



What is PaRDeS?

PaRDeS, which means garden or orchard, is an acronym coined by Moses de Leon in the 16th century for four different ways of reading the text of Torah. During this period, the notion that there are as many different ways of reading and understanding Torah as the number of people who stood at Sinai (which is every Jew who has ever lived and will ever live) becomes popularized. The **PaRDeS** method recognizes that through these four approaches very different interpretations and understandings of the text will emerge. The following is the **PaRDeS** method:

P - Peshat - the simple, straightforward meaning of the text. These questions must be answered directly from the text.

R - Remez - hint, a hint into our own nature, philosophical truths about the text. Here the text becomes personal through “how” and “what” questions.

D - Drash - homiletical, the story behind the text. These are “why” questions and each question has many answers.

S - Sod - the secret meaning, mystical. Through “how” questions we struggle to understand God’s plan for the world.