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PARDES PROJECT ON CAMPUS

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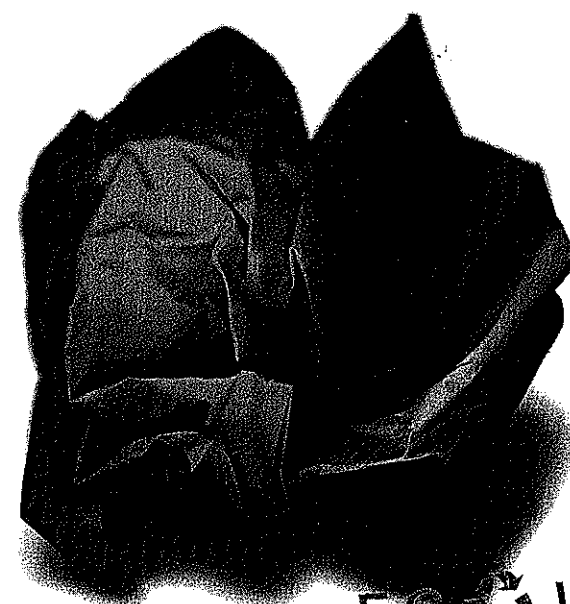
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PARDES PROJECT

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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.

i Rabbi Aryeh Levine recounted: "After Mincha (the afternoon service) my teacher (Rav Kook), as was his custom, set out on a walk in order to focus his thoughts. I accompanied him. On the way I plucked a flower. He trembled and said to me softly: 'Believe me, I have always been careful not to purposelessly pluck a blade of grass or a flower which could grow and develop; for there is no grass from below that does not have a Mazel (force from above) from above imploring it 'Grow!.' Each blade of grass says something, each stone whispers a secret, each creature utters a song."

—Malachim Kivnei Adam, Simcha Raz, pp. 239-240 Source, pg. 15

ii In 1993, over 1,670 scientists, including 104 Nobel laureates — a majority of the living recipients of the prize in the sciences — signed a "World Scientists' Warning To Humanity." Their introduction stated: "Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk the future that we wish for human society and the plant and animal kingdoms, and may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about." The scientists' analysis discussed threats to the atmosphere, water resources, oceans, soil, living species, and forests. Their warning: "we the undersigned, senior members of the world's scientific community, hereby warn all humanity of what lies ahead. A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

iii G-d took Adam "...and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate it and to protect it."
—Genesis 2:15

How Would You Respond?

1 The plans have been completed for the extensive construction project. The land has been purchased and the monies raised. The full team of workers are ready to begin. This success of this venture will virtually assure a bright future for your company, and a failure could be financially devastating. Suddenly you are advised that the project will play havoc on the local environment, with a particularly destructive effect on certain endangered waterlife in the region.

2 You promised your children a jungle gym for Chanukah. As the winter thaws and your plans begin to develop you realize that your limited yard space can accommodate the play set only if a tree, several bushes, and a flower bed are removed. One child suggests that your reluctance to order the jungle gym is because it is too expensive. Another child suggests that you are simply too sensitive to the “life wish,” of tulips, and insufficiently sensitive to the “play wish,” of your children.

It is customary to recite the following prayer
before entering into a Torah discussion:
Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110

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.

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
יכשלו חברי בדבר הלכה
ואשמח בהם. כי הי' יתן
חכמה מפיו דעות ותבונה.
גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות
מתורתך.

Points for Study

1 When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man, He took him and had him pass before all the trees of the Garden of Eden, and said to him: "Do you see My handiwork, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created was created for you. Be careful not to ruin and destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you."

Koheles Rabbah, 7:28
Source, pg. 15

2 Even things you see as superfluous in this world — like flies, fleas, and mosquitoes — are part of the greater scheme of the creation of the world, as the verse says (Genesis 1:31), "And G-d saw all that G-d has created, and behold it was very good." Rabbi Acha bar Rabbi Chanina said, even things you see as superfluous in this world — like snakes and scorpions — they are part of the greater scheme of the creation of the world.

Midrash Exodus Rabbah 10:1
Source, pg. 15

3 Not yours is the earth, but you belong to the earth, to respect it as Divine soil and to deem every one of its creatures, a creature of G-d, as your fellow being. Consider the things around you. I lent them to you for wise use only; never forget that I lent them to you. As soon as you use them unwisely, be it the greatest or the smallest, you commit treachery

against My world, you commit murder and robbery against My property, you sin against Me!" This is what G-d calls unto you....

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Nineteen Letters;
Fourth Letter and Horeb 56
Biography, pg. 10

4 Everything is full of riches and greatness, everything aspires to ascend, to be purified and to be elevated. Everything recites a song, offers praise, magnifies, exalts; everything builds, serves, perfects, elevates, and aspires to unite and to be integrated...

The realization dawns on us that were it not for the lower beings, the uncouth and the unseemly, the higher beings could not have emerged in their splendor, their esteem and their luminous quality. Thus, we continually become more conscious of the integration and unity of existence.

Rav Abraham Isaac Kook, 20th Century Palestine;
Orot Hakodesh II: 386, 431
Biography, pg. 10

5 *"Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it; have dominion over...every living thing..."*

Genesis 1:28
Source, pg. 16

On the other hand...

6 G-d took Adam "...and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate it and to protect it."

Genesis 2:15
Source, pg. 16

7 The two verses represent two aspects of the nature of human beings which are in a constant

state of tension...there is unavoidable dynamic tension between the capacity to exercise control over nature and the duty to act toward nature with a sense of fiduciary responsibility.

Rabbi J.B. Soleveitchik, *Lonely Man of Faith*,
Tradition 7:2, pg. 10-16
Biography, pg. 12

8 *You must not destroy trees by wielding an axe against them; for you may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Only trees which you know not to be fruit bearing trees, may you destroy and cut down...*

Deuteronomy 20:19
Source, pg. 16

9 ...unless the value of the wood is greater than the value of the fruit.

Bava Kama 91b
Source, pg. 17

10 ...unless the destruction is for protection of health

Talmud Shabbos 128b
Source, pg. 18

11 ...unless you have a personal aesthetic preference

Talmud Shabbos 140b
Source, pg. 19

12 ...unless it is for the gratification of personal psychological need.

Talmud Shabbos 105b
Source, pg. 20

13 ...unless it is an expression of anger and therefore serves as a catharsis

Tosafos to Talmud Kidushin 32a
Source, pg. 21

14 Rav Chisda said: "When one can eat barley bread and eats wheat bread he violates bal tashchit (Do not destroy!)" Rav Papa says: If one can drink beer and drinks wine he is also in violation of this verse! (Wheat and wine are more extravagant). But this is incorrect. 'Do not destroy!' as applied to oneself is more important. *(In other words reasonable use and enjoyment of this world is permissible, even if extravagant. Ed.)*

Talmud Shabbos 140b
Source, pg. 19

15 The raven said to Noah, "great is your hatred for me! There are only two ravens in the world, a male and a female. If the power of heat or cold overwhelms me, would not the world be lacking a species?"

Talmud Sandhedrin 108b
Source, pg. 22

16 The Torah doesn't permit a killing that would uproot a species, even if it permitted the killing [of individuals] in that species. And here, the one who kills the mother and the child on the same day...it's as if that person has made that species extinct.

Nachmanides, *Commentary to Deuteronomy. 22:6*
Biography, pg. 13 Source, pg. 23

Source Biography

Rabbi 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 Frankfurt-am-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. His many books and lengthy sermons formed the basis for much of the significant writings of succeeding generations. Among his many erudite works were: *Novellae* on Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah; *Gur Aryeh* on the Torah; *M'er haGolah Derech Chaim*; *Netzach Yisrael*; *Nesivos Olam*, etc. —A.S.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen 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 Mitnagdic 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, philosophic, 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 pulsed 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 embraced. 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 Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993)

Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik was born into a family already known for its great Torah learning. His grandfather and father, emphasized a thorough analysis of Talmud, and it is in this way that Rav Soloveitchik studied and taught his own students. He was awarded a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin, and then settled in Boston in the early 1930's. He became the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva University, and gave weekly shiurim to senior students, while delivering philosophy lectures to graduate students. His accomplishments in both Halachic study and secular study made him a unique Torah personality to Torah scholars all over.

His limitless expertise in and appreciation of secular disciplines never lessened his total devotion to Torah study. Indeed Torah study was the central focus of his life and his teachings. His public historic shiurim in memory of his great father, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, and his public shiurim between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur organized by the Rabbinical Council of America known as Kinus T'Shuva, were attended by thousands of Torah students from all groupings in the Torah community. Thus he was one of the leaders of the generation.

He never engaged in pejorative or invectives when speaking of non-orthodox Jews. He was polite and respectful to others. Yet he was firm and inflexible in protecting and advocating the Mesorah of Torah tradition. His ruling, written by him, that one is not allowed to pray in a house of worship that violates Halachic standards even if it would result in not fulfilling the Mitzvah of Tekiath Shofar is an illustration of his strong stand on Torah and Mesorah.

This can also be seen from his opinion that while dialogue with non-Jewish faiths may be necessary, it may not deal with theological topics. This was a historic principle which guided his disciples in all their dealings with non-Jewish clergy, and continues to this very day.

His teachings and shiurim are responsible for literally thousands of men and women in the educational and academic community today.

—F.S.

Rabbi Moshe Ben Nachman (1194-1270)

Besides the Rambam, the Ramban was probably the greatest and most influential of the Rishonim. Born in Gerona, he remained there most of his life. Like the Rambam, he was equally distinguished in both Halacha and Hashkafa. His contributions to scholarship covered every area: his Talmudic commentaries combined the French school of analysis with the Spanish emphasis on halacha and every word he wrote was scrupulously examined in all of Spain; he wrote major works defending Alfasi against the critique of Baal HaMaor and Ravad and Bahag against Rambam's criticisms of his classification of mitzvos; he wrote masterful works of halacha such as Toras HaAdam on the laws of death and mourning including a philosophical section, Shaar HaGmul; he committed to writing derashos he had given on fundamental topics such a Rosh Hashana, Koheles and Torah; he wrote an account of his public disputation in Barcelona with the convert Pablo Christiani in 1263; he composed poetry, but probably the most popular of his works is the Commentary on Chumash which he modestly directed to "calm the minds of those weary of galus, studying on Shabbos and Moadim."

The Commentary is multi-dimensional including all methods of interpretation from simple pshat to esoteric Kabbala. The Ramban is not satisfied with explaining the verse at hand; he is concerned with the overall structure of the various chapters and their interconnections. Many of his explanations have become basic principles of Judaism. The Commentary is available in English translations.

The Ramban held that the mitzvah of settling Eretz Yisrael applies even today and ultimately settled there himself during the last years of

his life. When he arrived in Jerusalem there was hardly a minyan and he wrote that “what had been the most sacred is now the most desecrated.” He organized a minyan and erected a synagogue.

Over the centuries his view on the mitzvah of settling the Land has been most influential. He also held that even mitzvos which were obligatory outside of the Holy Land did not achieve the level of shleimus as when performed within Eretz Yisrael. Looking back at the chaotic state of the Land during the periods of non-Jewish control, the interpreted Leviticus 26:32 as promising that Israel's enemies will be unable to settle the Land. As part of the mitzvah of settling the Land he included the admonition “that we not forsake the Land to others of the nations” (Numbers 33:53).

Recognizing the anguish people experience in everyday life without apparent explanation, he composed a major Commentary on the Book of Job.

—M.G.

Sources

 Bereishis Rabbah 10

ח"ר סימון חין לך כל עשב ועשב, שאין לו מזל ברקיע שמכה אותו,
ואומר לו גדל

 Koheles Rabbah, 7:28

א נ"גן ראה את מעשה האלהים כי מי יוכל לחקן את אשר עותו. בשעה שברא הקב"ה את
אדם הראשון נטלו והחזירו על כל אילני גן עדן ואמר לו ראה מעשי כמה נאים ומשובחין
הן וכל מה שבראתי בשבינך בראתי. הן דעתך שלא תקלקל וחחריב את עולמי. שאם

 Midrash Exodus Rabbah 10:1

א ויאמר ה' אל משה בא אל פרעה. אם מאן אתה לשלח הנה אנכי נוגף וגו'. הה"ד (קהלת ה)
ויתרון ארץ בכל הוא. וכל המדרש כמו שכחוב בויקרא רבה ובזאת חוקת התורה. רבותינו
אמרו מהו ויתרון ארץ בכל היא אפילו דברים שאתה רואה אותן כאלו הם מיותרין בעולם
כגון זבובים ופרטושים ויתושין הן היו בכלל ברייתו של עולם שנאמר (בראשית א) וירא
אלהים את כל אשר עשה, ורבי אחא ב"ר חנינא אמר אפילו דברים שאתה רואה אותן כאלו
הן מיותרין בעולם כגון נחשים ועקרבים הן היו בכלל ברייתו של עולם. אמר להן הקב"ה
לנביאים מה אתם סבורים אם אין אתם הולכין בשליחותי וכי אין לי שליח ויתרון ארץ
בכל היא אני עושה שליחותי אפי' ע"י נחש אפילו ע"י עקרב ואפילו ע"י צפרדע. תדע לך
שכן שאלולי הצרעה היאך היה הקב"ה פורע מן האמוריים. ואלולי הצפרדע היאך היה
פורע מן המצריים הה"ד הנה אנכי נוגף וגו'.

