

A Question for Liberal Jews Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi

Jews like asking questions. Starting from childhood, when the youngest child asks four questions at the Seder, questions are welcomed and encouraged. The whole premise of Talmudic debate is *'shakla v'tarya'* - answering a question with another question. We are even commanded in the Torah to ask questions. Deut. 32: 7 tells us: 'Ask your parents and they will tell you; your elders and they will speak to you.'

Equally, questions have been asked of us as human beings since the time when God asked Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, 'Where are you?' Our teacher Rabbi John Rayner wrote that the whole of halachah, the system of Jewish law, was an attempt to answer the question of Deuteronomy (10:12) 'What does the Eternal One your God require of you?' (Jewish Religious Law. A Progressive Perspective, p.33).

Forty years before, the great Progressive Rabbi Leo Baeck wrote in his book, This People Israel, 'Every people can be chosen for a history, for a share in the history of humanity. Each is a question which God has asked, and each people must answer.'

So my question is, 'What is the question that is being asked of us as Liberal Jews in the world today, and how can we answer it together?'