

RAPHAEL JEWISH COUNSELLING SERVICE: A MESSAGE FOR PESACH

I have often wondered about the origins of the Quiz Show. What questions were asked? Who asked the questions? What form did the answers take? Did they leave the quizzers satisfied? And, of course, was there a prize at the end of the show?

Well, I do not know when the original Quiz Show took place but presumably Google will give us some clues. Certainly the four questions recited at our Seder Table have been asked by many generations and both the questions and explanations have stood the test of time. Representing, as the whole procedure does, an early example of how best to impart knowledge even to 'the son who does not know how to ask', the Q & A system is most effective. And yes, there is a prize (or in my family tradition, several prizes) given, not for knowing the right answers, for after all, they are included in 'the game', but for finding a hidden piece of matzo, without which the programme would be 'frozen'.

In typically Jewish fashion one question leads to another, and the fact that we have four questions means there will be many more. Symbols cleverly remind us of the story. It is not difficult to appreciate why, for instance, we eat unleavened bread, and this 'bread of affliction' as it is sometimes known, has become the main item associated with the eight days. Only one ingredient is missing but what a difference that makes to the loaf to which we are accustomed. Can there really be just one factor that separates it from the norm? Do we simply need to add yeast to the mixture and our trusted crusty loaf will, as if by magic, await our pleasure?

No, it is not as a result of a conjuring trick but thanks to expert chefs (and yes, they may not be professionals!) that we can resume our normal diet when Pesach has run its eight days. At this Season, there are a number of questions that Raphael poses to our community. These are four such questions. Firstly, what is Jewish Counselling? (ie "Why is Jewish Counselling different from all other counselling?") Secondly, who does it benefit? Thirdly, what is involved? And finally, why should this interest you? And, what about a prize?

The Answers: 'Jewish Counselling' - because the counsellor is Jewish there is a certain empathy between client and counsellor from the outset which may not be possible otherwise. Anyone finding it difficult to cope, who has lost a job, is bereaved, has marital problems, feels 'unleavened' or maybe unloved, even worthless, is likely to find help either as an individual or as one of a couple. Involved? Firstly a phone call to arrange a confidential consultation, and then, presuming a go-ahead is agreed, a commitment to a programme of sessions. Whilst you may not have any personal need for Raphael's services, you may be able to point someone in the right direction and in doing so perform a wonderful mitzvah positively contributing to the life, yes, the life of a fellow Jew. And what a prize that would be! So this year, whilst the children enjoy the search for that elusive piece of matzo, you could perhaps search in your heart and consider how you may help another to benefit from our work. Although funding is always welcome, this is not an appeal for finance. Do please phone, write or email for details of what we do and how you might be able to contribute. It is the individual who enables us to continue to serve the community, quietly and regularly and, on behalf of Raphael and whatever part you play in enabling us to continue our story without 'freezing', I say 'Thank You!'.

Jack Lynes

Chairman

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