

The Gift of Freedom (Pesach - April 2008)

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As we listen again to the story of Passover and explain to our children why 'this night is different from all other nights' and argue over the various traditions that have come about through the ages, we are often perplexed at a slight discomfort within ourselves. True, our ancestors seem to have managed their escape very successfully.

They even succeeded in bringing bread with them, and who could imagine our recounting of their sojourn without reference to the Matzoth? So why the discomfort? There may be a clue if we clear our minds and look not so much at the tyranny and oppression from which 'we' were fleeing, but rather the freedom which 'we' were seeking.

Was it a freedom to observe our Judaism, to worship The One on High rather than bow down to idols? Was it a freedom to work and achieve as equals in 'our' land? It was all this and more. Released from bondage and slavery, 'we' could hold our heads up high and be true to ourselves. Pressing the right buttons, in the right order, we could be complete people. A people alive. A people aware. A people who matter. A people concerned about others.

Might this be the time to ask ourselves a fifth question? Being concerned about others is not simply a challenge to the conscience which can be resolved by acts of charity. That discomfort may be due to 'our' failure to respond to a fellow Jew who although physically free, has a mind in captivity. Like a computer which does not respond, help is required to rekindle the flame and loosen the shackles.

Raphael Jewish Counselling Service now reaches out to many clients from all sections of our community. The final success of Raphael Jewish Counselling Service will come when it is no longer needed. That time, alas, is some way off. Please make us known to any fellow Jew whom you think might add to our work and let Raphael, the Angel of Healing contribute to that most precious of possessions which we celebrate during these special days, the gift of Personal Freedom.