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How Do You Pardes?

PARDES WAS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS A HOME BASED, SYNAGOGUE SPONSORED, ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM. ITS APPLICATIONS HAVE EXCEEDED OUR EXPECTATIONS. PARDES GROUPS ARE FOUND IN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS, UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, HOMES, SYNAGOGUES, JCC'S, MILITARY BASES, PRISONS, OUTREACH AND SENIOR CITIZEN CENTERS.

WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU ARE USING THE MATERIAL.

PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO CALL US, TOLL FREE, AND TELL US HOW DO YOU PARDES?

war?



Introduction

I grew up in the sixties. In school, on television, in the newspaper, Viet Nam was all around us. I can remember when our next door neighbors, in Buffalo, NY flew a flag at half mast because their son was killed in action. War was bad. War meant death, misery and the suffering of innocent children. On campuses across the country there were anti-war rallies. Life magazine carried 11 x 17 shots of the unthinkable. I can remember a huge billboard challenging: Imagine they called a war and no one showed up.

Yet, when the sight of blood stopped staring me in the face I began to think more clearly. Would America be the wonderful country that it is if not for battle? Would the Nazi tyranny have stopped if it were not for World War II? Would the war have stopped if not for the bombing of Hiroshima? Would Israel exist if not for war? Will it continue to exist without a war?

The development of the world as we know it has evolved through war. The Torah tells us that even the wonderful, peaceful Messianic era will be ushered in through the war of Gog and Magog!

Yet, war brings with it the most tragic scenes in history. In the words of one of the great Talmudic rabbis: "We all await the period of time before the coming of the Messiah, yet I don't want to be there."

Rabbi Yaacov Haber

**MANY OF THE TOPICS INCLUDED
IN THE PARDES CURRICULUM
ARE FAR-REACHING AND HAVE
BROAD RAMIFICATIONS.**

**THE INTENT OF PARDES IS TO
PROMOTE SENSITIVITY AND
SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH
EXPOSURE TO A VARIETY OF
TORAH SOURCES.**

**IT IS NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW
OF PARDES TO ARRIVE AT
CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO
DECISIONS OF HALACHA.**

**PLEASE CONSULT YOUR RABBI
FOR PERSONAL DECISIONS.**

How would you respond?

<input type="checkbox"/> DOVE Open Borders Less Death Short Term Equal Rights Economic Prosperity Favorable World Opinion Peace	<input type="checkbox"/> HAWKS Secure Borders Less Death Long Term Our Land Self Sufficiency Respect Through Strength War will Lead to Peace
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- 1 Israel is on the brink of war. An election is taking place. The two platforms are clearly delineated. You have to vote.
- 2 Hold a mock election before and after Pardes learning discussion. Does the outcome differ?

It is customary to recite the following prayer before entering into a Torah discussion.

Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שלא
 יארע דבר תקלה על ידי ולא אכשל
 בדבר הלכה וישמחו בי חברי ולא אומר על טמא
 טהור ולא על טהור טמא ולא על מותר אסור
 ולא על אסור מותר ולא יכשל חברי בדבר
 הלכה ואשמח בהם. כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו
 דעת ותבונה. גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך.

May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that You illuminate my eyes with the light of your Torah and that You save me from all stumbling blocks and errors, whether it be in discussions of what is prohibited and what is permitted or in monetary matters, whether it be in any other Halachic decisions or just in theoretical study. I pray that I do not make any mistakes, and if I do, my study partners should not take delight in them. I pray that I should not proclaim the impure pure or the pure impure, the permitted forbidden or the forbidden permitted. I pray that I should not derive joy from the errors of my study partner. Open my eyes and allow me to see the wonders of Your Torah because it is from G-d that all wisdom comes forth, it is from His mouth that I will acquire wisdom and understanding. Amen.

Discussion Points

What is the difference between a Jewish soldier and a non-Jewish soldier? When a non-Jewish soldier shoots a gun, he is hoping that the bullet will find its mark. When a Jewish soldier shoots a gun, he is hoping that between the moment he pulls the trigger, and the moment the bullet hits, G-d will perform a miracle, and there will not have to be wars any more.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

1 To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die . . . a time to kill, and a time to heal . . . a time to love, and a time to hate . . . a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 Source, p. 15

2 The name of G-d is "Peace."
Shabbos 10b Source, p. 15

But...

3 "G-d is a man of war"
Exodus 15:3 Source, p. 15

4 When there is a great war in the world, the power of the Messiah is aroused. The time of song has arrived, the cutting down of tyrants, the wicked perish from the world, and the world is invigorated, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The individuals who are killed unjustly, in the revolution of the flood of the war, participate in the concept, "the death of the righteous atones." They rise above in the root of life, and the essence of their lives brings a general quality of good and blessing to the overall structure of the world, in all its values and senses. Afterward, at the cessation of the war, the world is

renewed in a new spirit, and the coming of the Messiah is revealed even more, for according to the extent of the war, in quantity and quality, so increases the expectation of the coming of the Messiah through it. The present world war (WWI - editor) is possessed with an awesome, great and deep expectation, attached to the changes of time, and the visible sign of the end, in the settlement of the Land of Israel. With great intellect, powerful courage, and piercing logic, with true longing and clear thought, we must receive the lofty content of the light of G-d that is revealed wondrously in the events of these wars. "Master of wars, sower of righteousness, producer of salvation, creator of cures, too awesome for praise, master of wonders who renews in his goodness daily the act of creation, let shine a new light on Zion, and let us all merit to receive its light."

Rabbi Avraham Isaac Kook, Orot, "The War" 1 Biography, p. 10

5 War is not a last resort. The purpose of war is to coronate G-d in this world. The purpose of war is to bring the world to a higher state of holiness and awareness. War is the underlying purpose of the Jewish people creating a government. It is with war that we will be able to usher in a messianic time, a time where we will know war no more.

Rabbi Goldvicht in Asafot Maarachot Parshat Vayera Source, p. 15

6 When G-d decrees that there must be war, and does not wish to annul the decree, then even the prayers of the righteous will not be able to stop it.

Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein, Torah Temimah, based on verse in Ecclesiastes 8:8 Source, p. 16

7 All conflicts and hostilities between nations are caused by G-d; human beings have no choice as to whether to wage war or not. The only choice of the individual is whether he will participate in the war or not.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Miktav M'Eiyahu, vol. 3, p. 70 Source, p. 16 Biography, p. 12

8 "When you wage war against your enemy..." – Remember that they are your enemy, and don't have compassion upon them, because they won't have compassion upon you. . .
Rashi, on Deuteronomy 20:1 Source, p. 17

9 Revolutions and upheavals in world history left so much destruction and desolation in their wake. Their goal and purpose is so that the nations of the world may attain the same understanding and love of G-d, and thus the same peace, which Israel has won for itself. Israel has already reached that goal, but the rest of mankind still has to be brought by means of the Divine struggle in history.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on Psalms 46 Biography, p. 13

10 At a time when nations should be acting brotherly G-d punishes one man for killing another. However, in a time of war? "a time to hate"? then it is the time to kill, and no one is punished for this at all. For this is the nature of the world from the time of creation.

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin, HaEmek Davar, Genesis 9:5 Source, p. 17 Biography, p. 11

11 Though it does not initially seem so, conflict – like all natural phenomena – is purposeful and constructive. Through the seemingly external necessity to confront one's enemy in battle, and often to even physically wrestle him (as Jacob with the archangel of Esau), previously opposite attributes subconsciously merge, thereby elevating one to a higher state of existence.

Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh, The Hebrew Letters, p. 113 Biography, p. 12

But...

12 Rabbi Nachman said: "Many foolish beliefs that people once held, such as forms of idol worship that demanded child sacrifice, etc., have disappeared. But, as of yet, the foolish belief in the pursuit of war has not disappeared." He used to ridicule certain scientists, saying: "What great thinkers they must be, what ingenuity they must possess to invent amazing weapons that can kill thousands of people at once! Is there any greater foolishness than this—to murder so many people for nothing?"

Chayei Moharan 546 Biography, p. 14

13 Religious intolerance is the cause of all wars. When the nations all call upon the name of one G-d, they will dwell in peace.

Abarbanel, on Isaiah 2:4 Source, p. 18 Biography, p. 12

14 It is forbidden to wage war against any person in the world unless you first offer him peace, be it a permitted war, or an obligatory one, as the verse says: (Deuteronomy 20:10) "When you approach a city to wage war against it, you shall call to them in peace."

Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Laws of Kings 6:1 Source, p. 19 Biography, p. 13

15 One must avoid all forms of war. Wars turn friends into enemies, and spread theft and violence. Even when the Israelites conquered the Land, they always sent messengers to proffer peace. According to the Midrash, this was Moses' idea, and G-d agreed. They even sent a peaceful messenger to the King of Edom, though they knew that he wouldn't listen. This was in order to teach a lesson to future generations.

Akeidah, Numbers 21:14

16 Wars only exist because G-d's Kingdom is divided. However, when this oneness is restored, the forces of evil will be dispersed.

Rabbi Moshe Chaim of Sedulkov, Degel Machne Ephraim, parashat BeHaloscha Source, p. 19

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the L-rd's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow up to it. And people shall say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the L-rd, to the house of the G-d of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the L-rd from Jerusalem... and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 2:2-4 Source, p. 20

Biographies

Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Kook (1865-1935)

The first chief rabbi of what was then Palestine, Rabbi Kook was perhaps the most misunderstood figure of his time.

Born in Latvia of staunch Hasidic and Mitrnagdic stock, he retained throughout his life a unique blend of the mystical and the rational. He was a thorough master of the entire Halachic, Midrashic, philosophical, ethical, and Kabbalistic literature. But more important, he brought to bear the entire tradition upon the contemporary scene. He saw the return to Eretz Yisrael as not merely a political phenomenon to save Jews from persecution, but an event of extraordinary historical and theological significance. Rabbi Hutner once said that Rav Kook peered down on our world from great heights and hence his perspective was unique.

Above all, Rav Kook pulsated with a sense of the Divine. And, he sought to reach those who had strayed. He once quoted the rabbinic dictum that one should embrace with the right hand and rebuff with the left and commented that he was fully capable of rejecting; but since there were enough rejecters, he was fulfilling the role of embracer. On the other hand, he was never tolerant of desecration of Torah, as will be clear to any objective student of his life and works.

Though keenly aware of the huge numbers of non-observant Jews, he had a vision of the repentance of the nation. His concept of repentance envisioned in addition to the repentance of the individual, a repentance of the nation as a whole; a repentance which would be joyous and healing. He refused to reject Jews as long as they identified themselves as Jews. In a noteworthy exchange with his great friend, admirer, and opponent, Rabbi Yaakov David Willowski, Rav Kook explained the two components of a Jew: his essential nature — the *pintele yid*, and the path he had chosen in exercising free will. Even if the second element were weak, as long as the first was not repudiated, there was still hope.

He called for and envisioned a spiritual renaissance where "the ancient would be renewed and the new would be sanctified." His vision of repentance disdained fear and apprehension and looked forward to "the poet of Teshuva, who would be the poet of life, the poet of renewal and the poet of the national soul waiting to be redeemed."

Perhaps he was that poet.

Rav Kook's printed works to date are in excess of 30 volumes with many works still in manuscript. There are a number of translations into English of a small fraction of his works. **M.G.**

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (The Netziv) (1817-1893)

The Netziv was Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva for almost 40 Years until it was closed by the Russian government in 1892. Founded by R. Chaim of Volozhin flourished, increasing from 100 to 400 students.

As a young man the Netziv was undistinguished, but by virtue of his extraordinary diligence grew to become one of the greatest scholars and leaders of his time. The prevalent method of Talmudic study was that of deep analysis of the sugya (topic) at hand. The Netziv's approach was to immerse himself in all the relevant passages from the entire Tannaitic literature, always striving to go back to the earliest Rishonim, who were closer to the Talmudic period. He believed only in this manner could the text being studied by properly understood. His approach was strongly encouraged by R. Dovid Luria.

The Netziv emphasized study of Chumash and Nach and gave a *shiur* on the weekly parsha every day after morning prayers. He was an early supporter of the Chovei Tzion movement and strongly supported the resettling of Eretz Yisroel. However, he was opposed to the selling of the Land for the Shemittah year. Contrary to the view of Rav Hirsch he opposed separate communities.

During the Netziv's time in Volozhin the Yeshiva produced great scholars, including R. Issur Zalman Meltzer, The Dvar Avrohom, Rabbi A. Shapiro, R. Avrohom Y. Kook, R. Moshe M. Epstein and R. Zelig R. Benges.

The Netziv's works include his famed commentary on the Sheiltos of Rabbi Achai, his Commentary on Commentary on the Song of Songs and Meishiv Davar, a collection of his responsa.

The Maskilim could not bear the success of the Yeshiva and constantly sought its demise. Their continuous barbs were noted by the government who demanded that the Yeshiva curriculum and hours of study be completely revamped. It is often said that the Yeshiva was closed because of the Netziv's refusal to permit secular subjects to be studied. The fact is that the government's demand were such that if adopted the Yeshiva would have totally lost its character. For example, one of the demand was that secular subjects be studied until 3:00 PM and that night study cease.

Left with no choice the Netziv felt compelled to close the Yeshiva. His entire existence was linked to the Yeshiva and after its closing his health began to decline. He passed away less than two years after the closing. His two sons were Rabbi Chaim Berlin and Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan. **M.G.**

Isaac Abrabanel (1437-1508)

Abrabanel was a remarkable figure combining within himself multiple talents including that of statesman, financier, Biblical Commentator, philosopher and protector of his people. He lived in the twilight years of the middle ages and his life and times reflected the transition between the middle ages and the modern period.

Abrabanel was born in Lisbon where he received a wide ranging education. In 1571 King Alfonso of Portugal captured 250 Jews in North Africa who were to be sold into slavery. Under the leadership of Abrabanel a huge ransom was provided to secure their release. He served as treasurer to King Alfonso until he was forced to move to Castile and eventually entered the service of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1484. Despite his political influence he was unable to prevent the expulsion in 1492 and refused the king's offer to remain at his post, choosing instead to throw in his lot with his people. He then lived in Naples, Corfu and finally in Venice, where he died. Most of his writings were composed in his later years when he was free of governmental responsibilities.

Abrabanel's commentaries on Tanach are unique and represent a fresh departure in the depth of his questions and analyses and the originality of his interpretations. All subsequent commentators must take note of his questions even if they do not agree with his answers. He did not believe that appointing a king was a mitzva and was a strong opponent of monarchy.

He wrote a famous commentary on Maimonides' Guide to the Perplexed which he admired greatly, though he did not hesitate to criticize that work. He wrote works on the Pesach Haggadah and Avos and several works on the Messianic period and the Messiah, and Rosh Amana, in defense of the Rambam's thirteen principles of faith.

He often bemoaned the excessive time he spent on worldly matters and in his last work, a letter written to Saul HaKohen in 1507 Abrabanel writes: "All these commentaries I wrote after I left my country. Before that, all the time was spent in the courts and palaces of the kings... my days in vanity and my years in getting rich- es and honor; and now these riches have perished... It was only after I had become a fugitive...without money, that I sought out the Book of the Lord... Therefore, I have limited myself to the contemplation of the Guide to the Perplexed and to the exposition of the Bible. These are the sources of all knowledge and in their wisdom all doubts and perplexities are dissolved." **M.G.**

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1891-1954)

Rabbi Dessler was born into a family steeped in the musar movement founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter and he remained a musar personality for his entire life. However, his thought went considerably beyond the ordinary concerns of other musar thinkers and he integrated other systems and confronted different problems as well.

Most of Rabbi Dessler's education took place at the Kelm Talmud Torah where his father had been an outstanding disciple of R. Simcha Zissel. The family resided

in Homel where Eliyahu had the opportunity to meet outstanding Chabad thinkers. In 1929, he became a rabbi in London and in 1941 accepted the directorship of the Gateshead kollel. Over the years, he became familiar with Kabbalistic and Hasidic thought, particularly the thought of Rabbi Zadok HaCohen and the Tanya.

His essays and letters have been collected in four volumes (several volumes under the title Strive for Truth have been edited and translated into English by Rabbi Aryeh Carmel). His topics include perennial questions such as free will and faith as well as contemporary problems in education, evolution and how to respond to the Holocaust.

His personal character and modesty complemented and affirmed his thought. On the last Sukkot of his life he visited the sukkah of the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish, upon seeing Rabbi Dessler, rose and rushed toward him. Not imagining that he was coming toward him, Rabbi Dessler turned to the door to see who the distinguished guest was that the Chazon Ish was so honoring. **M.G.**

R' Samson Rafael Hirsch (1808-1888)

The father of modern German Orthodoxy, he was a fiery leader, brilliant writer, and profound educator. His greatness as a Talmudic scholar was obscured by his other monumental accomplishments. After becoming chief rabbi and member of Parliament in Bohemia and Moravia, he left to revitalize Torah Judaism in Frankfurtam-Main which he transformed into a Torah bastion. His best known works are the classic six-volume Commentary on Chumash, noted for its tribulation was his formulation of a self contained system of Jewish thought.

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginzburg

Rabbi Yitzchak Ginzburg is a well-known lecturer in Israel on topics of Kabbalah and Chassidus. He has authored several books, and produced numerous cassette tapes. He is also the Rosh Yeshiva (spiritual head) of yeshivos in Chevron, Jericho, and in at the grave of the patriarch Yosef, in Shechem, that was recently destroyed by the Palestinians. **E.S.**

Rav Moshe Ben Maimon (The Rambam) (1135-1204)

Moses Maimonides is known as the greatest Jewish philosopher and codifier of Jewish law in history. Born in Cordova, Spain, he was forced to flee from fanatical Moslems at the age of thirteen, where he traveled with his family to North Africa, and ten years later to Palestine. As a result of the devastation left by the Crusaders, Palestine was virtually uninhabitable, forcing the family to move to Fostat (current day Cairo). Throughout these journeys, the young Maimonides had concentrated on Torah studies under the guidance of his father, and by the time he reached Fostat had become a famous scholar. Supported by his merchant brother, the Rambam was able to write copiously, gaining international acclaim in both Jewish and secular fields of knowledge. After the tragic death of his brother, the responsibility of supporting his

17.

Isaiah 2:2-4

ספר ישעיה פרק ב

- א. סדבר אשר חנה ישעיהו בו אמוץ על יהודה וירושלם:
- ב. והנה באחרית סגמים לכול יהנה סר בית יהנה פראש סהרים ונשא מגדעות ונחמו אליו כל סגזים:
- ג. והלכו עמים רבים ואמרנו לנו ונצלה אל סר יהנה אל בית אלהי נעקב וירנו סדברנו ונלכה פארחתיו כי סגזיו פאא תורה ודבר יהנה מירושלם:
- ד. ופעט פיר סגזים והוכים לעמים רבים ונחמו סרבותם לאמים ונחיתותיהם למזמות לא ישא גזי אל גזי וקרוב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה: