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**Q&A Forum - Review**

## Blending Faiths

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Fellow Q&Aers,

We welcome Sharon and Diane to our list this week. We now have 119 members and are growing. Who do you know that you would like to receive Q&A? Ask them and tell them to check us out on the web where our previous Q&As are archived - they can sign up for Q&A right from the website or by sending me an email.

You may want to note that I now have 2 email addresses. The newest one is [jpacheco@personalgrowthconcepts.com](mailto:jpacheco@personalgrowthconcepts.com) - For the time being, I get them either way but, over the next several months, I will be migrating to the new one listed above.

A special thanx to those who sent our bonus materials for today. Pat sent one way back in Nov 2001, Mike in Jan of 2002 and Norm just sent me the last one a few days ago.

Enjoy your Q&A.

**Q:** Hi John, this question concerns spirituality: I have recently been made aware that there are several Buddhist organizations who seek to combine Christian/Jewish theology with Buddhist traditions as a means of deepening their spirituality, a way to follow 'the path.' I've been told that there are Jewish Buddhists (affectionately called Jew-Bu's), Catholic Buddhists, etc. The more I study Buddhist practices, the more I can understand how this way of life does deepen a spirituality that is lacking in many of our western traditions. I would welcome your comments on this. Is it really possible to blend more than one religion without compromising or contradicting one's faith?

**A:** What an interesting question. This boils down to my thoughts and beliefs about your question; I have not done any reading or research on the topic. I understand that other spiritual traditions offer both different ideologies and practices. Most are rooted in the belief of one supreme being and most have prophets, those whose mission/purpose is to show others the path. Your question about blending is interesting since things that are blended lose their unique individual properties and become a combination or amalgam of the ingredients. The risk would be, in blending you lose your faith but may come up with a different faith system that works better for you. I would think if you "blend" you most likely lose the uniqueness of your faith but if you study, understand and select and utilize certain practices from other faiths to augment your own study and practices of your faith, then you will enhance your understanding and focus on your own faith. If you are trying to do the latter, I believe that confusion may be the first sign that something is amiss and should point you back to the basic tenets of your faith. I think a clear decision needs to be made - do you want to augment your faith, or blend/risk and come up with a new faith? I wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do. John

**Quote:** The minute you settle for less than you deserve, you get even less than you settled for. - Maureen Dowd

Bonus 1:

### South Bronx Jewish Tale

The South Bronx in 1950 was the home of a large and thriving community, predominantly Jewish. In the 1950s the Bronx offered synagogues, mikvas, kosher bakeries, and kosher butchers - all the comforts one would expect from an observant Orthodox Jewish community.

The baby boom of the post-war years happily resulted in many new young parents. As a matter of course, the South Bronx had its own baby equipment store. Sickser's was located on the corner of Westchester and Fox, and specialized in "everything for the baby" as its slogan ran. The inventory began with cribs, baby carriages, playpens, high chairs, changing tables and toys. It went way beyond these to everything a baby could want or need. Mr. Sickser, assisted by his son-in-law, Lou Kirshner, ran a profitable business out of the needs of the rapidly expanding child population.

The language of the store was primarily Yiddish, but Sickser's was place where not only Jewish families but also many non-Jewish ones could acquire the necessary for their newly-arrived bundles of joy. Business was particularly busy one spring day, so much so that Mr.. Sickser and his son-in law could not handle the unexpected throng of customers.

Desperate for help, Mr. Sickser ran out of the store and stopped the first youth he spotted on the street. "Young man", he panted, "how would you like to make a little extra money? I need some help in the store. You want to work a little?" The tall, lanky black boy flashed a toothy smile back. "Yes, sir, I'd like some work." "Well then, let's get started." The boy followed his new employer into the store. Mr.. Sickser was immediately impressed with the boy's good manners and demeanor. As the days went by and he came again and again to lend his help, Mr..Sickser and Lou both became increasingly impressed with the youth's diligence, punctuality and readiness to learn.

Eventually Mr. Sickser made him a regular employee at the store. It was gratifying to find an employee with an almost soldier-like willingness to perform even the most menial of tasks, and to perform them well. From the age of thirteen until his sophomore year in college, the young man put in from twelve to fifteen hours a week, at 50 to 75 cents an hour. Mostly, he performed general labor: assembling merchandise, unloading trucks and preparing items for shipments. He seemed, in his quiet way, to appreciate not only the steady employment but also the friendly atmosphere Mr. Sickser's store offered.

Mr. Sickser and Lou learned in time about their helper's Jamaican origins, and he in turn picked up a good deal of Yiddish. In time the young man was able to converse fairly well with his employers, and more importantly, with a number of the Jewish customers whose English was not fluent. At the age of seventeen, the young man, while still working part-time at Sickser's, began his first semester at City College of New York. He fit in just fine with his, for the most part Jewish classmates, hardly surprising considering that he already knew their ways and their language. But the heavy studying in the engineering and later geology courses he chose proved quite challenging. The young man would later recall that Sickser's offered the one stable point in his life those days.

In 1993, in his position as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff two years after he guided the American victory over Iraq in the Gulf War- General Colin Powell visited the Holy Land. Upon meeting Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir in Jerusalem, he greeted the Israeli with the words "Mer ken reden Yiddish" (We can speak Yiddish). As Shamir, stunned, tried to pull himself together, the current Secretary of State continued chatting in his second-favorite language. Colin Powell never forgot his early days working at Sickser's.

#### Bonus 2:

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks right to the top, rocks about 2" in diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full? They agreed that it was. So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them in to the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The students laughed. He asked his students again if the jar was full? They agreed that yes, it was. The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up every-thing else.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life. The rocks are the important things - your family, your partner, your health, your children - anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed. The pebbles are the other things in life that matter, but on a smaller scale. The pebbles represent things like your job, house, or car. The sand is everything else, the small stuff."

"If you put the sand or the pebbles into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, material things, you will never have room for the things that are truly most important."

- \*\*\*\*\* Pay attention to the things that are critical in your life.
- \*\*\*\*\* Play with your children.
- \*\*\*\*\* Take time to get medical checkups.
- \*\*\*\*\* Take your partner out dancing.
- \*\*\*\*\* There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal.
- \*\*\*\*\* Take care of the rocks first - the things that really matter.
- \*\*\*\*\* Set your priorities, the rest is just pebbles and sand.
- \*\*\*\*\* May there always be work for your hands to do;
- \*\*\*\*\* May your purse always hold a coin or two;
- \*\*\*\*\* May the sun always shine on your windowpane;
- \*\*\*\*\* May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain;
- \*\*\*\*\* May the hand of a friend always be near you;
- \*\*\*\*\* May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

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#### Bonus 3:

I've never made a fortune  
and it's probably too late now.  
But I don't worry about that much,  
I'm happy anyhow. And as I go along  
life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I haven't got a lot of riches,  
and sometimes the going's tough.  
But I've got loved ones around me,  
and that makes me rich enough.  
I thank God for his blessings,

and the mercies He's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong,  
My faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke,  
and the sun peeped through again.  
So God, help me not to gripe about  
the tough rows that I've hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage,  
when the way grows steep and rough.  
I'll not ask for other blessings,  
I'm already blessed enough.  
And may I never be too busy,  
to help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

end of bonuses (for this time!)

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**We wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do!**

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