

a *tallit*.

Technically, a quick glance at the hands of the priests should be permitted. Nevertheless, the custom is to be stringent and not even glance at them, in remembrance of the times when the blessing was administered with G-d's sacred name and even a glance would have been dangerous.

Peering Through the Cracks

Although the primary reason for not looking is to not get distracted, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi) explains that the original reason still applies to a certain extent.

Song of Songs 2:9 states, "Behold, He is standing behind our wall, looking from the windows, peering through the cracks." The Midrash interprets "looking from the windows" to mean that the Divine Presence rests above the heads of the *kohanim* and "peering through the cracks" to mean that it is manifest between their fingers.

Based on this Midrash, Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (Rosh) taught that although it is true that a person's eyes will no longer become "dim" by looking at the *kohanim*, it is still not proper to do so.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe would often cite this same verse and a related Midrash in relation to our times, when Moshiach's coming is imminent. He is standing on the other side of the wall of exile—a wall that is already cracked and crumbling—waiting impatiently for the final redemption, when G-d's presence will be openly revealed. May it be speedily in our days!

Live & Laugh

A couple go for a meal at a Chinese restaurant and order the "Chicken Surprise". The waiter brings the meal, served in a lidded cast iron pot. Just as the wife is about to serve herself, the lid of the pot rises slightly and she briefly sees two beady little eyes looking around before the lid slams back down.

"Good grief, did you see that?" she asks her husband. He hadn't, so she asks him to look in the pot. He reaches for it and again the lid rises, and he sees two little eyes looking around before it slams down.

Rather perturbed, he calls the waiter over, explains what is happening, and demands an expla-

nation. "Please sir," says the waiter, "what you order?" The husband replies, "Chicken Surprise." "Ah! So sorry," says the waiter, "I bring you Peeking Duck."

A man's boat is going down in German waters. He radios for help. On the other end he hears, "Vat is wrong?!" The man replies, "I'm sinking! I'm sinking!" The radio shouts back, "Okay! Vat are you sinking about?"

Calendar

FRIDAY 6 April—7th day of Pesach

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Abridged Hallel: 9:15 am
- ◆ Mincha: 5:40 pm
- ◆ Full Yom Tov Service: 6:00 pm
- ◆ Candle-lighting from a pre-lit flame after 5:43 pm (Blessing for Shabbos & Yom Tov only)

SHABBOS 7 April—Last day of Pesach

- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Abridged Hallel: 9:15 am
- ◆ Shir HaShirim
- ◆ Yizkor: approx. 10:45 am
- ◆ Mincha: 5:00 pm
- ◆ Followed by Seudas Moshiach (for men and women)
- ◆ Pesach ends: 6:31 pm
- ◆ N.B. Do not eat Chometz until an hour or so later

- ◆ Remember to **Count the Omer!**
- ◆ **Mincha** week nights now **5:45 pm**

◆ **Nathan Fine** of Ideal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011 887 5456/082 854 5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**

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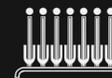
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◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



Good Yom Tov SYDENHAM!

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Tradition

By: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

How important is Tradition in Judaism? Obviously, the answer is that it is very important. I mean, they even devoted a major song in Fiddler on the Roof to Tradition!

How strong is the need for Tradition in the spiritual consciousness of Jews today? Despite the effects of secularism, I'd venture to suggest that there is still a need inside us to feel connected to our roots, our heritage, and our sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

But for vast numbers of our people, Tradition alone has not been enough. And that applies not only for the rebellious among us who may have cast aside their traditions with impunity, but also for many ordinary, thinking people who decided that to do something just because "that's the way it has always been done" was simply not good enough.

So what if my grandfather did it? My grandfather rode around in a horse and buggy! Must I give up my car for a horse just because my Zayde rode a horse? And if my Bobba never got a university degree, why shouldn't I? So, just because my grandparents practiced certain Jewish traditions, why must I? Perhaps those traditions are as obsolete as the horse and buggy?

There are masses of Jews who think this way and who will not be convinced to behave Jewishly just because their grandparents did.

We need to tell them **why** their grandparents did it. They need to understand that their grandparents' traditions were not done just for tradition's sake but there was a very good

reason why their forbears practiced those traditions. And those very same reasons and rationales still hold good today.

Too many young people were put off tradition because some Cheder or Talmud Torah teacher didn't take their questions seriously. They were silenced with a wave of the hand, a pinch of the ear, the classic *when you get older, you'll understand*, or the infamously classic, *just do as you're told*.

There are answers. There have always been answers. We may not have logical explanations for *tsunamis* and other *tzorris*, but all our traditions are founded on substance and have intelligible, credible underpinnings. If we seek answers we will find them in abundance; including layers and layers of meaning, from the simple to the symbolic to the philosophical and even mystical.

The Seventh Day of Pesach's Torah reading features the Song of the Sea, sung by Moses and the Jewish people following the splitting of the sea and their miraculous deliverance from the Egyptian armies. Early on, we find the verse, *This is my G-d and I will glorify Him, the G-d of my fathers and I will exalt Him*.

The sequence is significant. First comes **My G-d**, and only thereafter *the G-d of my fathers*. In the Amidah, the silent devotion which is the apex of our daily prayers, we begin addressing the Almighty as *Our G-d and the G-d of our fathers... Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. Again, *our G-d* comes first. So it is clear that while *the G-d of our fathers*, i.e. "Tradition," most definitely plays a very important role in Judaism, still, an indispensable prerequisite is that we must make G-d **ours**,

personally. Every Jew must develop a personal relationship with G-d. We need to understand the reasons and the significance of our traditions lest they be seen as empty ritual to be discarded by the next generation.

Authentic Judaism has never shied away from questions. Questions have always been encouraged and formed a part of our academic heritage. Every page of the Talmud is filled with questions - and answers. You don't have to wait for the Pesach Seder to ask a question.

When we think, ask, and find answers to our faith, then the traditions of our grandparents become alive and we understand fully why we should make them ours. Once a tradition has become ours and we then realize that this very same practice has been observed uninterrupted by our ancestors throughout the generations, then Tradition becomes a powerful force that can inspire us forever.

Split Your Sea

By Rabbi Y Y Jacobson

"To match couples together is as difficult as the splitting of the sea," states the Talmud.

What is the meaning behind these words? True, the process of finding and maintaining a life partner may be challenging and difficult, nothing short of a miracle. But why, of all miracles described in the Bible, does the Talmud choose specifically the miracle of the splitting of the sea to capture the process of marriage?

A Map of the Subconscious

What is the difference between the land and the sea? Both are vibrant and action-filled environments populated by a myriad of creatures and a great variety of minerals and vegetation. Yet the universe of dry land is exposed and out in the open for all to see and appreciate, while the world of the sea is hidden beneath a blanket of water.

In Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah and Chassidic spirituality), these two physical planes reflect the conscious and unconscious dimensions of the human psyche. Both parts of the self are extremely vibrant and dynamic. The

difference between them is that while our conscious self is displayed and exhibited for ourselves and others to feel and experience, our subconscious self remains hidden, not only from other people but even from ourselves. Most of us know very little of what is going on in the sub-cellars of our psyche.

If you were given a glimpse into your own "sea" and discovered the universe of personality hidden beneath your conscious brain, what do you think you would find? Shame, fear, guilt, pain, insecurity, an urge to destroy, to survive, to dominate, a cry for love? Would you discover Freud's Libido, Jung's collective unconscious, Adler's search for power and control, Frankl's quest for meaning?

In Kabbalah, at the core of the human condition is a yearning for oneness. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), founder of the Chabad school of Kabbalah, was one of the greatest soul-experts in the history of Judaism, has written on the subject more than any other Jewish sage. In 1796, a hundred years before Freud, he published a book, the Tanya, in which he presented his "map of the subconscious," based on the Talmudic and Kabbalistic tradition. Rabbi Schnuer Zalman offers a fascinating parable for the inner life of the soul: quoting the biblical verse, "The soul of man is a divine flame" (Proverbs 20:27), he explains that just as the flame is always swaying, dancing, licking the air, seeking to tear free of the wick and rise heavenward, so too the soul in man is always aspiring to leave its shell and experience oneness with the divine.

The Secret of Intimacy

This quest for a relationship with the divine is manifested in our search for relationships with our twin flame here below. Where Freud diagnosed the libido as a craving for union with a parent, and Jung saw it as a longing for the opposite gender etched in our collective unconscious, the Kabbalah understood it as a quest for union with G-d. Our desire for intimacy is one of the profoundest expressions of our existential craving for Truth, for Oneness, for G-d.

As the Book of Genesis states, "G-d created Man in His image, in the image of G-d He

created him; male and female He created them." Clearly, it was in the union and oneness of the genders that the first Adam, the first human being, reflected the image of G-d.

This view of relationships and intimacy is expressed in the very Hebrew names for man and woman given by Adam in Genesis. The Hebrew words for man and woman — *Ish* and *Isab* — both contain the Hebrew word for fire, *Eish*. They also each contain one more letter— a *yud* and a *hei* respectively—which when combined makes up G-d's name. The significance of this is profound. Man without woman, and woman without man, lack the fullness of G-d's name. When they unite, the two-half images of the divine within them also unite. The fire and passion drawing them to each other is their yearning to recreate the full name of G-d between them.

At a Jewish wedding ceremony, this blessing is recited: *Blessed are You, G-d, King of the Universe, Who created the human being in His image...* Why is this blessing said at a wedding ceremony? Wouldn't it be more appropriate to say such a blessing when a child is born? The answer is that it is through the uniting of man and woman that the image of G-d is most closely reflected.

The ramifications of this idea are important. It means that marriage is not a suspension of one's natural individual self for the sake of uniting with a stranger. Rather, through marriage man and woman return to their true natural state, a single being reflecting G-d, each in his and her own unique way. Marriage allows wife and husband to discover their full and complete self, a self made up of masculine and feminine energy.

Know Thyself

We may travel through life unaware of this dimension of self, seeking oneness with the divine. Throughout our years on this planet we may behave as though this element of self does not exist. Though its symptoms reverberate through our consciousness — most often in the feelings of emptiness and lack of contentment when our spiritual self is un-satiated — we are prone to dismiss it or deny it. After all, at least in the short term, it is far easier to accept that we are nothing more than intelligent beasts craving self-gratification than spiritual souls craving for G-d.

When we view the surface self, selfishness is easi-

er than selflessness; isolation more natural than relationship; solitariness more innate than love and commitment. Only when we "split our sea," when we discover the depth of our souls, the subtle vibrations of our subconscious, do we discover that oneness satisfies our deepest core; that love is the most natural expression of our most profound selves.

"To match couples together is as difficult as the splitting of the sea," the Talmud states. The challenge in creating and maintaining a meaningful and powerful relationship is the need to split our own seas each day, to learn how in the depth of our spirits we yearn to love and share our lives with another human being and with our creator.

Why Can't I Peek During Duchaning? (*Birkat Kohanim* - Priestly Blessing)

By Rabbi Yehuda Shurpin

The Talmud tells us that when the *kohanim* would stand on the platform (*duchan* - now you know where the word *duchaning* comes from) in the Temple and bless the Jewish people using G-d's ineffable name, the Divine Presence would rest above the joints of their fingers. It was therefore said that if one looked at the *kohanim's* hands at that time, his eyes would become "dim."

However, today, when there is no Temple standing and the *kohanim* no longer use G-d's ineffable name, why don't we look at the *kohanim* during the Priestly Blessing?

Do Not Disturb

According to Jewish law, the *kohanim* are supposed to concentrate when blessing the congregation, praying to G-d that He bless the entire Jewish nation. For their part, the congregation should concentrate on receiving the blessing. In order that no one be distracted, the *kohanim* cover their faces and hands with

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