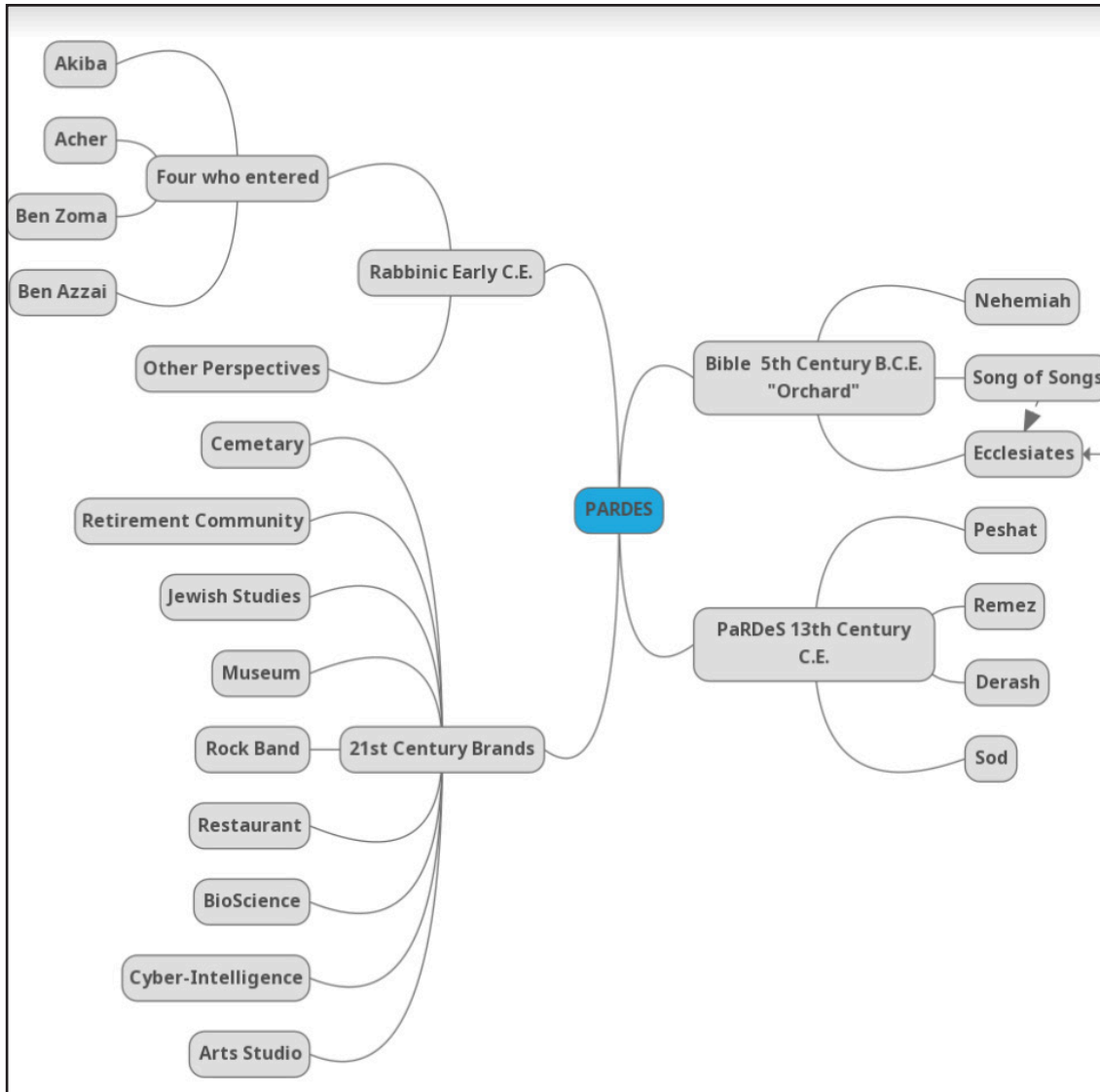


Introductory Chapter

From an orchard/garden to a Paradigm



From an orchard/garden to a Paradigm

This mind-map illustration traces the transition from *pardes* as a luxurious garden or orchard to a “loan-word” in Hebrew bible, then to the rabbinic tale of four who entered *pardes*, then to an acronym for a four dimension mode of interpretation, and most recently use in 21st century brand names.

Seeing *pardes* as a paradigm not only allows us to mine the experience of each of these stages, but to explore the richness of approaching *The PaRDeS Paradigm: A Guide to Multi-Dimensional Thinking*

What is a Paradigm?

A paradigm refers to a framework of beliefs, values, and practices that defines how a group or individual interprets and interacts with the world. The term is often used in philosophy, science, and social sciences to describe a set of assumptions or ways of thinking that guide research, problem-solving, or behavior. It can also be applied to religious and spiritual belief

Origin of the Term

The word “paradigm” comes from the Greek “paradeigma,” meaning “pattern” or “example.” It was popularized in modern times by philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn, who used it to describe the set of practices that define a scientific discipline at any particular period of time. Kuhn also highlighted "paradigm shifts" when circumstances change established understanding.

What is the PaRDeS Paradigm?

"PaRDeS" assimilated into the Jewish Experience and Hebrew Scriptures from ancient Persia in the 5th Century B.C.E., was embedded in the Talmud in the early first century, became an acronym in the 12th/13th century, and is being used as part of brand names in the 21st century. In each phase, Pardes is a paradigm of response to circumstances in which the people were living, and as an overall Problem-Solving Multi-Dimensional Approach.

In its earliest occurrence, the Biblical Pardes paradigm is based on singular uses of the word "Pardes" in each of the books of Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, reflecting political, philosophical and sensual approaches to life respectively. This biblical pardes paradigm will be treated in these pages as "Hebraic Consciousness" as differing from "Greek Consciousness" and "Rabbinic/Talmudic Consciousness".

In its Talmudic phase, pardes is the spiritual experience of "the four who entered Pardes" : Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher (Elisha ben Abuyah), and Rabbi Akiva. The results of the experience we are told are:

Ben Azzai looked and died.
Ben Zoma looked and was struck (went mad).
Acher cut the plantings (became a heretic).
Rabbi Akiva entered in peace and departed in peace."

The exact nature of this Talmudic Pardes Paradigm is indeterminate, with speculation about mysticism and other life altering practice. Within these pages, the focus will be a paradigm of facing the future and the unknown, as well as the life of Rabbi Akiba as sharing the nature of a paradigm.

What Is the PaRDeS as an acronym Paradigm?

The PaRDeS acronym Paradigm is a framework built on the concept of multi-layered paradigms for interpretation. The PaRDeS acronym Paradigm is a method for interpreting Jewish texts, especially the Torah and mystical writings like the Zohar on four levels of interpretation:

Peshat (Simple): *The literal meaning*

Remez (Hint): *The allegorical or symbolic meaning*

Derash (Inquiry): *The homiletic or interpretive meaning*

Sod (Secret): *The mystical or hidden meaning*

The Pardes Paradigm in the 21st century is both a “brand name” and business philosophy.

Finally, The Contemporary Brand Name Pardes Paradigm represents an interesting variety of organizations and entities who have incorporated Pardes into their brand names.

Pardes in the 21st century is both a “brand name” and business philosophy.

Among the entities that use Pardes in their brand name are:

A designated wall in a Jewish museum

a cemetery,

a retirement home,

a publishing house in Israel,

A publication of a German Jewish students organization

an unconventional synagogue,

an international Jewish studies program,

an art studio,

A residential area in Israel known for being an artist colony.

a rock band,

A restaurant and a catering hall

a bio-science company,

and a program to leverage the ‘learning’ skills of the Israeli Yeshiva student in the cyberspace and intelligence sphere of information technology companies and the Israeli government.

How Paradigms Relate to PaRDeS

Paradigm as a Foundation: Each level in PaRDeS represents a different paradigm—a distinct way of seeing and interpreting the text.

Framework for Thinking: PaRDeS is a framework that organizes these paradigms, allowing interpreters to move between literal, symbolic, interpretive, and mystical perspectives.

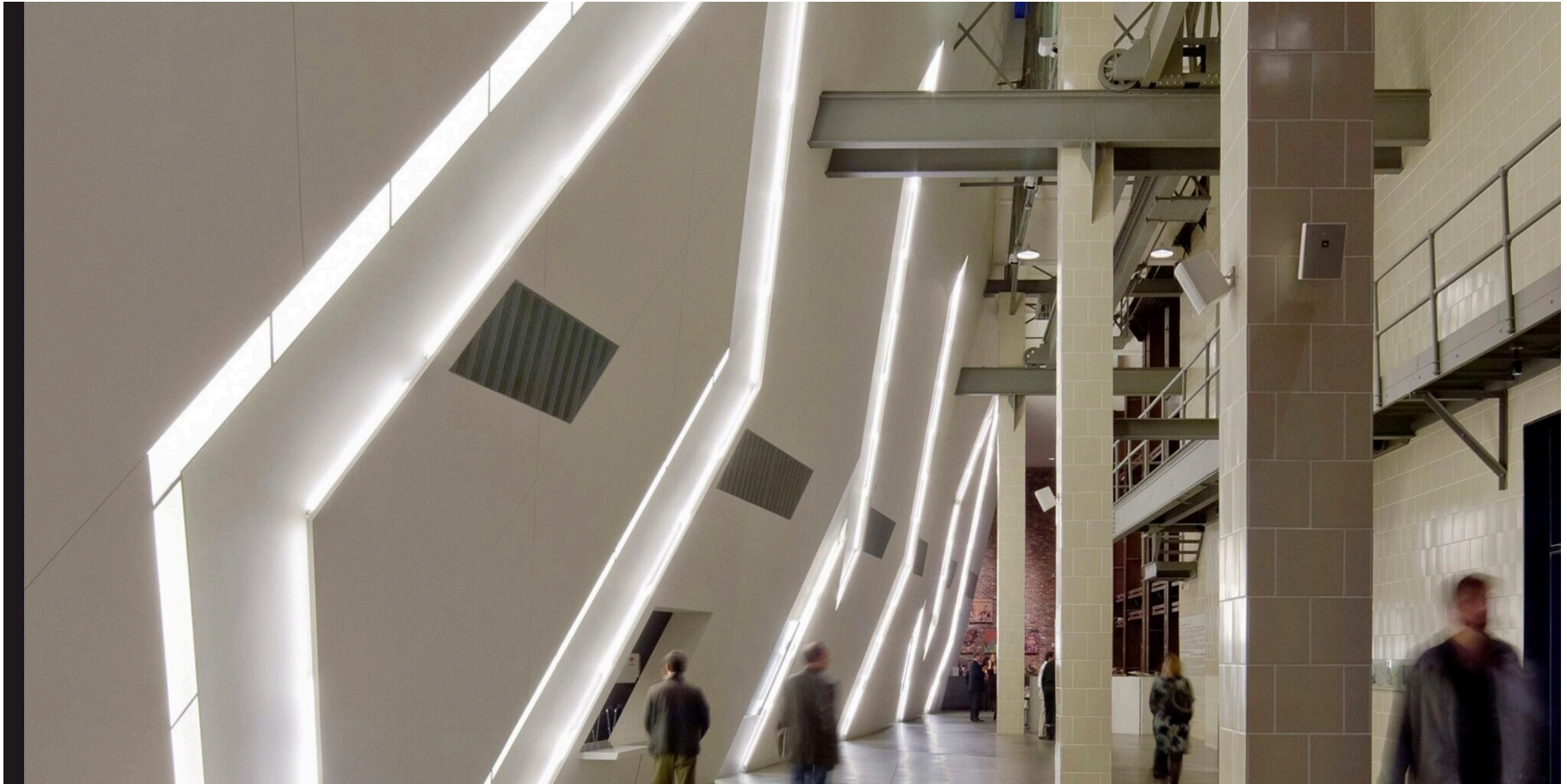
Multi-Dimensional Understanding: The PaRDeS Paradigm encourages multidimensional thinking, demonstrating that no single paradigm is sufficient for a comprehensive understanding; instead, each offers unique insights.

Personal and Creative Growth: By engaging with multiple paradigms, individuals can expand their creativity and personal transformation, as suggested in works like “The PaRDeS Paradigm: A Guide to Multi-Dimensional Thinking.”
In Summary

PaRDeS Origin and Contemporary Expression: The PaRDeS Paradigm reveals how this ancient Jewish methodology offers a blueprint for resilience, innovation, and personal reinvention. Explore its journey from biblical times through Rabbinic thought, Kabbalah, and its surprising manifestations in 21st-century brands and problem-solving initiatives.

Paradigms are the building blocks of frameworks like PaRDeS: The PaRDeS Paradigm is a framework built on the concept of multi-layered paradigms for interpretation. The relationship between paradigms and frameworks, such as the PaRDeS Paradigm, centers on how we organize and approach understanding complex subjects—especially in areas like Jewish mysticism and scriptural interpretation. The PaRDeS Paradigm is a structured way to apply different paradigms to deepen understanding, foster creativity, and encourage holistic interpretation.

Entering into the experience of the PaRDeS Paradigm through standing at the Pardes wall of the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco



<https://apeirodesign.com/projects/contemporary-jewish-museum/>

Apeiro Design (formerly Auerbach Pollock Friedlander) implemented Daniel Libeskind's design (seen to the right) for the Pardes Wall pictured above, an angled installation of lighted Hebrew letters which spans nearly the full length of the original 1907 Jessie Street Power Substation. Together, these letters - Pei-Reish-Dalet-Samekh- form the acronym PaRDeS, and can be read on this wall shown above from right to left.

A wall plaque relates: "The symbolic significance in the idea of PaRDeS is reflected in the Museum's goals to create an environment for exploring multiple perspectives, encouraging open-mindedness, and for acknowledging diverse backgrounds."

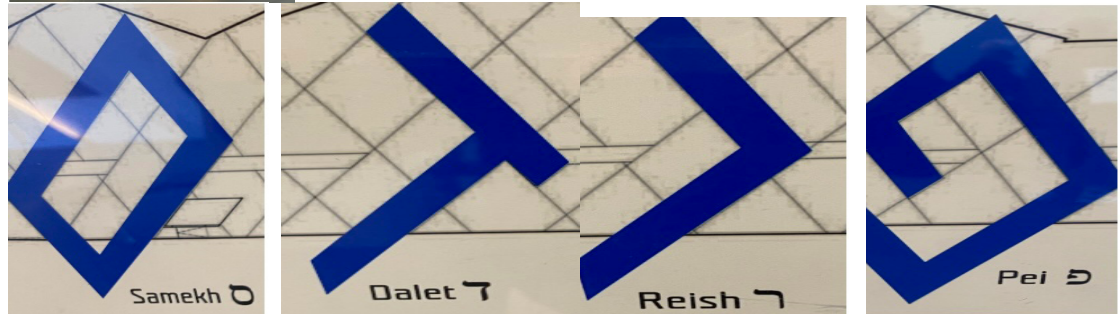


The Alphabet of Multi-Dimensional Thinking PaRDeS (read right to left)

Top row - Pardes wall letters



2nd row - letters on a plaque



“Since the Middle Ages, interpreters of the Kabbalah- Judaism’s tradition of mystical wisdom -believed that every scriptural text has at least four levels of meaning, which create a path to comprehending the divine.”

Sod - “secret” or mystical meaning.

Drash - “to inquire” or “to seek”, or the allusive or moral meaning.

Remez- “hints” or allegorical meaning.

Pshat - “plain” or literal meaning.

PaRDeS represents one of Judaism’s most sophisticated contributions to hermeneutics—a four-level approach to meaning that transcends its original biblical context to offer a universal model for deep interpretation.

S - Sod - Secret/
Mystery

Mystical and metaphysical readings. Hidden structures and cosmic significance. The ineffable and paradoxical. The text as window into ultimate reality

D - Derash - Interpretation/
Inquiry

Ethical and existential application. What the text demands of the reader. Homiletical and moral dimensions. The text as mirror and guide.

R - Remez - Hint/
Allusion

Symbolic connections and patterns. Intertextual echoes and resonances. What the text points toward beyond itself. The realm of allegory and typology.

P - Peshat - Simple/
Plain
Meaning

The literal, surface-level understanding. Historical and linguistic context. What the text says on its face. The foundation upon which all other readings rest.

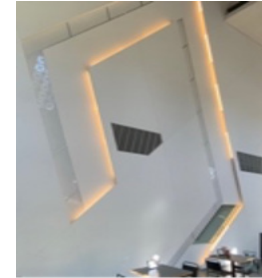
Applying the PaRDeS Paradigm to the Pardes Wall space as suggested by a wall plaque “to create an environment for exploring multiple perspectives, encouraging open-mindedness, and for acknowledging diverse backgrounds”

In Jewish thought and spiritual psychology, the framework of Pardes (PaRDeS) can be applied as a deeply effective tool for managing anxiety about future change and uncertainty. Integrating insights from Jewish mindfulness, resilience studies, and contemporary therapeutic approaches, it provides a multilayered way of understanding and responding to fear of the unknown.

Imagine standing in front of each of the PaRDeS letters, reading these suggestive labels and then pausing in thoughtfulness.

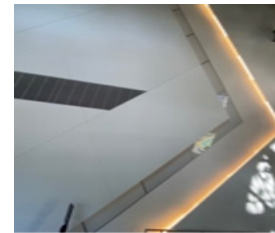
Peshat (Literal Layer):

This level grounds awareness in the present moment—what is concretely real. In response to anxiety, practicing “peshat consciousness” resembles mindfulness-based approaches that emphasize sensory grounding, breath work, and attentional awareness of the “here and now”.



Remez (Symbolic Layer):

Anxiety often arises from uncertainty’s ambiguity. The remez level invites interpreting experiences symbolically rather than catastrophically—seeing uncertainty as opportunity for insight or transformation. Modern therapeutic work on uncertainty tolerance shows that reframing threats as sources of creativity strengthens emotional resilience.



Derash (Ethical/Learned Layer):

On this interpretive level, we explore meaning through narrative and ethical discourse—linking current fears to collective or ancestral stories, as found in Torah or communal memory. Research shows narrative integration enhances emotional stability by connecting personal stress to broader human experience.



Sod (Mystical Layer):

The mystical dimension encourages cultivating awe, trust, and surrender to divine coherence beyond rational control. This parallels the “being mode” in Jewish contemplative practice, where letting-go and acceptance restore calm energy for renewed engagement with change.



Pardes

Its Origin Story

In this chapter “**From an orchard/garden to a Paradigm**” the focus is on the “facts” of the transition of pardes to PaRDeS that establishes both pardes as a series of paradigms within a larger more organic “PaRDeS Paradigm”

As we examine the origins of pardes, we need to be conscious of the explicit references to the persian orchard/garden in the Tanach, the Hebrew Scriptures. This connectivity is all but lost in both the Talmudic story about the four who entered pardes. Then there is little known about the expansion of pardes into the acronym PaRDeS.

What is as yet unstudied is the phenomena of 21st Century entities’ absorption of pardes in their self-descriptions or brandnames. That one is able to gather such a to be studied list is reflective of our information age, just as the other pardes paradigms are reflective of their circumstances.

As we progress through this present day and historical pardes paradigms, computer resources such as Google and A.I. platforms will be resourced to explore the topic of this book: **The PaRDeS Paradigm: A Guide to Multi-Dimensional Thinking**

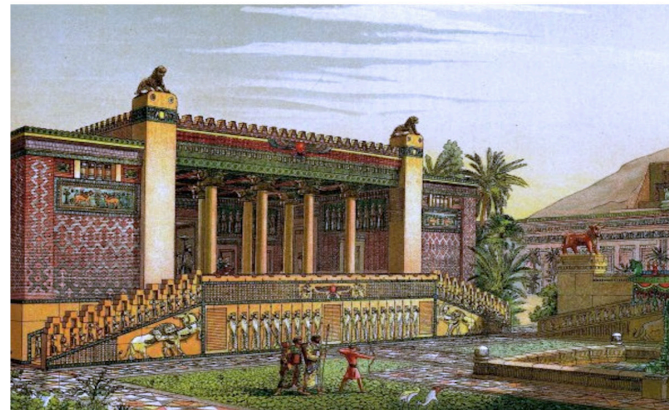


Persian Garden History

Persian garden holds roots in the 6th BC when Cyrus The Great, who ruled over a vast territory, determined the plan of the ancient garden of Pasargadae and ordered it to be constructed at Pasargadae (close to Shiraz province). In fact, the Persian garden plan, its elaborate architecture, and the presence of natural elements originated from Cyrus’ notions. The purpose of the Persian garden was to provide physical and spiritual relaxation. So, it is true to say that it was during the Achaemenid Empire that the idea of an earthly paradise came into reality.

The idea of the Persian garden has influenced the design, decoration, and description of other works of art, such as Persian carpet, pottery, calligraphy, music, and poetry. Among all these, Persian carpets are a great illustration of Persian gardens. There are many carpet designs that take inspiration from the Persian garden, so perhaps it is better to refer to the carpet as a flat Persian garden full of trees, flowers, and birds. <https://irandoostan.com/>

Achaemenid paradise gardens





Pardes derives from a Persian garden, a masterpiece of landscape architecture known for its symbolic design and harmonious setting. These gardens are often enclosed, symmetrical, and divided into four parts by waterways, a layout called the chahar bagh (“four gardens”). They are designed to represent an earthly paradise, with a key focus on water, shade from trees like cypress and fruit trees, and fragrant flowers.



Miniature 15 century painting of a Persian bagh

The term paradise derives from old Persian pairi [around] daeza [wall brick or shape]. Composed in one word it means walled- in garden or compound.

It was introduced in European languages through Greek when Xenophon translated it to paradeisos. The Persian tradition of building enclosed gardens with rectangular water basin and odorous plants stems from the royal Achmenide tradition of the enclosed hunting grounds of lions which was a ritual practice enforcing their divine –royal authority.



Pardes entered our consciousness with the Persian Ruler Cyrus freeing the people from Babylonian domination.

“The Persian imperial masters preferred to exercise control through indigenous priestly classes, whenever possible, rather than through puppet kings. It was, therefore essential that the newly restored Israelite community not only recognize this fact, but take advantage of the opportunities which a hierarchically run society opened up for them. Priestly hegemony as proclaimed by the Pentateuch was thus a far more viable solution than a dogged persistence in hoping for a monarchical restoration, especially in view of the miserable record that the kings of Israel and Judah earned for themselves during the years of independence and quasi-independence.”

“The Pentateuchal-Aaronide priestly mutation proved to be a virile and durable strain. For more than two hundred years, the Aaronides exercised effective and creative leadership. They far excelled prophets and kings in making a Yahwistic society work. They had that very rare capacity for sustaining economic prosperity, exercising firm authority and encouraging a high degree of intellectual and spiritual creativity. For though the Aaronides phased out the prophets, they gave free rein to Psalmists, purveyors of Wisdom (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Ben Sira), and profound explorers of the human condition (Job).”

Ellis Rivkin “Lessons from the past: Mutations as a mode of Jewish survival”

In Hebrew “pardes” means orchard, while the notion of Heaven is rendered by the phrase Gan Eden (Garden of Eden). However, when the Tanach was translated into Greek, the translators used the word Paradise (deriving from the Persian Parade-sha), from which there was a backward linkage to the Hebrew word “pardes”.

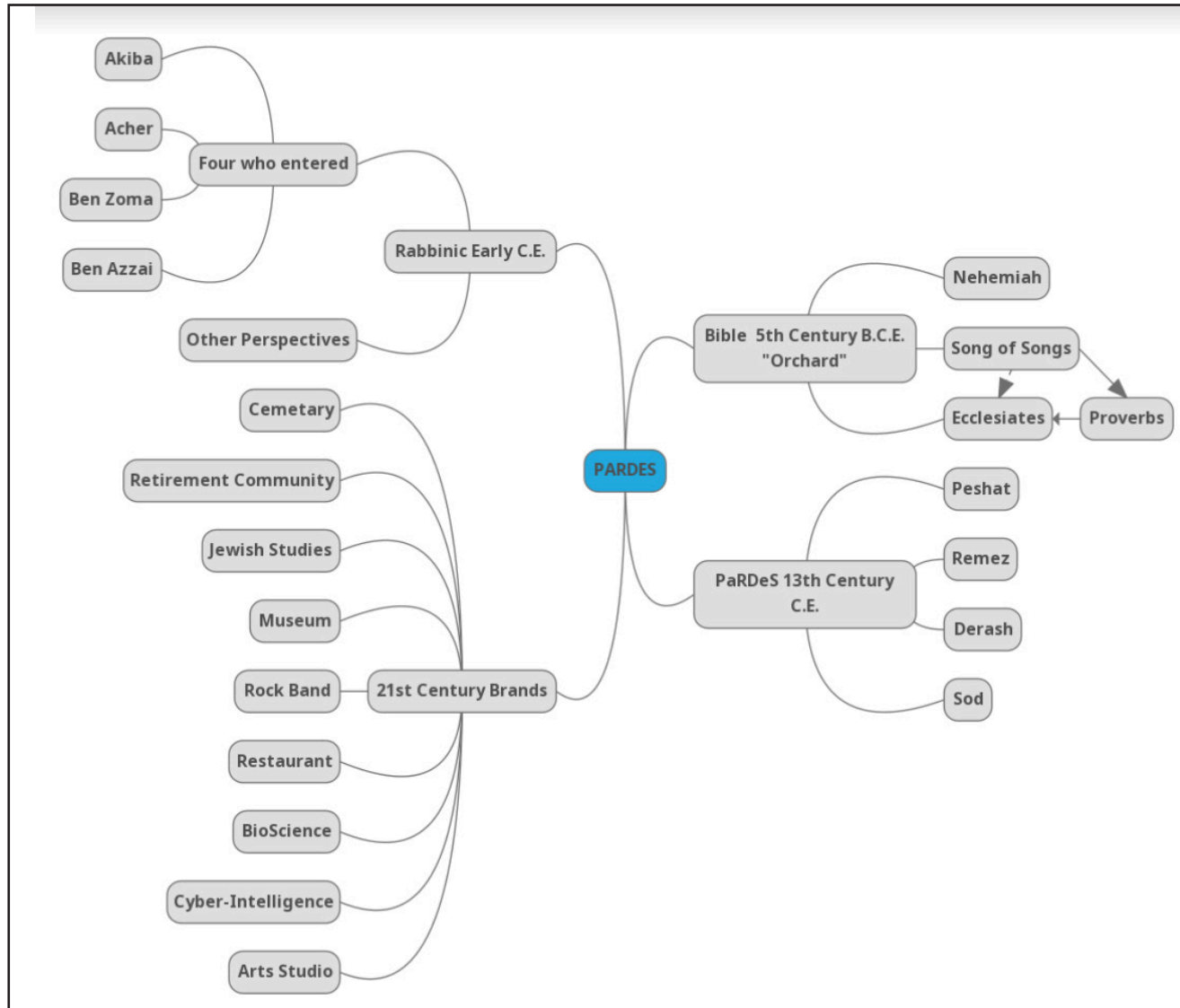
Thus, the notions of Pardes and Gan Eden, originally different, came to explain or amplify each other. The dangers associated with Gan Eden [the angel with the flaming sword] were transferred upon the Pardes and the dangers associated with the Pardes were transferred upon Gan Eden: both came to represent dangerous ideals and idea dangers.

The Pardes story thus became the story of Paradise. It became a common effort of medieval commentators to explain what happened in Paradise by means of the Pardes story. But the connection operated in the opposite sense as well. Entering the Pardes became one and the same thing with entering Paradise, i.e. returning to the primordial place and implicitly to the original state.

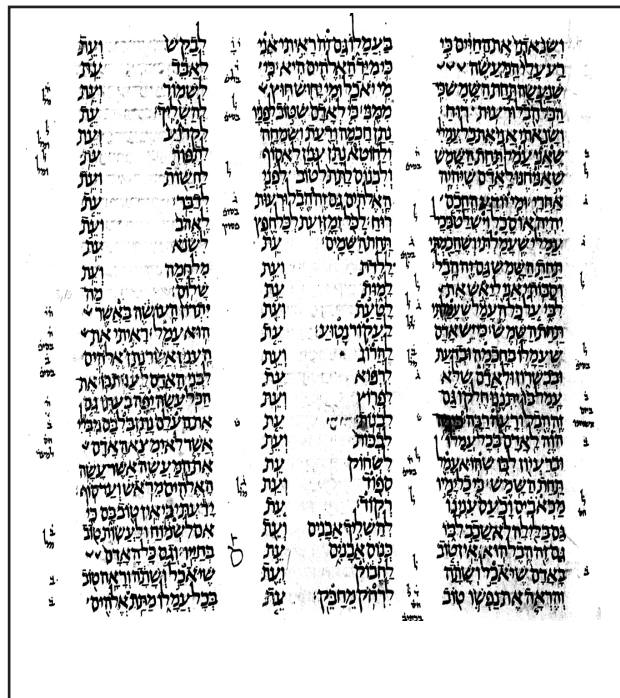
Edenic Paradise And Paradisal Eden, Moshe Idel's Reading Of The Talmudic Legend Of The Four Sages Who Entered The Pardes. Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies, 6, 18(Winter 2007): 79-87 Felicia Waldman

As we turn from the origin story of pardes to the appearance of the word pardes but three times in Hebrew Scripture, the Persian experience was for the people a period of political stability, freedom of thought, and a Persian Garden/Orchard sensuality.

From a pardes, to the bible, to a Talmudic story, to four levels of interpretation, to 21st century brand names, becoming a Paradigm



Pardes in the Hebrew Bible

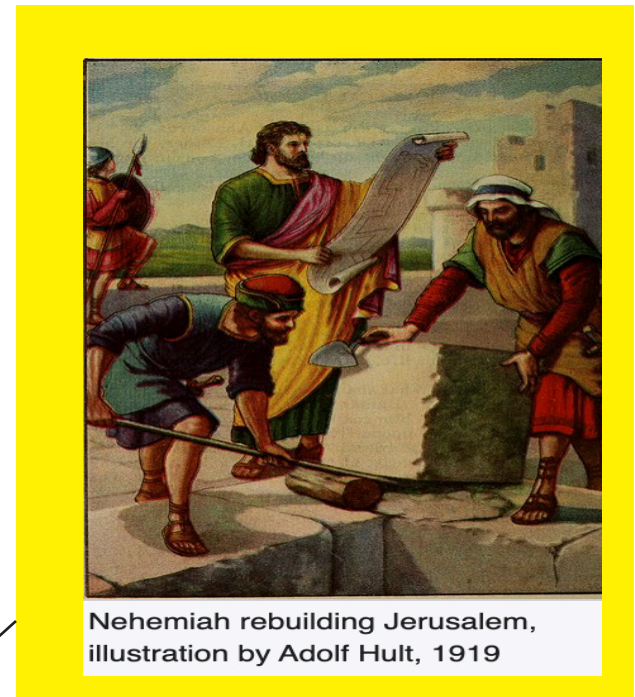


Ecclesiastes - "For Everything there is a Season"

פָּרְדֵּס n. [m.] preserve, park (loan-word from Zend *pāri-daēza*, enclosure, Spieg Haug in *Ew* ^{Jahrb. v. 182 f.}, cf. Spieg ^{Avesta i. 293.}; Pers. پالیز, *pālēz* Lag ^{Ges. Abh. 75, 211}, Kurd. *parēs* Nö ^{ZMG xxxvi (1882), 182}; hence Arm. *partēz* Lag ^{Arm. Stud. § 187^s}, late As. *pardāsu* Meissn ^{ZA vi. 290}, Ar. فِرْدَوْس ^{Ar. Stud. § 187^s}; Gk. *παράδεισος*; cf. also DI ^{Pa 95 ff.} Di ^{Gn 2, 8}); — נֶפֶשׁ Ne 2⁸ (containing trees); cstr. פְּרִדִּים רְמוּבִים Ct 4¹³ (fruit-trees and costly plants); אֵץ פְּרִדִּים Es 2⁵ (+ גִּבּוֹת).

Brown-Driver-Briggs Bible Dictionary

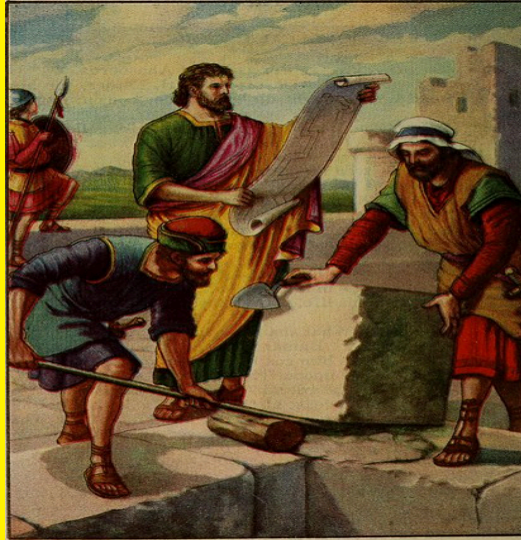
Scholars commonly cite roughly 304,805 words for the standard Masoretic Text (Tanakh) in Hebrew, "pardes" only appears 3 times



Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem, illustration by Adolf Hult, 1919



Song of Songs 4:13 Your thighs shelter a pardes of pomegranates with rare spices with nard



Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem,
illustration by Adolf Hult, 1919

Nehemiah

Nehemiah, along with Ezra led the people as they readjusted to being back in their homeland. The verse indicates his role in the rebuilding required, and his management of the royal Pardes or gardens.

Nehemiah 2:8: "A letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's **pardes**, directing him to give me timber to make beams for the gates of the temple fortress, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy."

The Book of Nehemiah:

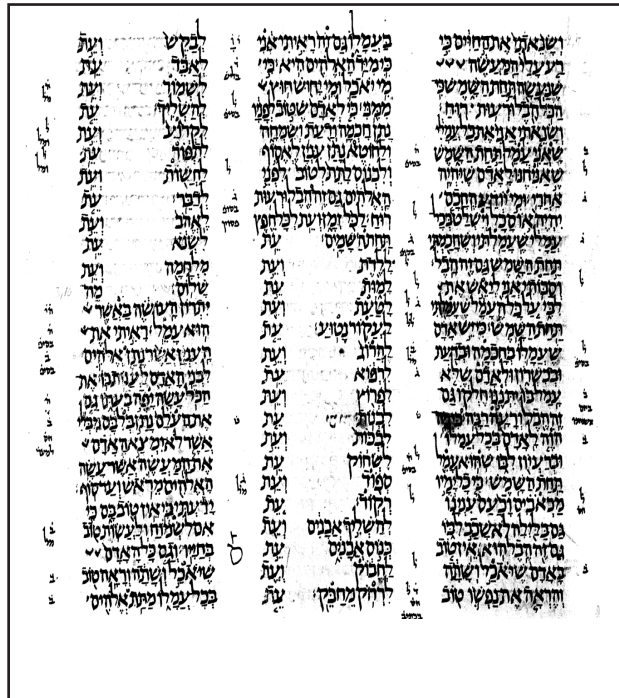
This text embodies a collective, national, and restorative form of Hebraic consciousness. It demonstrates:

Historical Consciousness: History is viewed as a meaningful, covenantal arena for God's relationship with Israel. The national confession in chapter 9 retells this entire history.

Covenantal Identity: The community's identity is reaffirmed through the public reading of the Torah (Nehemiah 8) and the renewal of the covenant (Nehemiah 10).

Integrated Life: There is no split between sacred and civic life; political leadership, urban planning (rebuilding the wall), and spiritual reform are interwoven.

Communal Responsibility: Justice is a communal task, as seen when Nehemiah enforces the Sabbath and stops the oppression of the poor.



Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes is portrayed as an elderly affluent, former ruler, who reflects on his achievements while advising the reader to enjoy life.

The parades verse Ecclesiastes 2:5 reads: "I made myself **pardesim** and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees." The verse indicates his ability to use his wealth and position to create and use more than one Pardes.

Kohelet relentlessly focuses on earthly life, work, aging, pleasure, toil, death — not the afterlife.

God is acknowledged but feels distant, enigmatic — divine justice is uncertain, and life appears random.

Kohelet famously says: "There is nothing new under the sun" (1:9) — time is cyclical, repetitive, and seemingly meaningless.

Kohelet critiques both hedonism and wisdom, but ends by affirming that enjoyment of simple things (food, drink, work) is the best we can do—a kind of secular holiness.

Kohelet starkly faces death as the great equalizer—wise or foolish, rich or poor, all go to Sheol. No clear afterlife theology.

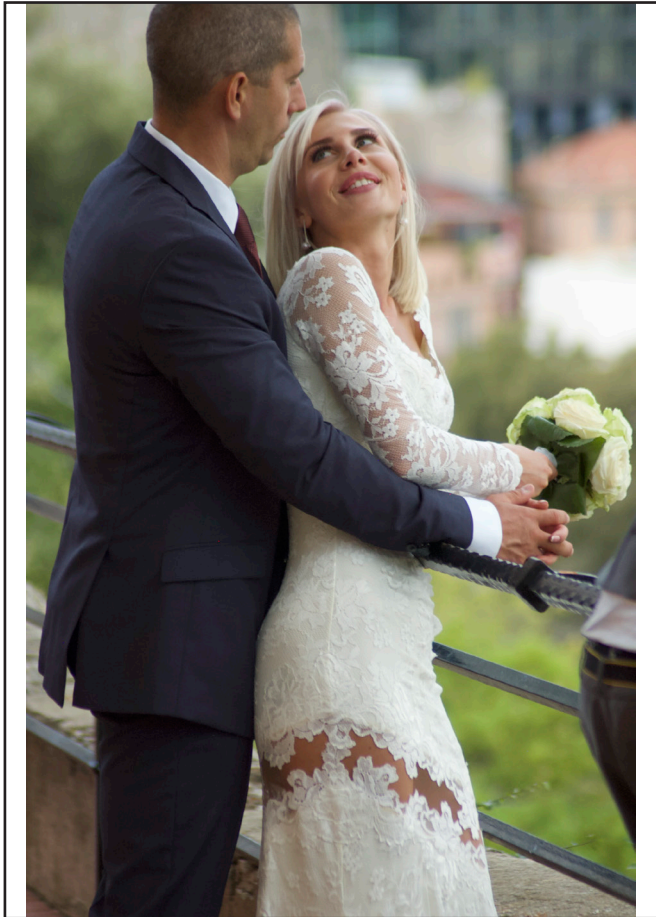
Kohelet questions wisdom's value, calling it "hevel" (vanity/breath) — yet still sees it as better than folly. A tension.

Song of Songs

Ecclesiastes shares Rabbinic tradition attribution to the royal King Solomon with Song of Songs. Our Pardes verse 4:13:

"Your channel is an **pardes** of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard..." or

4:13 "Your thighs shelter a **pardes** of pomegranates with rare spices– henna with nard" -



The Song of Songs:

This book is presented as a radical example of embodied Hebraic consciousness.

Embodied Experience: It prioritizes concrete, sensory life, filled with vivid physical imagery of scents, gardens, and desire.

Holistic Integration: Erotic love is celebrated as part of creation, demonstrating the lack of a sharp divide between sacred and secular.

Relational Covenant: The mutual longing of the lovers ("I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," 6:3) serves as a metaphor for the divine-human covenant, framed as desire rather than duty.

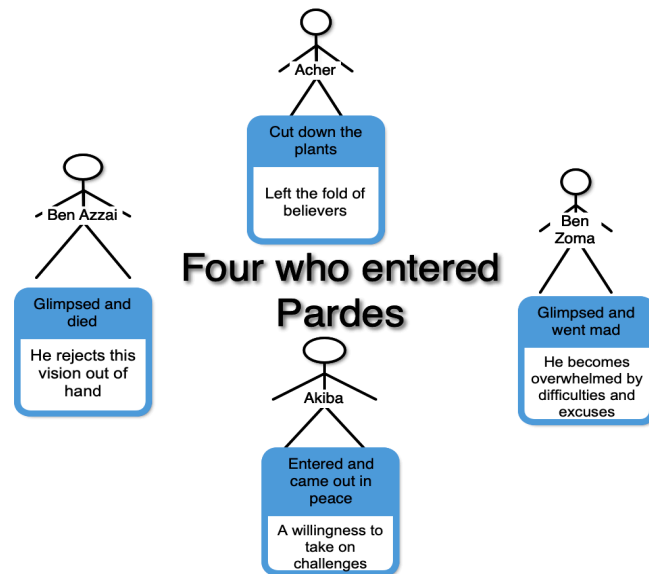
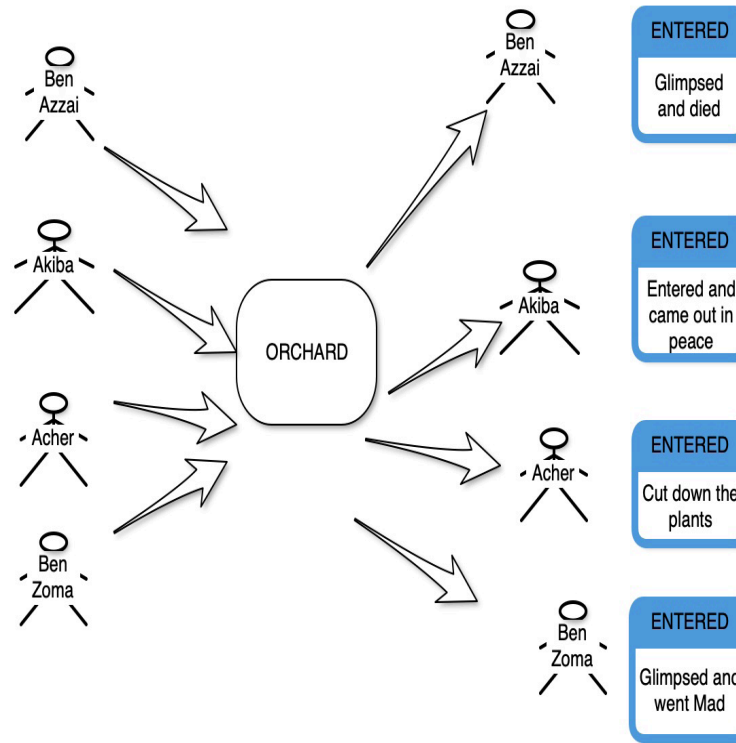
A Talmudic story about entering an orchard.

There is much speculation about the nature of that orchard and the experience of each who entered. Here is one of several versions of the account:

Four entered the orchard — Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher, and Rabbi Akiva. Ben Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma looked and went mad; Acher destroyed the plants; Akiva entered in peace and departed in peace.

Orchard

Look to the top illustration “Four who entered the orchard” Using the illustrating ‘language’ of computer programming, let’s analyze this passage. Using stick figures to represent each of the four, we create a two-level box for each. One level of the box shows the action “entered” for each of the four, and the innermost box we use for the nature of the reaction of each of the four.



Considering the extent of the impact of the experience on Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma, this was not just any orchard. What would cause glimpsing and dying, or glimpsing and going mad? The description of Acher is strange to us, but it does seem like a negative response! Only Akiba’s was a non-negative experience. So what gives?

Pardes - A broader pass

Look at the 2nd diagram to the left and note a few differences: The orchard is now labeled Pardes, the action is each of their responses, and actions become more descriptive: Acher has left the fold of believers, and Akiba’s faith remains intact and his leadership is enhanced. Ben Azzi rejects the experience, and Ben Zoma is overwhelmed by it.

Four entered Pardes — Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher, and Rabbi Akiva. Ben Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma looked and went mad; Acher destroyed the plants; Akiva entered in peace and departed in peace.

Pardes is more than just an ordinary orchard or garden. A common explanation for Pardes in this context is mysticism, mystical speculation, an elevated spiritual state. Think beyond rational imagination. To best understand the implications of Pardes, think of an LSD or drug-induced state of mind. Think of facing into the unknown future, or perhaps the unexamined past.

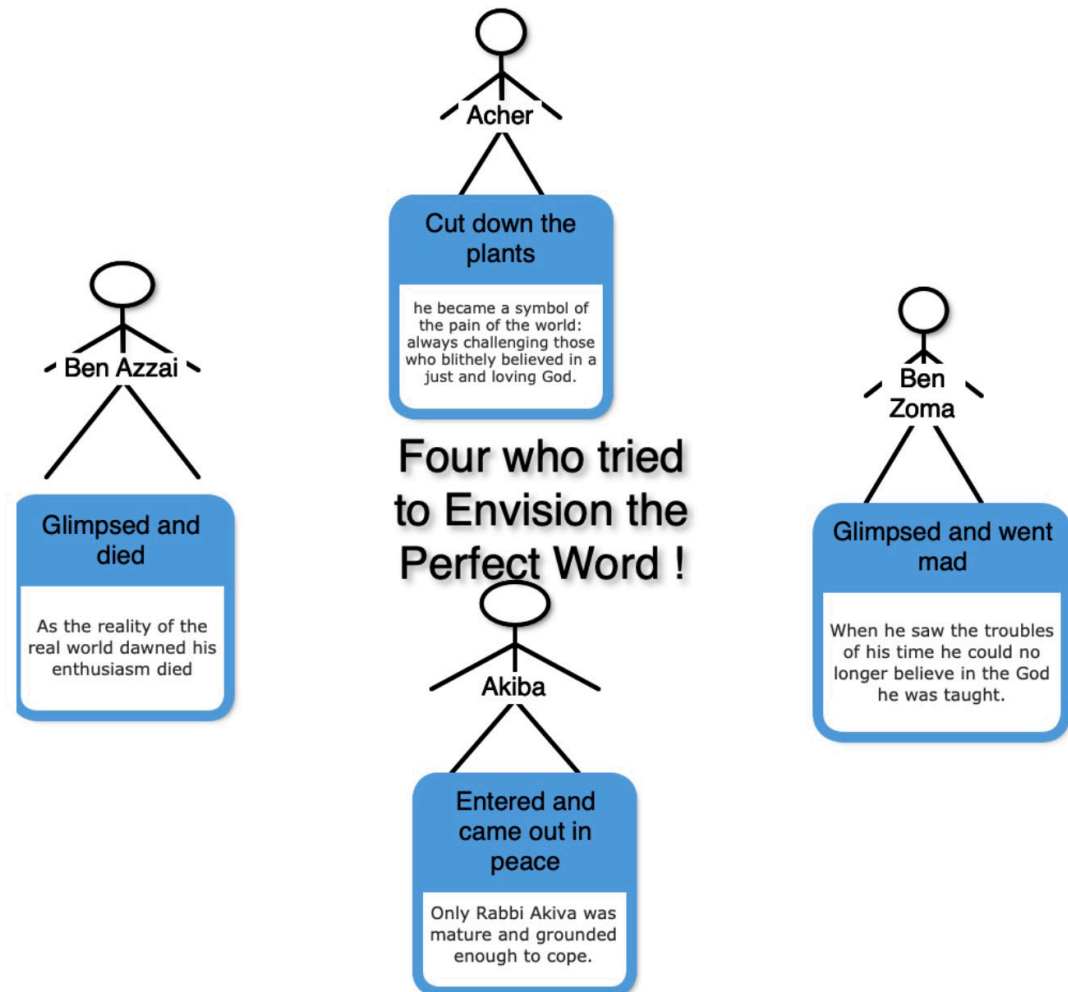
Think of PARDES as a structured space to explore the possible! A paradigm in which we can safely experiment understanding the risks.

The challenge is transforming the Paradigm of entering Pardes into a model of productively facing the future. From the adverse reactions of three of the four, we must learn to prepare ourselves.

In a sermon, Rabbi Dr. Andrew Goldstein suggested another interpretation of entering Pardes:

“But what if it was Paradise... meaning that the four tried to envision the perfect world and then were forced to compare it with the world in which they lived. And this examination proved a great trial of their religious faith. In many ways, their world had many of the challenges of ours today.”

(<https://www.liberaljudaism.org/2018/09/four-rabbis-entered-paradise/>)



That entering Pardes can be quite an upsetting experience is witnessed by these words of the psychologist Abraham Maslow:

“We are generally afraid to become that which we can glimpse in our most perfect moments, under the most perfect conditions, under conditions of greatest courage. We enjoy and even thrill to the godlike possibilities we see in ourselves in such peak moments. And yet we simultaneously shiver with weakness, awe, and fear before these very same possibilities.”

We must learn to own up to our possibilities as we daily face our futures.

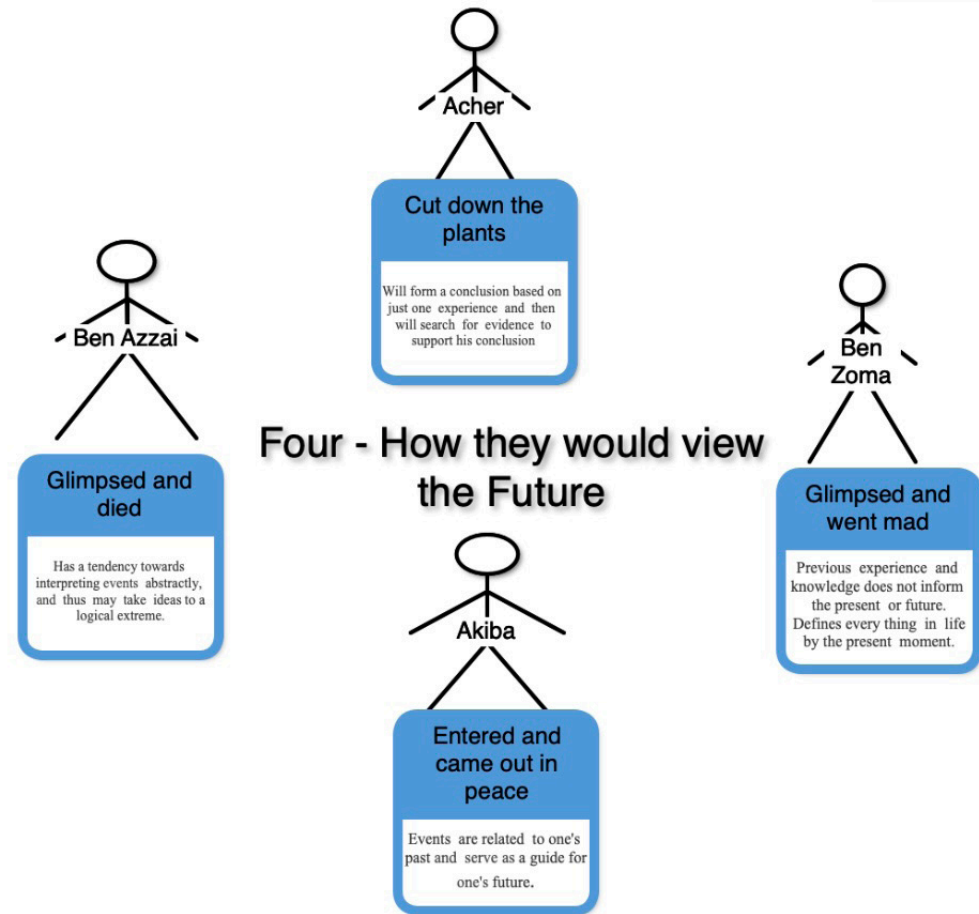
A contemporary health professional's perspective:

We have identified four paradigms that we have identified based on the "four who entered" are:

Ben Zoma- This type of person interprets events with a synchronic orientation. Previous experience and knowledge does not inform the present or future. This type of person also continually reinterprets the past so that it conforms to currently-held opinions, so that the person sees life as an undifferentiated totality. This is reflected in how the person defines every thing in his or her life by the present moment.

Ben Azzai - This type of person has a tendency towards interpreting events abstractly, and thus may take ideas to a logical extreme. However, while the person's ideology may be extreme, his behavior often contradicts that ideology, which he justifies through a sense of personal exemption. This person also has little to no interest in social involvement.

Aher- This type of person will form a conclusion based on just one experience and then will search for evidence to support his conclusion, without considering other possibilities. Interpretation for this person serves merely as a justification for his personal view. This person's social involvement tends to be antagonistic.



R. Akiva- This type of person interprets events in a manner that is consistent with his traditional narrative, and that narrative serves to provide a positive outlook with a moderate conclusion. He also interprets experiences in a diachronic manner so that events are related to one's past and serve as a guide for one's future. His social involvement is conciliatory.

The Four Who Entered the Pardes and the Study of PTSD, Ira Bedzow, Faculty Member New York Medical College, Journal of Torah and Medicine of the Einstein College of Medicine Synagogue and the Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Volume V, Pages 223-224

The challenge is transforming the Paradigm of entering Pardes into a model of productively facing the future.

Workshop Title: Pardes: A Future-Oriented Workshop on The Four Who Entered Pardes

A forward-facing, experiential workshop that uses the Talmudic vignette of the four who entered Pardes (Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Elisha ben Abuyah, Rabbi Akiva) as a symbolic laboratory for responding to future shock, technological disruption, and rapid cultural change. Participants map personal and communal thresholds, prototype adaptive practices, and produce visual midrash that functions as a navigational tool for uncertain futures.

Transforming a narrative of risk into a framework of growth, creativity, and future-readiness

The classical story (Hagigah 14b) describes four figures—Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher, and Rabbi Akiva—entering the mystical orchard (PaRDeS). Traditionally it's framed as a warning. But in a future-oriented, experiential, Hebraic model of creative emergence, each “outcome” can be reconceived as a positive developmental trajectory.

Four Positive Developmental Channels

Inspiration (Ben Azzai) -Outcome Archetype: The Visionary.

Cognitive Expansion (Ben Zoma) - Outcome Archetype: The Explorer of Mind.

Creative Disruption (Acher) - Outcome Archetype: The Necessary Heretic / Sacred Disruptor.

Integration (Akiva) -Outcome Archetype: The Integrator.

Ben Azzai — Ecstatic Ascent → Radical Inspiration Channel

Classical: “He gazed and died.” Positivized: He touched pure inspiration, unmediated. Teach participants to access pure inspiration safely, with grounding practices.

Ben Zoma — Overwhelm → Cognitive Expansion & Meta-Learning

Classical: “He looked and was harmed” (lost mental equilibrium).

Positivized: He expanded beyond known categories. This is the frontier where innovation, paradigm shifts, and prophetic imagination occur.

Acher (Elisha ben Abuyah) — Transgression → Creative Deviance & Boundary-Breaking

Classical: “He cut the shoots” (apostasy). Positivized: He becomes the necessary innovator who challenges inherited paradigms. Acher embodies the Disruptive Innovator Pathway—the creative friction without which tradition stagnates.

Rabbi Akiva — Safe Entry & Safe Return → Integrative Leadership

Classical: “He entered in peace and left in peace.” Akiva is the Integrative Master Pathway—the ideal of Hebraic Consciousness:moving between worlds, integrating inspiration, reason, rebellion, and peace.Present Akiva not as “perfect,” but as the trained traveler of inner worlds.

Origins of PaRDeS - The four levels of interpretation.

“He who constantly occupies himself with the Torah is compared by the Psalmist to “a tree planted by streams of water” (Ps. 1,3). just as a tree has roots, bark, sap, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit, seven kinds in all, so the Torah has the literal meaning, the homiletical meaning, the mystery of wisdom, numerical values, hidden mysteries, still deeper mysteries.

(Zohar, Parsha Balak, Page 202a the Zohar Volume 5, Soncino Press 1934)

Moses de León was the first to use Pardes as an acronym for these four methods of interpretation. In his responsa he writes, “[A]s I explained in my book which I called Pardes,[a] and the name Pardes by which I called it is a known concept that I disguised. The four approaches within its name are the ‘four which entered into the orchard,’ i.e. **peshat and remez and derasha and sod,**” (Wikipedia)

From Kabbalah Online a traditional presentation of PaRDeS

פֶּשֶׁט	Peshat: often inaccurately translated as literal, it comes from the root which means simple, although <i>peshat</i> is sometimes anything but simple! <i>Peshat</i> correctly means the intended, explicit meaning.
רֵמֵז	Remez: alluded meaning (reading between the lines). Remez in modern Hebrew means hint. Traditionally, remez referred to methods such as <i>gezera shava</i> (equivalent language implying equivalent meaning) and <i>gematria</i> (word-number values)
דֵּרַשׁ	Derash: Homiletical or interpretative meaning. The word 'midrash' is from the same root. The <i>drash</i> is an interpretation that is not explicit in the text.
סוֹד	Sod: (lit. secret). The mystical or esoteric meaning.

What makes PaRDeS a paradigm ?

PaRDeS functions as a structured way of seeing and acting in the world: four complementary lenses—Peshat, Remez, Derash, Sod—applied in sequence or dialogue to any text, event, artwork, or life decision. As a paradigm, it:

- Organizes inquiry:** Start with the plain sense, notice hints, compare/interpret broadly, then consider hidden dynamics. This scaffolds thinking, prevents premature conclusions, and invites layered understanding.

- Bridges modes of knowing:** It integrates rational analysis (Peshat/Derash) with symbolic and experiential insight (Remez/Sod), yielding creativity and resilience in complex situations.

- Scales beyond scripture:** The same lenses adapt to films, personal narratives, organizations, and problem-solving—turning interpretation into a repeatable practice for reinvention and meaning-making.

How PaRDeS maps to a standard problem cycle

Define (Peshat) — Clear problem statement; who, what, when, where, measurables.

Sense and Signal (Remez) — Early-warning signs; patterns across datasets, narratives, user experiences.

Interpret and Norm (Derash) — Generate hypotheses, test analogies, run scenario branching, check ethics.

Reveal Root and Transform (Sod) — Design leverage interventions, culture shifts, rituals, or governance changes.

Embed and Iterate — Return to Peshat for implementation metrics and continue cycles.

PaRDeS interpretation of a photograph



Peshat – Simple restatement of the obvious elements

A young girl is watching a man using a machine to tear down a house in a residential area.

Remez – Hints – References to specific or similar elements

The girl is holding what looks like a basketball suggesting that she was on her way to play, but stopped fascinated by the tear down activity. And might she have a playmate who lived in the house being torn down?

The neighborhood is of similar vintage homes, and one wonders if a replacement house would be of a similar design or more modern? Why might we ask, is the house being torn down? Is a neighbor wanting to expand their property?

Is there a relationship between the girl and the man? Is she watching her father working? Perhaps it was her old house and her parents will be rebuilding a more satisfactory dwelling for themselves?

Drash – Stories that expand on the elements and themes

What would the girl be thinking or feeling? Sad because of a positive connection with the house or the people who lived there? Happy because she never liked the house and or the people?

Would she be fascinated by the mechanics of this strange process of a house being torn down? Would she grow up to be an architect or an interior designer?

Sod – Traditionally secrets, but could be personal insights of the viewer.

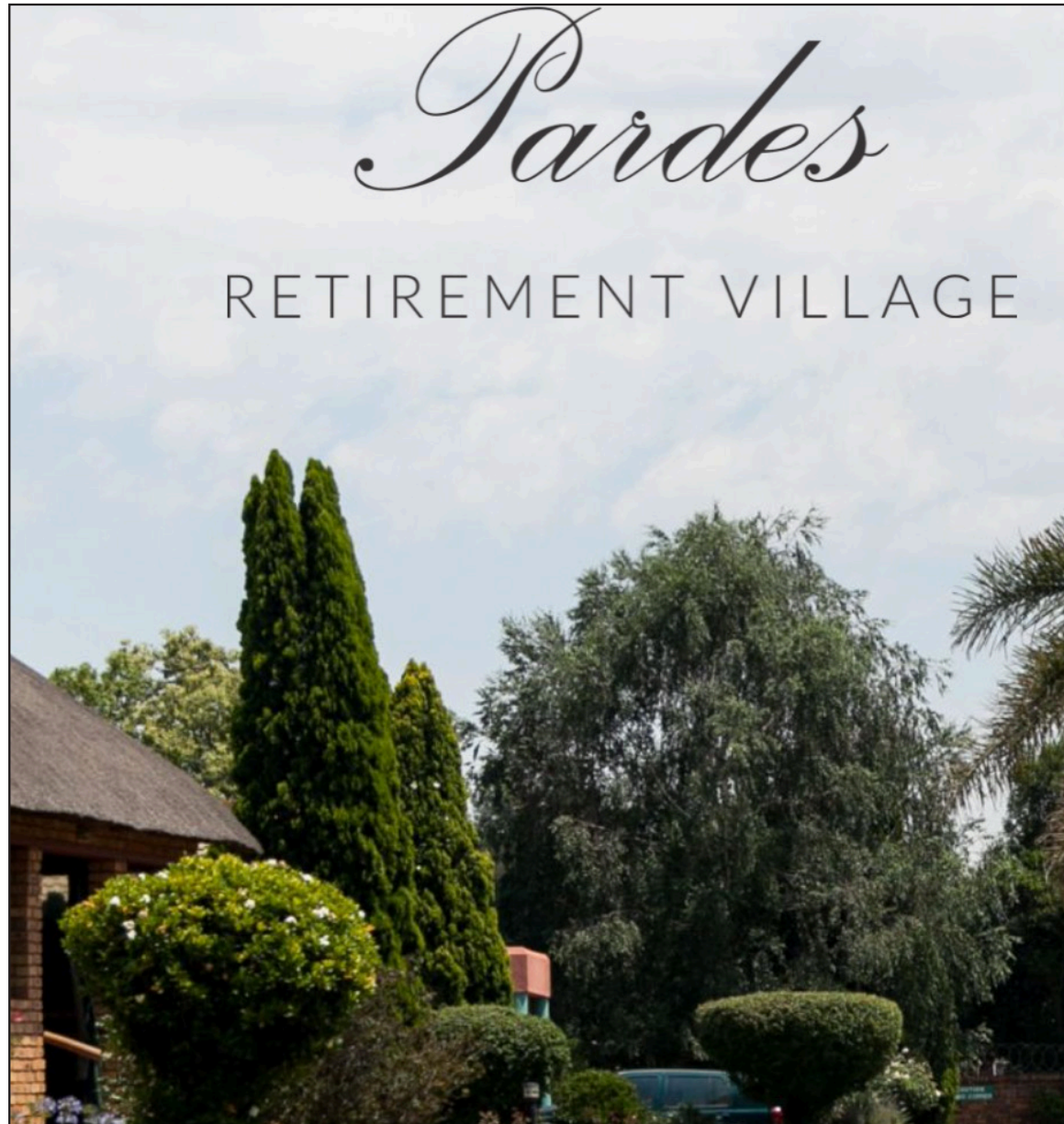
What do I or you get out of the picture? Is there a favorite or hated house/home that this picture reminds us about?

Does it represent a loss of innocence? A loss of the comfortable familiar, a moment of new possibilities?

Can the picture represent future shock which Alvin Toffler has described as experiencing too much change too rapidly? Is the young girl witnessing a change in her neighborhood?

What does this picture mean to you?

There is much to learn about *Pardes* by exploring how the paradigm is being used in the real world of organizations and entities that use it in the self-identification and brand names.



Spiritual / Religious Contexts:

The unconventional synagogue, Jewish studies program, museum wall, retirement home, cemetery—all these tie “*Pardes*” back to its Judaic roots.

“*Pardes*” literally means “orchard” or “garden” in Hebrew, but in Jewish hermeneutics, it’s also an acronym for *Peshat, Remez, Derash, Sod* (four levels of textual interpretation).

Educational / Intellectual Contexts:

International Jewish studies programs and cyber/intelligence learning programs are leveraging the idea of exploration and cultivation of knowledge—much like the original “garden” metaphor.

Cultural / Artistic Contexts:

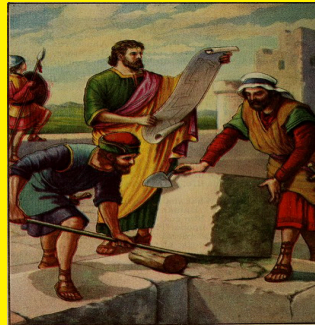
Art studio, artist colony, rock band, restaurant/catering—all these are naming choices likely evoking creativity, cultivation, or richness.

Commercial / Modern Tech Contexts:

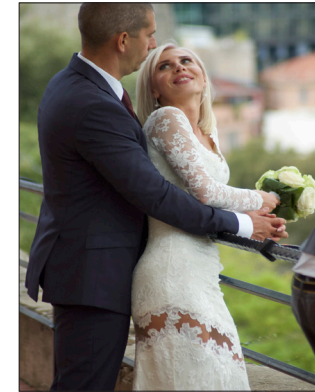
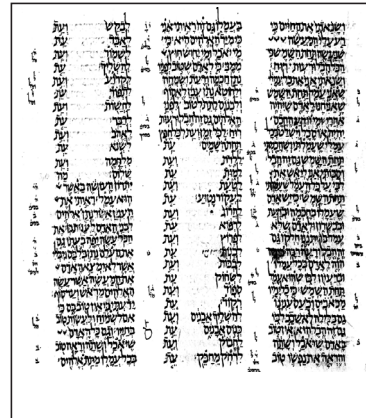
Publishing house, bio-science company, cyber/intelligence program—here “*Pardes*” conveys growth, innovation, and depth, probably drawing on its spiritual and intellectual resonance.



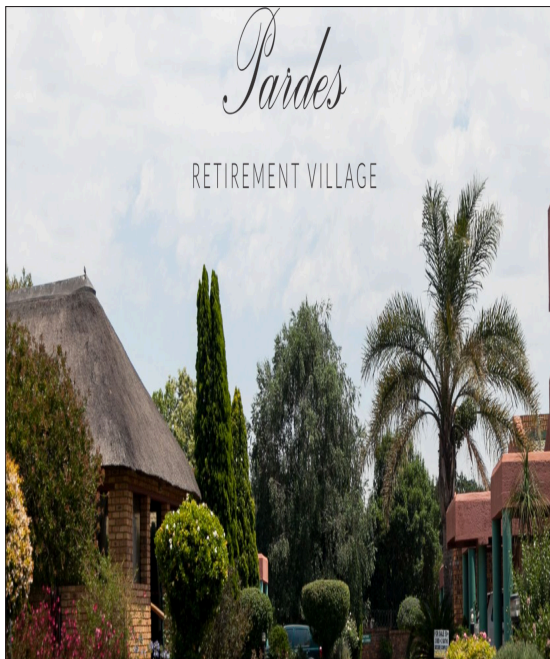
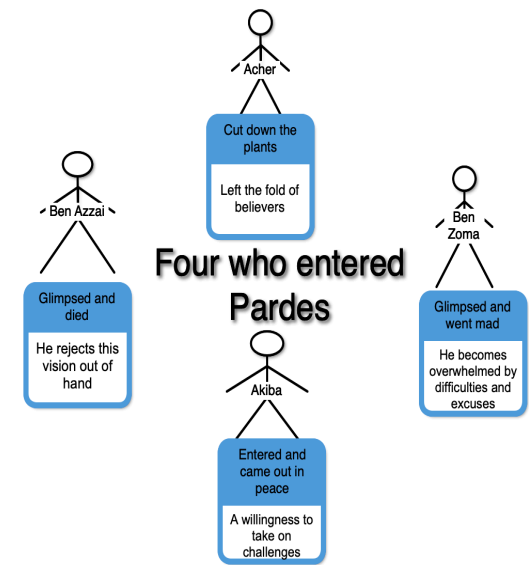
Persian princess resting in a garden, miniature fresco, early 17th century, Isfahan, Iran. Photo: Raah: The Art Archive/Alamy



Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem, illustration by Adolf Hult, 1919



The PaRDeS Paradigm: A Guide to Multi-Dimensional Thinking



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