and public life.

Drawing on survey data and alumni experiences, this study explores the enduring impact of the Pardes model.

Pardes Alumni Become Jewish Leaders

53%

Jewish Professional Life

of alumni respondents work
in Jewish professional life

21%

Founded Institutions

of alumni respondents
founded Jewish institutions
or initiatives

50%

Shaped Organizations

of alumni respondents led
or shaped Jewish
organizations

96%

Knowledge Sources

of alumni respondents
serve as trusted Jewish
knowledge sources

The impact of Pardes is not confined to the classroom. Alumni assume positions of leadership across Jewish education, communal organizations, campuses, synagogues, philanthropy, and public life.

Pardes alumni lead and shape some of the Jewish world's most influential institutions.



SHALOM HARTMAN
INSTITUTE
מכון
שלום הרטמן



The impact of Pardes extends far beyond the people who study there.

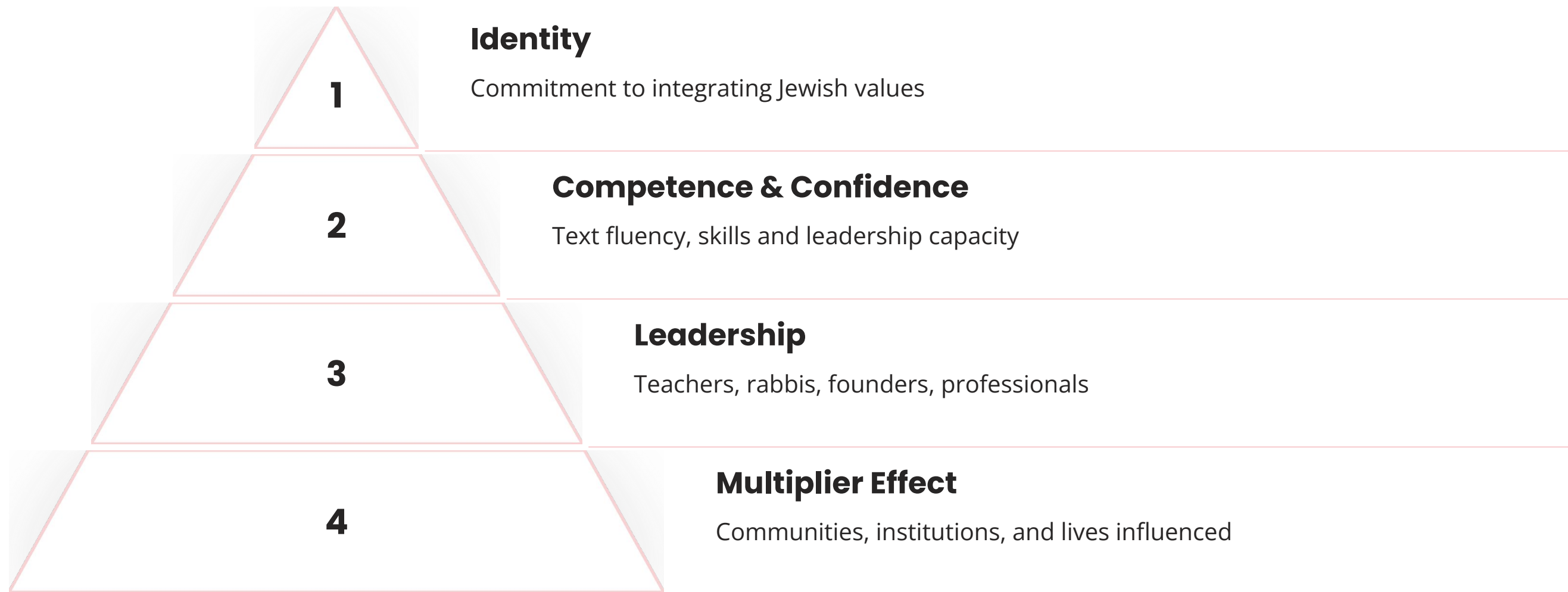
513,000

Estimated people reached by the 760 alumni respondents through teaching, mentorship, leadership, institutions, and community life.

Every Pardes investment creates ripple effects through communities, institutions, families, and future generations.

How Pardes Creates This Impact

The study reveals a clear pattern: immersive Jewish learning develops the competence, confidence, and commitment that enable alumni to lead and influence Jewish life at scale.



What Makes the Pardes Impact Last



Text and Torah Study

Learning through direct engagement with Torah and Jewish texts develops the confidence, wisdom, and capability to lead, teach, and shape Jewish life across generations.



The Jerusalem Experience

Living and learning in Jerusalem leaves a profound mark, shaping how alumni engage with Israel in their communities decades later.



Faculty Mentorship

Faculty serve not only as teachers but as mentors and models of committed, intellectually serious Jewish life — and those relationships often continue long after the program ends.



Pluralistic Engagement

Learning alongside Jews from across the denominational spectrum develops the ability to engage respectfully with people whose religious commitments differ from their own.



Alumni Networks

Relationships built through intensive shared learning sustain friendships, professional collaborations, and havruta partnerships across decades.

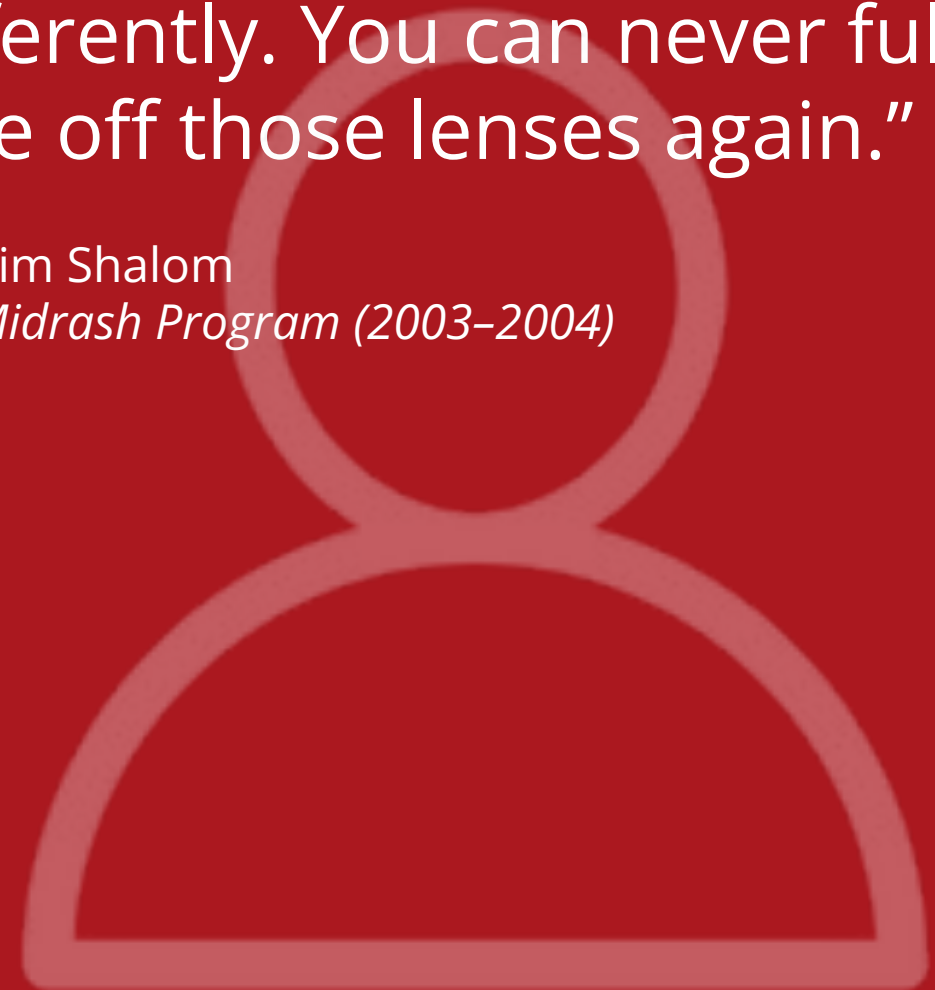
Inside the data

STAGE #1

Pardes Shapes Lived Jewish Identity

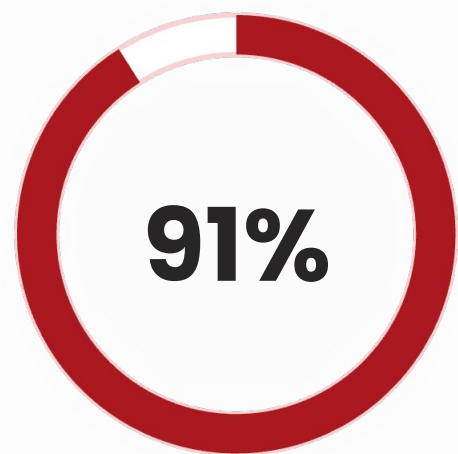
“Once you've done serious Torah study you look at the world differently. You can never fully take off those lenses again.”

— Haim Shalom
Beit Midrash Program (2003–2004)



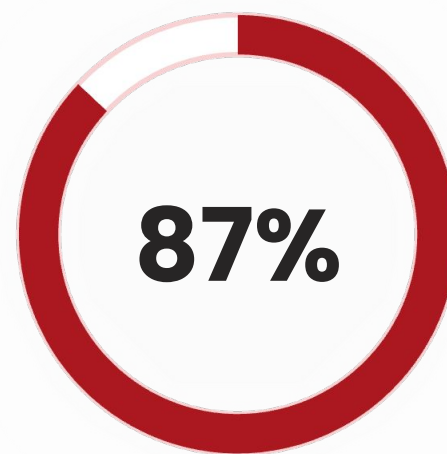
Jewish ideas and values, gained through studying at Pardes, continue to shape how alumni think, lead, and live. The numbers are striking.

In which areas do Jewish ideas and values play a role in your life today? To what extent has Pardes shaped that role?



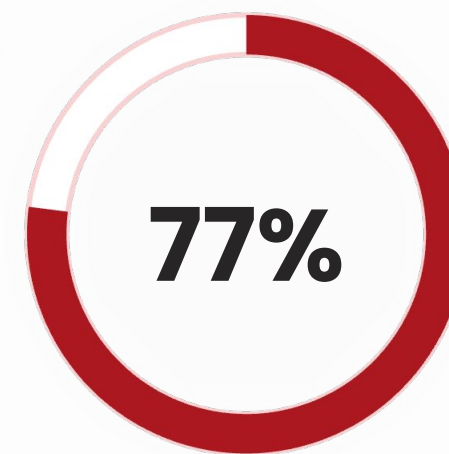
Personal Life Decisions

Jewish values inform how alumni think about life's challenges and choices



Family & Community

Values guide interactions with family, friends, and community members



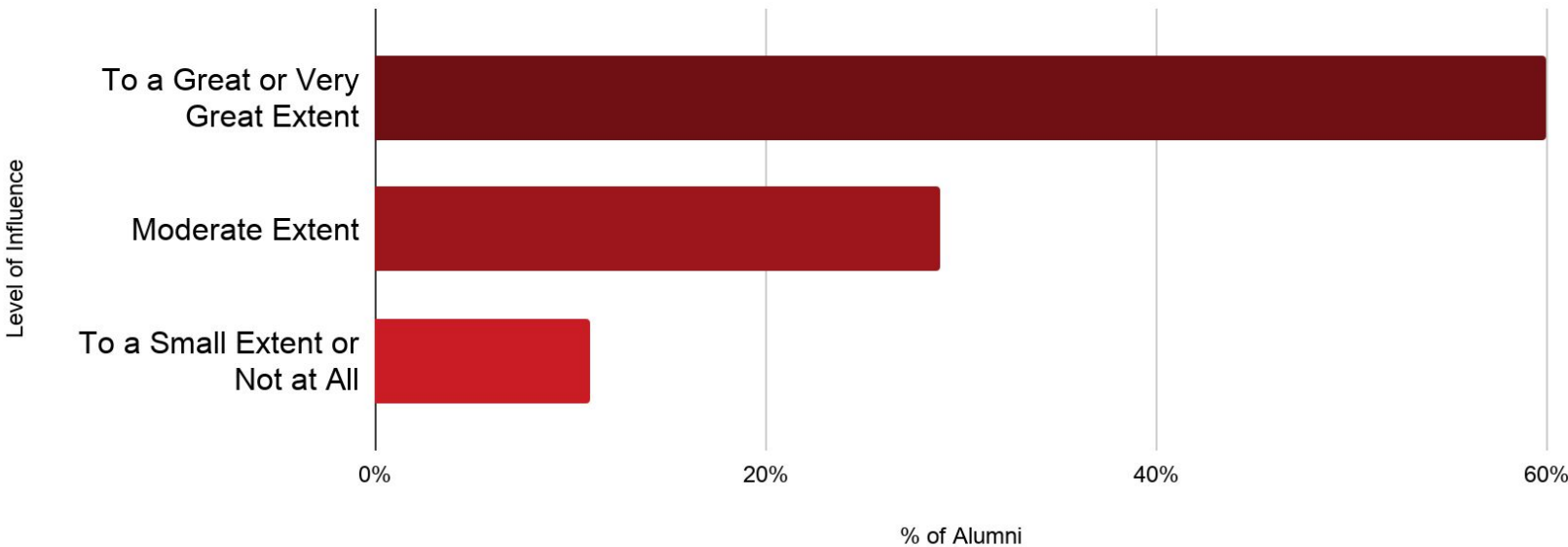
Professional Leadership

Alumni draw on Jewish ideas in teaching, leading, and professional work

Depth of Influence on Jewish Values

When alumni respondents were asked to describe the extent to which Pardes shaped the role of Jewish ideas and values in their lives, the responses revealed an overwhelming pattern of deep, lasting influence — not a surface-level encounter, but genuine transformation.

To what extent has learning at Pardes shaped the role that Jewish ideas and values play in your life?



Areas of Pardes Influence

Alumni were asked in which areas their Pardes experience had been most influential. Continued Jewish learning tops the list, followed closely by relationships to Jewish tradition and Israel. Pardes's impact spans the personal, relational, communal, and professional dimensions of alumni lives.

Continued Jewish Learning

80% — The most widely reported area of influence, reflecting Pardes's core mission

Relationship to Jewish Tradition

62% — How alumni understand and relate to halacha, practice, and heritage

Relationship with Israel

61% — Pardes's Jerusalem setting leaves a deep imprint on alumni ties to Israel

Connections Across Difference

57% — Exposure to the full spectrum of Jewish thought and practice

Connection to Jewish People

55% — Deepened sense of belonging and responsibility to Klal Yisrael

Career & Professional Direction

33% — Pardes as a catalyst for shifts toward Jewish professional work

i Alumni also cited influence on Jewish ritual practice (44%), spiritual life (43%), and ongoing relationships with faculty as friends, colleagues, and mentors (30%).

Israel as Integral to Identity

75%

Strong Israel Connection

say that Israel is part of their lives by continuing to visit, considering moving or making it their home.

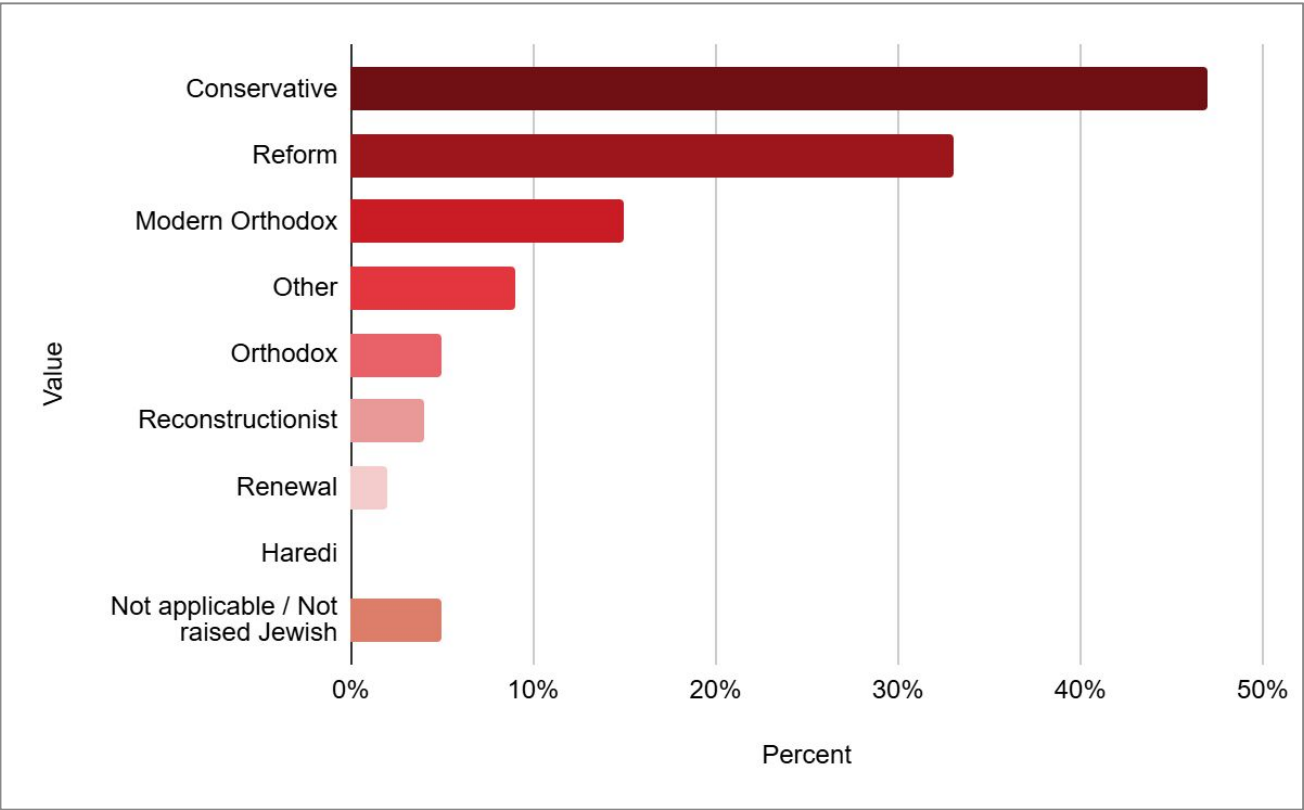
Encountering the Torah of Eretz Yisrael

Many alumni describe Jerusalem not simply as a location, but as an immersive encounter with “the Torah of Eretz Yisrael,” experiencing Jewish life through the rhythms of Shabbat, public life, conflict, community, and everyday Israeli reality. Alumni carry this grounded and deeply personal relationship with Israel back into their communities long after Pardes.

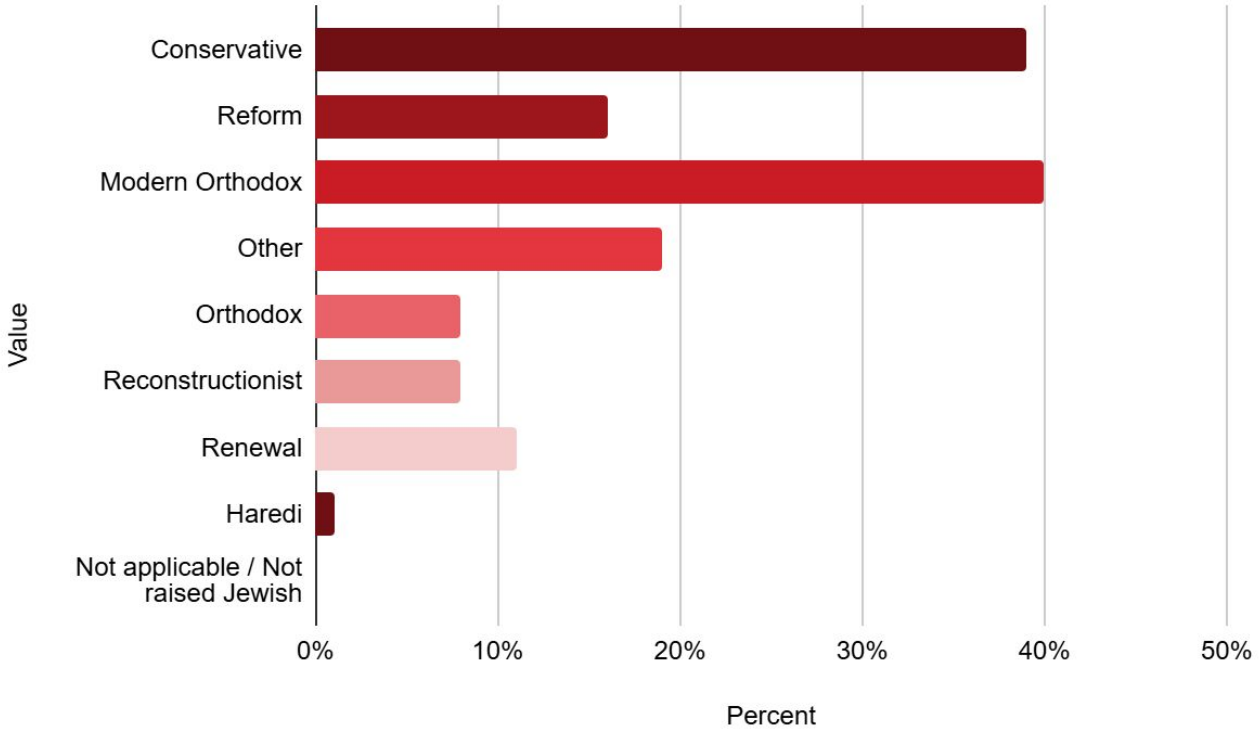
Denominational Shifts Among Alumni

One of the most revealing indicators of Pardes's transformative impact is the shift in how alumni identify denominationally from how they were raised. The beit midrash experience doesn't fit neatly into any box — and neither do its graduates.

How Alumni Were Raised



How Alumni Identify Today



While alumni move in different religious directions, the Pardes experience consistently expands their engagement with Jewish learning, practice, and community.

In Their Own Words

“

"Pardes gave me a framework for thinking about every major decision in my life. It's not just that I learned Torah — I learned how to think Jewishly about everything."

— *Pardes Alumna, Year Program*

”

“

"I came to Pardes uncertain about my Jewish identity. I left with a deep, unshakeable sense of who I am as a Jew and what I stand for."

— *Pardes Alumnus, Summer Program*

”

“

"The learning at Pardes didn't just inform me — it transformed me. That's not a metaphor. My life looks fundamentally different because of the year I spent in that beit midrash."

— *Pardes Alumna, Multiple Programs*

”

“

"Israel Education at camp was mostly advocacy, and I don't feel that the Israel education that I received at Pardes was advocacy. I really feel that it was education."

— *Maya Zinkow, Campus Rabbi, UC Berkeley Hillel*

”

STAGE #2

Pardes Builds Competence and Confidence

“After two years, I knew all the basics and would never have to be embarrassed again.”

— Deborah Shapira
*Beit Midrash Program (1996–1998); Summer Program;
Pardes Learning Seminar*



Where Competence Is Built

Alumni are clear about the source of their growth. The beit midrash itself — the act of learning, wrestling with text, and engaging with peers — is the engine of transformation.

94%

**Learning Most
Valuable**

Say the learning experience
itself was the most valuable
aspect of Pardes

63%

Faculty as Models

Cite faculty as formative role
models in their development
even decades later

Interpretation

These findings point to an important insight about how Pardes creates impact: **competence is built through serious engagement with Jewish texts in the Beit Midrash.** Programming extras or social experiences supplement the impact. Faculty who model intellectual humility, rigorous questioning, and a genuine love of learning create an environment where students do more than absorb information. They become lifelong learners themselves.

Growth Looks Different at Different Starting Points

Pardes meets learners at every starting point, helping beginners gain entirely new abilities, intermediate learners both build and deepen skills, and advanced learners refine and strengthen existing expertise.

57%

New Abilities

of alumni respondents with no prior Jewish learning report developing entirely new abilities

84%

Deepened Skills

of alumni respondents with advanced text study backgrounds report significantly deepening existing abilities

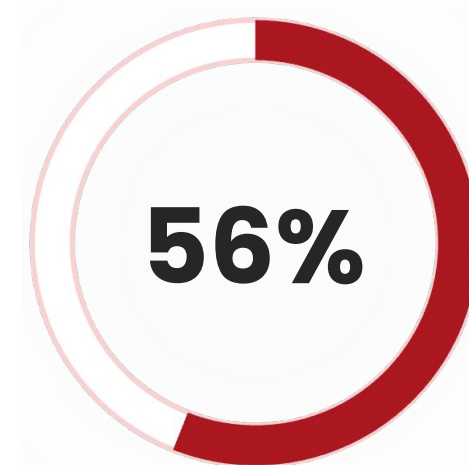
Continued Jewish Learning

Perhaps the most telling indicator of Pardes's lasting impact is what alumni do after they leave. Learning at Pardes is not a destination — it ignites a lifelong pursuit.



Continue Learning

Report continued engagement in Jewish learning years after completing their Pardes program



Independent Study

Feel confident studying Jewish texts independently — without a teacher, curriculum, or structured program

Independent text confidence is the hallmark of true competence. A learner who can open a page of Talmud, a chapter of Tanakh, or a responsum and engage with it autonomously is a learner who has been genuinely equipped for a lifetime of Jewish growth.

In Their Own Words

“

“Without Pardes, I would have been unable to have the confidence to encourage people to think differently about Torah, from a psychological emotional point of view, embodying it.”

— *Pardes Alumna, Year Program*

”

“

The whole Pardes experience helped me do what I do today, which is learn and teach. Pardes gave me a serious start.

— *Pardes Alumnus, Summer Program*

”

“

“Pardes deepened my love for Judaism and grounded it in knowledge and practice. It is that foundation that I have relied upon throughout my career.”

— *Pardes Alum, Educators Program*

”

STAGE #3

Pardes Alumni Become Jewish Leaders

“To the degree that I am now a Jewish communal leader... these Pardes teachers have shaped who I am.”

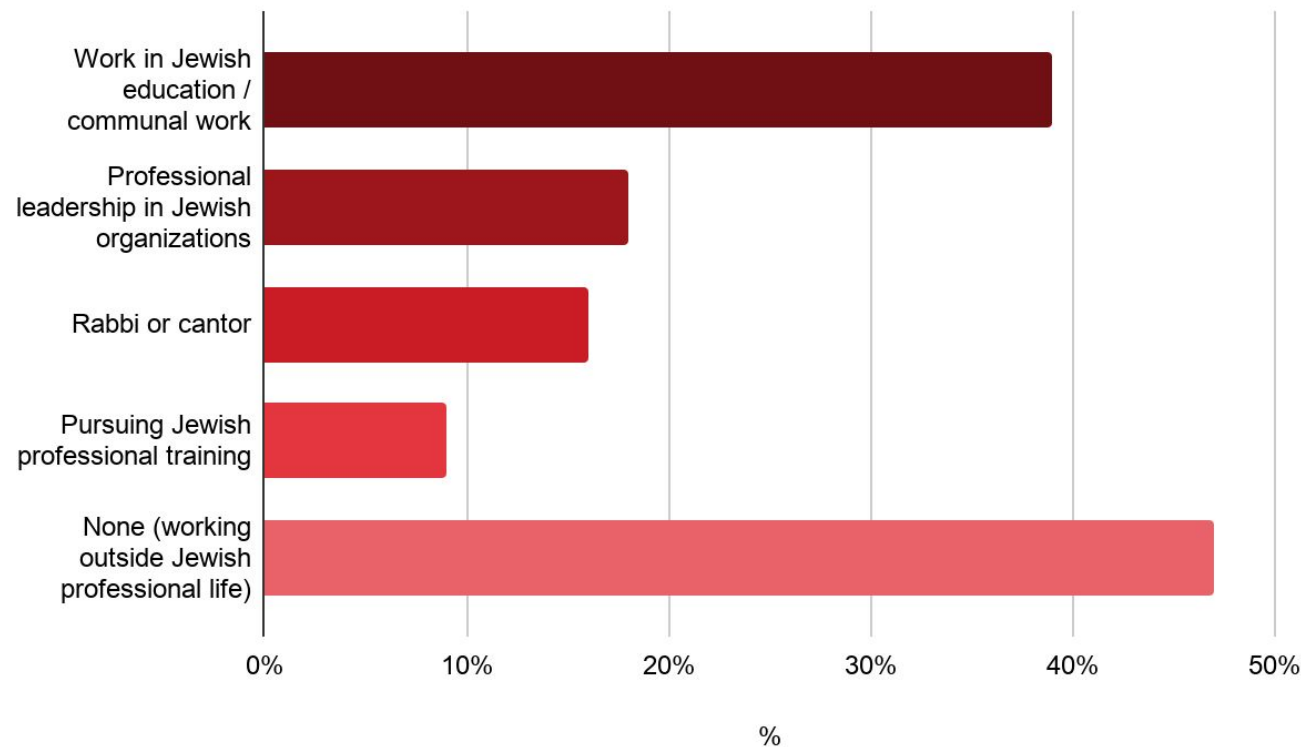
— Marc Baker, CEO, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston *Beit Midrash Program* (1997–1998); *Fellows Program* (1999–2000); *Educators Program* (2000–2002)



Professional Engagement with Jewish Life

Current Jewish Professional Roles

While 47% of alumni work outside Jewish professional life, a remarkable 53% are engaged in Jewish vocations. This includes rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, communal professionals, and organizational leaders — a remarkable concentration of Jewish professional impact.



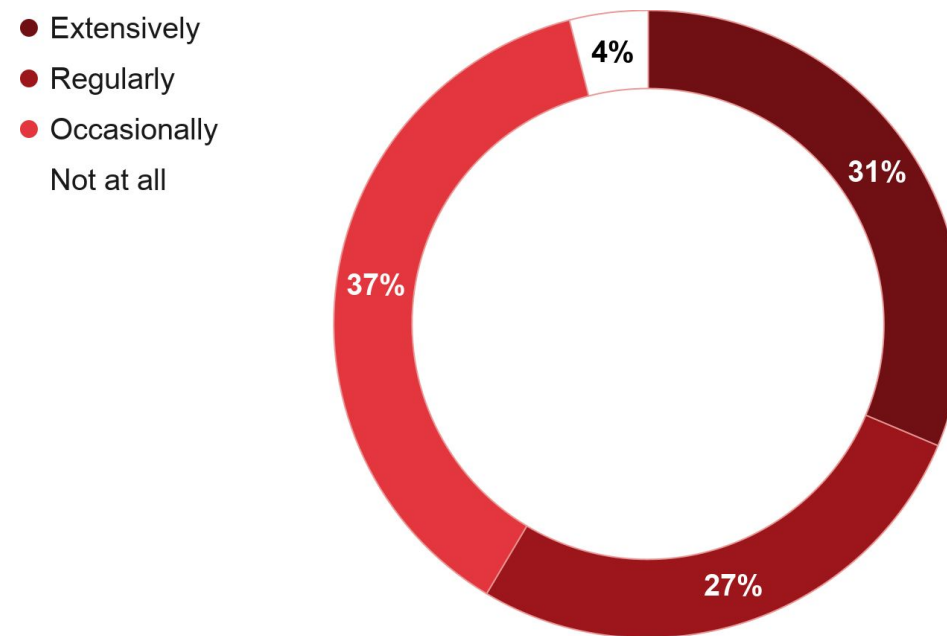
How Alumni Apply Jewish Values Professionally

Even among those not working in formal Jewish roles, Pardes alumni apply Jewish ideas directly in their work. The majority have created programming, shaped organizations, or integrated Jewish perspectives into secular contexts.

- **60% — Brought Jewish values into Jewish orgs or communities**
- **53% — Created Jewish educational programming**
- **50% — Led or shaped Jewish organizations**
- **43% — Integrated Jewish perspectives into secular work**
- **21% — Founded Jewish institutions or initiatives**

Alumni as Trusted Knowledge Sources

Pardes alumni do not keep their learning to themselves. Nearly all respondents report that others turn to them for Jewish guidance and perspective.



96% of alumni are relied upon as trusted Jewish knowledge sources in their communities.

Colleagues, friends, family members, students, and congregants actively seek out Pardes alumni for Jewish learning, insight, and guidance which raises the level of Jewish discourse everywhere.

Beyond the Jewish Sector

One of the most striking dimensions of Pardes's leadership impact is how it extends far beyond explicitly Jewish institutions. Alumni carry Jewish frameworks of thinking, ethics, and values into every professional arena they inhabit.

43%

Integrate Jewish perspectives and values into their roles in **secular leadership contexts**

Impacting Discourse Worldwide

Pardes alumni carry Jewish learning into fields far beyond Jewish communal life. Alumni describe using habits developed through serious text study, including ethical reasoning, debate, interpretation, and reflection, in settings ranging from healthcare and education to public policy and leadership.

For many, Jewish learning shapes how they lead, make decisions, and engage with the broader world.

In Their Own Words

“

“My community never knew what Havruta is. Now everyone is using it.”

— *Maxim Delchev, Jewish Educator and Community Leader, Lauder School Sofia / Bulgarian Jewish Community*

“

“In what way can I help the Jewish people move forward in history and be the best people we can be?”

— *Nigel Savage, Founding CEO, Jewish Climate Trust; Founder and Former CEO, Hazon (now Adamah)*

“

“This wasn’t just training—it was empowerment through responsibility.”

— *Maya Zinkow, Campus Rabbi at UC Berkeley Hillel*

“

“It was an emotional experience applying an intellectual method to result in an emotional experience and a relational experience to the text itself and its holiness.”

— *Elie Kaunfer, CEO, Hadar Institute*

”

”

STAGE #4

The Multiplier Effect

“A love of Jewish texts — I have helped thousands of young people engage in text-based learning who wouldn't have otherwise.”

— Anonymous alumnus
Survey respondent



The Multiplier Effect at Scale

The 760 alumni respondents estimate that they have collectively influenced more than 513,000 people through Jewish learning, leadership, teaching, mentorship, institutions, and community life.

513,000

Estimated people reached by survey respondents alone

The impact of Pardes extends far beyond the beit midrash itself. Each alumnus becomes a source of Jewish learning, leadership, and influence that continues to ripple outward across communities, institutions, families, and generations.

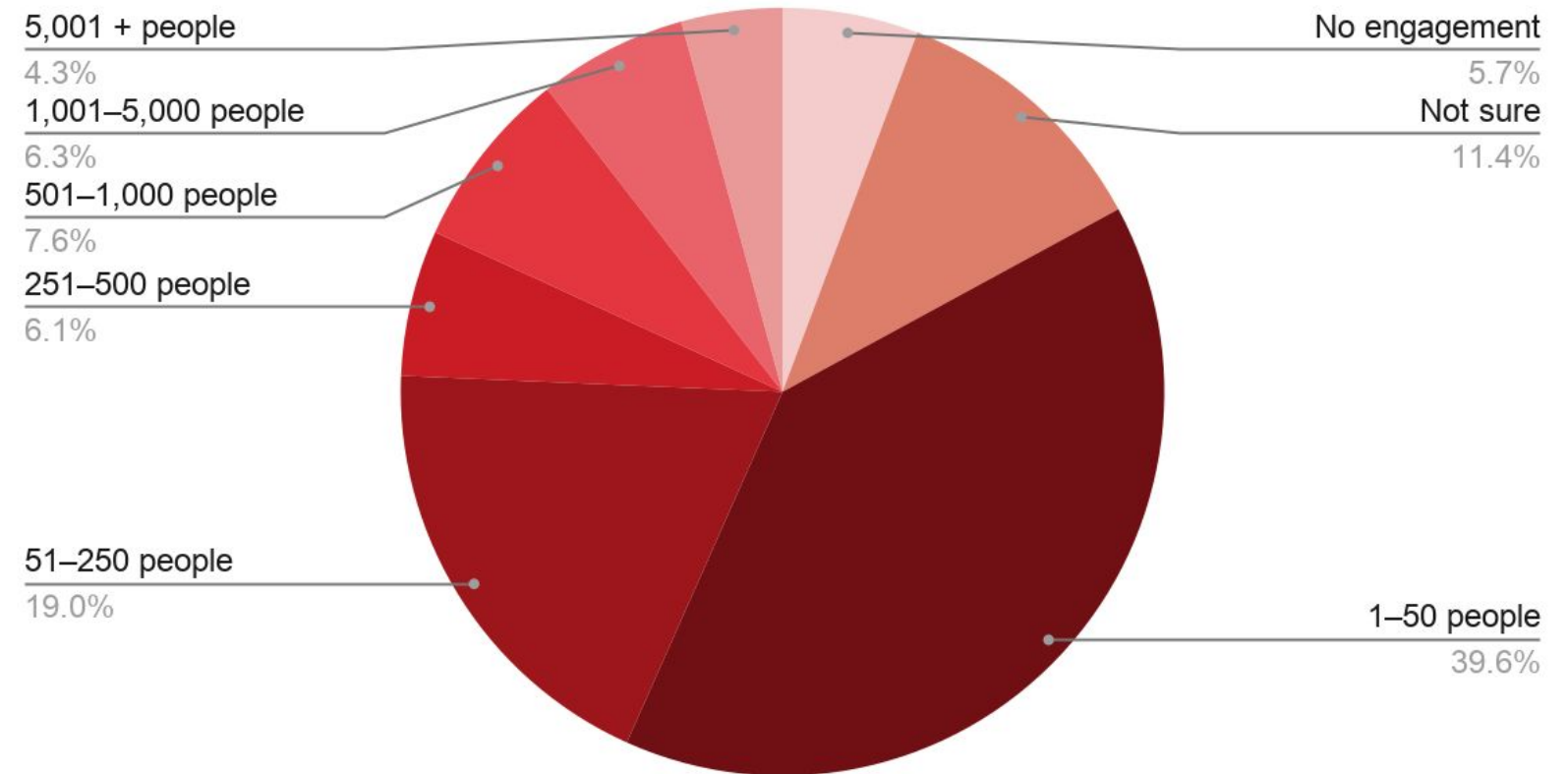
THE DATA

Reach and Influence

Pardes alumni extend Jewish learning far beyond their own study experience. Across communities, institutions, classrooms, workplaces, and families, alumni become trusted teachers, leaders, mentors, and guides.

The impact of a Pardes education compounds over time. One learner becomes a source of influence for hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of others.

How many people would you estimate have been reached by your Pardes-inspired contributions?



Meaningful Actions in the World

When asked to describe the most meaningful Jewish actions they have taken since Pardes, alumni responses paint a vivid portrait of lives animated by Jewish purpose and equipped by Jewish learning.



Rabbis

Dozens of alumni cite Pardes as the pivotal step that led them to pursue rabbinical ordination and professional Jewish leadership.



Bridge Builders

Alumni report working across denominational, political, and cultural divides — modeling the pluralism they experienced at Pardes.



Educators

Alumni have created curricula, founded schools, launched learning initiatives, and built institutions that reach thousands.



Institution Founders

Alumni have founded or co-founded Jewish institutions, initiatives, or communities across the world.

**Pardes
alumni lead
and shape
some of the
Jewish
world's most
influential
institutions.**



The Jewish Federations[®]
OF NORTH AMERICA



OR HALEV



SHALOM



Organization of the Jews
in Bulgaria

Transformation That Extends Across a Lifetime

Lifelong Learning Continues

One of the clearest indicators of lasting impact is that alumni continue seeking Torah learning long after their formal studies end.

51% Engage with Content

More than half of all alumni regularly engage with Pardes content — articles, podcasts, Torah commentaries, and educational resources

38% Online Learning

Actively participate in Pardes online learning programs — a strong indicator of genuine ongoing engagement with Jewish study

29% Return Programs

Have returned to Pardes for additional formal study programs since their initial experience — an extraordinary loyalty metric

Relationships That Endure

The same relationships that shape the Pardes experience continue influencing alumni personally, spiritually, and professionally decades later.



Peer Bonds

Alumni describe relationships formed in the beit midrash as among the deepest and most enduring of their lives — built on shared intellectual grappling and spiritual exploration.



Global Network

The Pardes alumni network spans continents — creating pathways for collaboration, support, and mutual Jewish influence across the globe.



Continued Engagement

Many alumni remain in active learning relationships with each other and with Pardes faculty years and decades after graduation.

Jerusalem + Pardes North America: The Strongest Combination

Alumni respondents who combined an immersive Jerusalem experience with Pardes North America programming show the strongest outcomes of any group in the study.

28%

Founders

have founded or co-founded Jewish institutions (vs. 20% among other multi-program alumni).

A third of single-program alumni express interest in future learning programs in Israel — suggesting that a single immersive experience leaves many wanting to return.

“Having not left Pardes so long ago, I am just at the very beginning of a hopefully long, growing post-Pardes journey and contribution.”

— Alumni Survey Response

Impact That Inspires Investment

The ultimate test of institutional impact is not what alumni say about an experience — it is what they do. By every behavioral measure, Pardes alumni demonstrate extraordinary loyalty, advocacy, and philanthropic commitment.

83%

Recommend Pardes

Actively recommend Pardes to others — friends, colleagues, students, and family members considering Jewish study

80%

Recommend Jewish Learning

Alumni actively encourage others to pursue Jewish educational opportunities

85%

Jewish Philanthropy

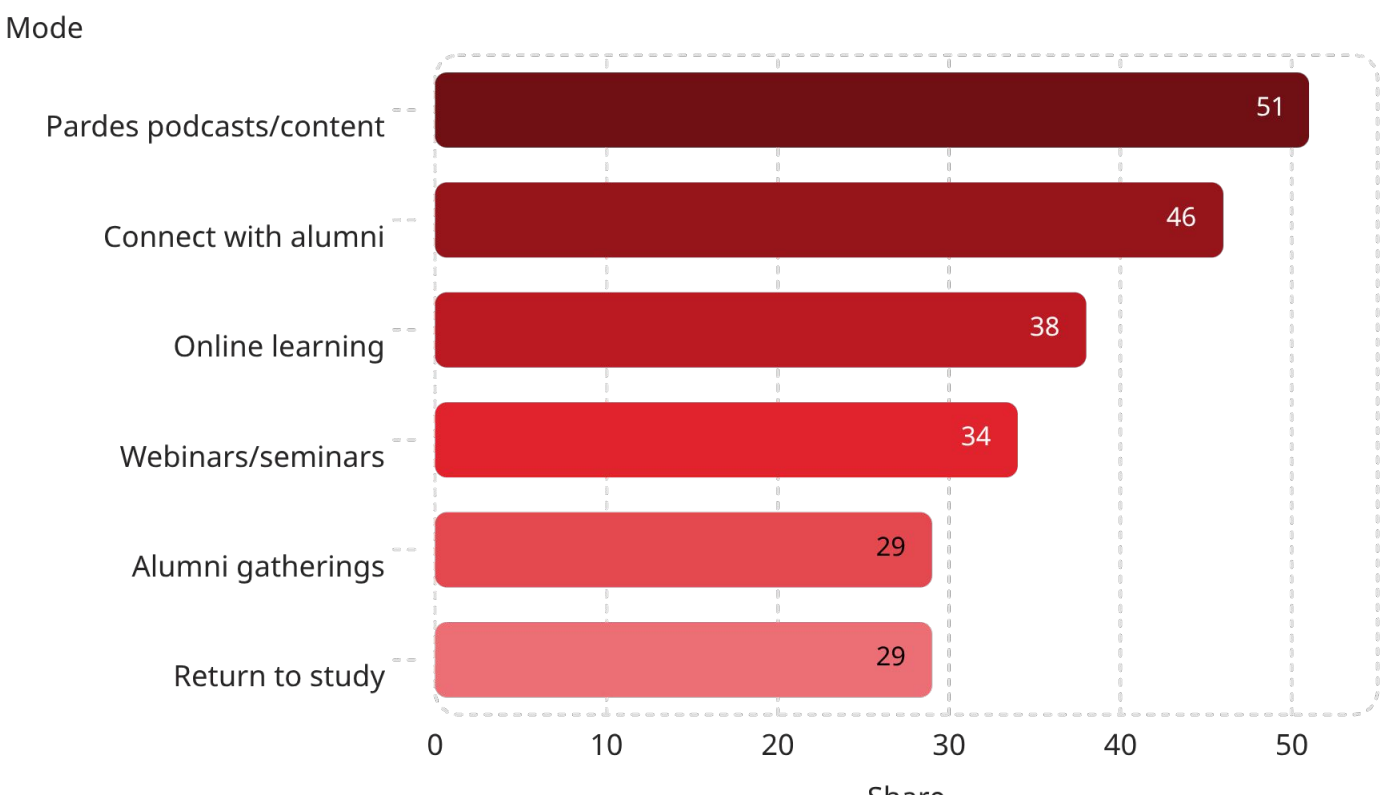
Donate to Jewish causes broadly — demonstrating that Pardes deepens commitment to the entire Jewish community

Impact drives loyalty. These numbers reflect alumni who don't just remember Pardes warmly — they invest in its future and champion its mission.

Alumni Engagement with Pardes Today

Alumni remain meaningfully connected to Pardes through content, events, and ongoing programs — though there is significant appetite for deeper engagement. The data points to a loyal, enthusiastic alumni base eager for more structured opportunities to learn, reconnect, and contribute.

Current Connection Modes



Most Desired Future Opportunities

A striking 78% of alumni are "very" or "somewhat" interested in future alumni learning and connection opportunities. Their top preferences reveal a desire for substantive learning alongside peer reconnection.

- Online learning with Pardes faculty — 65%
- In-person alumni gatherings/reunions — 39%
- Regional study groups or havruta — 38%
- Learning programs in Israel — 35%
- Professional learning / networking — 30%

Conclusions

The Impact of Pardes Extends Far Beyond Its Classrooms

Pardes has 10,000+ alumni worldwide. The following reflects findings from 760 survey respondents.

53% Work professionally in Jewish life

21% Have founded a Jewish institution, initiative, or community

96% Serve as a Jewish knowledge source for others

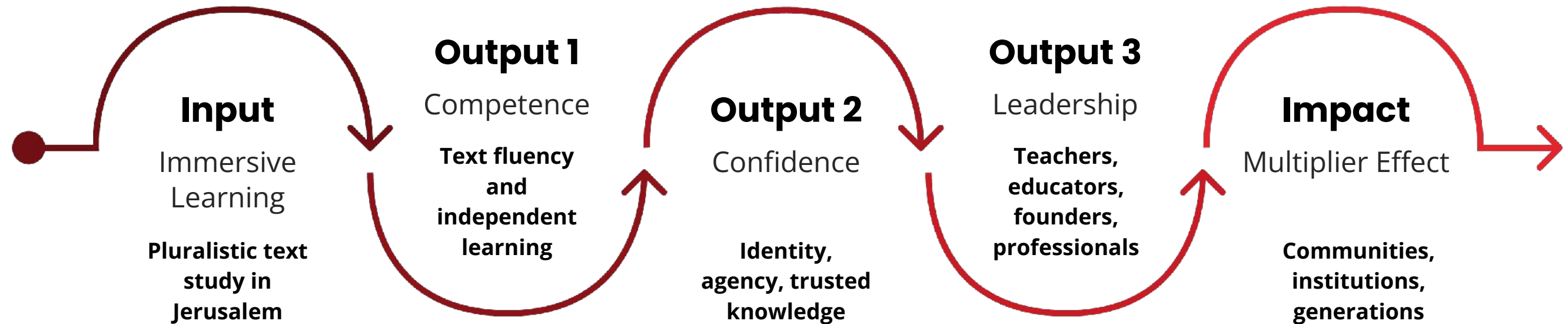
80% Continue regular Jewish learning years later

94% Say Pardes remains a trusted source of Jewish knowledge

These outcomes are not stages in a journey. Together, they illustrate the many ways Pardes alumni extend Jewish learning, leadership, and community influence far beyond their own experience.

The Pardes Model

Across decades and thousands of alumni, the same pattern appears repeatedly.



Serious Jewish learning does more than transmit knowledge. It develops the competence and confidence that enable alumni to lead and extend Jewish wisdom far beyond the beit midrash.

Why This Matters Now

The Jewish community faces an unprecedented convergence of challenges — each of which demands exactly the kind of leadership, literacy, and moral seriousness that Pardes helps cultivate.



Jewish Literacy & Confidence

Many Jews lack the confidence to engage deeply with Jewish texts and ideas. Pardes equips alumni for active Jewish life and leadership.



Leadership Gaps

A generation of rabbis, educators, and communal leaders is retiring. The pipeline of serious, text-fluent successors must be filled now.



Fragmentation & Polarization

Denominational divides and political polarization are accelerating. Pardes alumni are trained to build relationships across difference and navigate disagreement with nuance.



Israel Complexity

Navigating Israel with sophistication, nuance, and Jewish grounding requires exactly the textual and ethical toolkit Pardes develops.



Pardes provides the intellectual and moral infrastructure the Jewish world needs most right now.

Why Pardes Matters

The Jewish world needs more than learners. It needs people capable of transmitting Jewish wisdom to others.

Jewish Literacy

Building Jews with the confidence and fluency to engage deeply with Jewish texts, ideas, and tradition.

Leadership

Preparing educators, rabbis, founders, and communal leaders who strengthen Jewish life.

Continuity

Creating ripple effects that extend across communities, institutions, and generations.

For more than fifty years, Pardes has invested in people. This study demonstrates the return on that investment: knowledgeable Jews, confident leaders, stronger communities, and a multiplier effect that continues long after students leave Jerusalem.

The Evidence Is Clear

The true impact of Pardes is not measured solely by the people who study there, but by the thousands of lives those alumni go on to influence.

The 2026 Alumni Impact Study confirms what Pardes has always believed: immersive, pluralistic, rigorous Jewish text study is among the most powerful investments available in Jewish life today. The return is measured not in courses completed, but in leaders formed, communities strengthened, and Jewish futures secured.

Competence

Text fluency for life

Confidence

Leaders who can lead

Scale

Impact that multiplies

Appendix

This study employs a self-reported longitudinal design — alumni reflect on how Pardes shaped them over time. This captures genuine long-term outcomes rather than immediate post-program impressions.

We partnered with Research Success Technologies (Ezra Kopelowitz, Ph.D.) and Markowitz Consulting (Stephen Markowitz) — researchers with deep expertise in Jewish communal research — to design the study instrument and analyze findings.



760

Alumni Survey Respondents

Results in this report are derived from surveys from alumni respondents spanning five decades of programs.

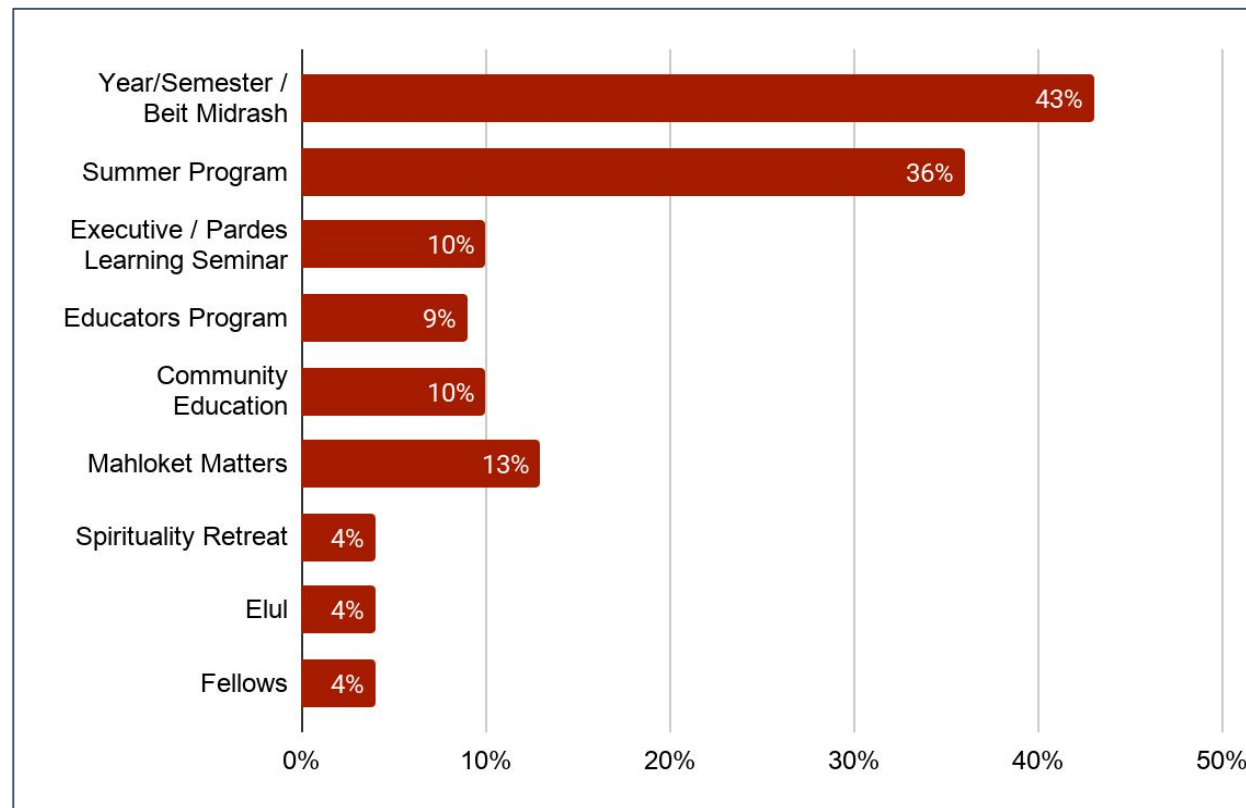
24

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with alumni nominated by Pardes for their continued leadership activity.

Programs Attended and Demographics

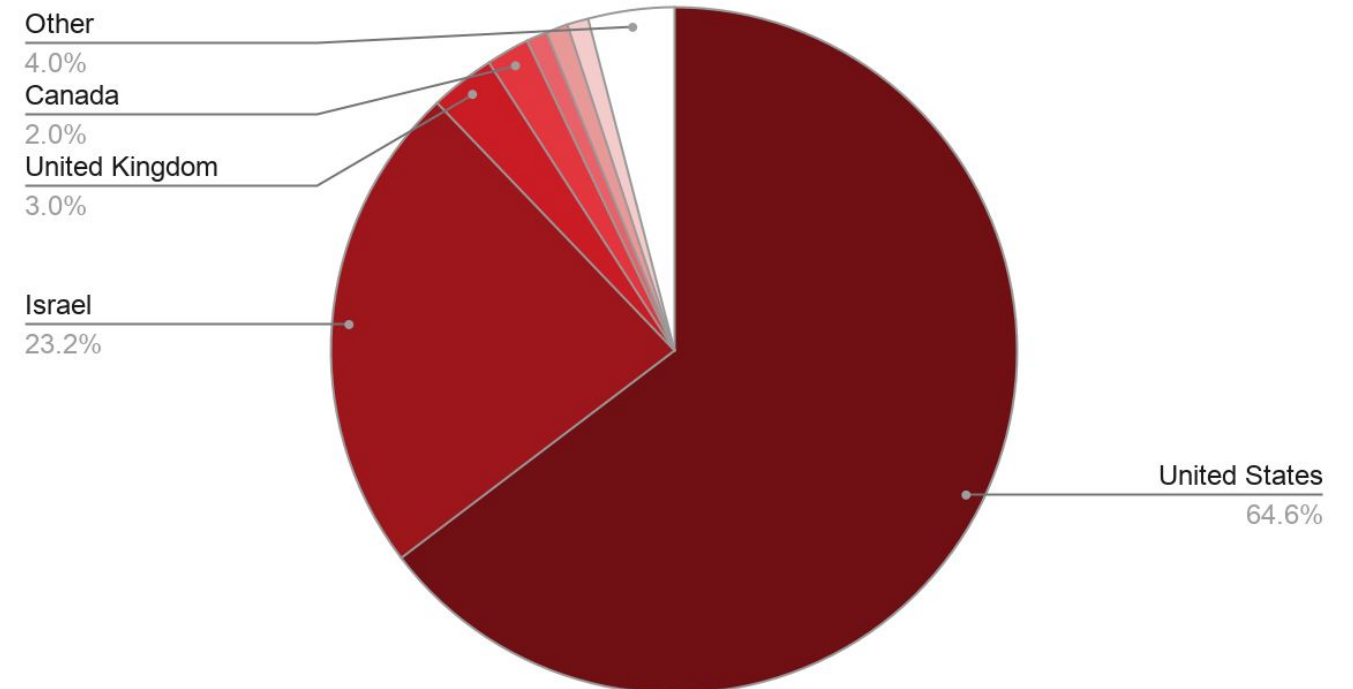
The Beit Midrash Program (Year/Semester) is the most widely represented, followed by the Summer Program and the Educators Program. Specialized offerings such as Mahloket Matters, PCJE, and Community Education round out a diverse alumni community. **Note:** because 75% of the respondents came to immersive programming the results have been skewed toward the experiences of immersive program alumni.



Alumni Demographics Snapshot

The respondent pool reflects the remarkable breadth of the Pardes community — diverse in age, geography, profession, and religious background, united by the shared experience of immersive beit midrash learning.

Geographic location of alumni responders



Additional Resources

The following documents are available for download or review.

[Full Survey Questions and Responses](#) Complete list of all questions administered to Pardes alumni in the 2026 Impact Study.

[Interview Archive](#)

24 in-depth alumni and stakeholder interviews conducted for the 2026 Impact Study.

[Research Success Technologies and Markowitz Consulting Study](#) A complete summary of the impact study's key findings and implications.