

The word paradise comes from the same root as the Hebrew word Pardes, meaning orchard. Pardes is also a method of studying the Bible to uncover layers of meaning. This same method can be used to uncover layers of meaning in one's own life.

**PaRDeS** can be used as an acronym. Each letter represents a different method of looking at an issue and a different aspect of the Jewish four worlds of experience.

**P'shat** means simple. It is the understanding that comes from examining the straightforward narrative of what has happened. Often, it is linked to the world of Asiah, action.

Examining the P'shat of your life means examining your life story. See what parts of your life still create pain for you. What actions do you take in your life that cause harm to yourself or others? What do you do that is not in accord with your values? How can you be more present in your life? What can you do or how can you act that is more in accord with a state of love or one-ness. What boundaries do you need in order to have balance in your actions? How do you support yourself in the world of action by becoming more physically healthy?

**Remez** means hint. It is the understanding that comes from examining the implied meanings. It is linked with the world of Briah, formation or feelings.

Looking at your life through the lens of Remez is helpful for dealing with difficult feelings. What do you feel that is not in accord with your values? What are you afraid of? What is the metaphor that best describes your life? How can you be more in tune with your emotions? What boundaries do you need to maintain with respect to having healthy feelings? How can you use your emotions to arouse a passion for healing yourself? How can you better use your imagination to promote your own healing?

**D'rash** means search or investigate. It is the meaning that is instructive or allegorical. One sees it associated with the world of Yetzirah, creation or knowing.

Examining your D'rash means to examine what you know and create. What do you create that is not in accord with your values? If you look at your life as a teaching tale, what does it teach? What do you know to be true? Do you absolutely know these things to be true? What do you resist knowing? How can you investigate your life to know more? What can you create that will enhance the sense of love or connectedness in your life? How can you be more aware of the sense of the Divine breath entering your body? How can you feel more awareness of God's absolute unity?

**Sod** means hidden. When one examines the sod of a scripture or a situation, one is looking for the secret. The world of experience that is most often used for Sod is Atziluth, emanation or being.

Examining your Sod means to examine your Being. If you choose not to continuously improve yourself in this life, who are you? How can you be more aware of how you emanate? How can you enjoy being yourself more fully? What parts of your Being do you reject? How can you transform the parts of yourself that don't feel whole? What secrets do you have? Why do you feel the need to hide them? How can you emanate more love in your life? How do you live life in service of the Divine?

Please excuse any unintentional misinterpretation of these concepts. I am not a Kabbalist or even a Jew. That said, even my limited understanding of these concepts has been a support to me.

Examining my actions, feelings, knowing, and Being this way has helped me take one more step on my own path to paradise. I hope this self-examination helps you on your path as well.

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