

## RAPHAEL GASSON

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I knew Dr Raphael Gasson since 1980 and admired him as a fellow Christian and his excellent and considerable welfare work. He deserved all the awards and honours that came his way.

He was born in London on 26 August 1920. His father, Emmanuel, was born in 1893 in Saxony of Russian Jewish parents. He moved to London in 1912 and was a chartered accountant. He was also a veterinary surgeon and conducted treatments and surgery without charging fees such was his love of animals. He married Anne during World War 1. Their daughter, Freda, was born in 1917.

Emmanuel was a brilliant musician and taught Raphael the piano. At the age of nine, the boy gave a recital of Beethoven which impressed Dr Lillian Coombes who had been a pupil of Liszt. She took an interest in the boy and sponsored him. At the age of 14, he played Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue and, later, Beethoven's Emperor Concerto. He has conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra and, while teaching at Chatham, broadcast Epilogues on television.

He left school in 1934 and was a clerical worker until War broke out. He was destined to become a rabbi.

He was very badly treated during the war by his Army colleagues who falsely accused him of being a spy and he was subjected to many violent beatings. He proved his innocence successfully. He was in the Army Intelligence Corp.

The persecution of Jews has always been with us and antisemitism is racism which is rife among left wing politicians. All his life he suffered from antisemitism

After the War, he trained to be a teacher at London University. As a teacher, he had posts in Portsmouth, Isle of Wight (Ventnor County Secondary School), Southampton and Jersey. He specialised in RE and Music.

In his long career, he achieved no fewer than fourteen doctorates and other awards.

In 1946, he was converted to Christianity and his father did likewise a few years later. This was after being involved in spiritualism and mediumship which he proved to be both false and dangerous.

He was born into a Jewish family. His mother's sister had died and she was named Rachel and intimately called Ray. After her death, Raphael grandparents became interested in spiritualism in the hope of being able to communicate with Ray.

Grandmother became a confirmed spiritualist but grandfather never discussed it. These attitudes were maintained and they believed that they were fully protected by the spirits but they were both killed crossing a road in 1946.

Grandmother attended many spiritualist meetings and, in one, it was alleged that Ray had said that if my mother gave birth, the child, if a boy, must be called Raphael and intimately known as Ray as this was the nearest masculine equivalent.

In Raphael's bedroom was put a life-sized head and shoulders picture of Ray which caused the boy to be terrified particularly when it was said that the lady in the picture had moved and had supernatural powers. The picture was eventually moved but fear still reigned in the boy.

Grandmother enquired at a Spiritualist meeting why Raphael was being persecuted. No explanation was given. Later, when walking the streets of London, he saw what appeared to a replica of himself standing in front of him. It was said to a revelation from the spirit world. The apparition told the young man to follow him but he could not as his movements were impaired and he shook with fear. It was claimed that the dead, presumably Ray, was communicating with him.

A spiritualist woman told him that he was now a medium and that because he was occasionally going to a church, this was evil and he should abandon all and every connection with both the church and Christianity as it was all lies and rubbish. He was being redeemed into the truth of spiritualism the only truth.

He went to seances and conducted some.

During the War, Raphael was in the Army and very troubled at the way Jews were being treated by German socialism. He was called a spy and a dirty rotten Jew and beaten up. However, he preached spiritualism which had become more intense by the influence of a Rational Spiritualist who said that there was no God and that prayers and hymn singing was futile.

Raphael was now convinced that the spirits were all good but they never made themselves known at the many seances he attended.. It was said that the spirits would not appear unless you were in a trance. Raphael and his new friend entered into trances in front of reliable witnesses all of whom were spiritualists. After the trance was over, the witnesses said that what happened during the two mens trances was spectacular but that was all.

Dr Gasson was then told that evil spirits were more prevalent and powerful than any so called good spirits. As in the natural world, evil is very often dominant and the majority of people are not interested in the good and in decent things of life and people that are kind are viewed with suspicion.

Raphael became disillusioned with spiritualism and the communication with the dead was not working but just a means of a medium displaying his /her alleged powers.

Many who allegedly received messages from the dead later found out that the messages were false and resulted in mental turmoil for them. The other factor was that the majority of people into spiritualism were women with strong feelings, were bored, wanting to make something out of their lives and making some money as well.

Generally speaking, to be a spiritualist you must condemn Christianity and be an atheist, although there are some exceptions.

No one ever communicated with dead Aunt Rachel. It did not work.

I knew Raphael from 1980 when he dealt with Benefits Claims and other charitable matters and sometimes I was with him when he interviewed clients. They complained about spiritualism being fraudulent and causing emotional trouble for them and their respective families. Some spoke of these spiritualists who told them to turn their backs on Christianity and other religions and seek the truth which was only in spiritualism.

As it has been universally written, spiritualism is connected to the occult and paganism.

Raphael wisely told his clients that each individual has the right to chose and that they cannot be dictated to. Spiritualism is not a religion but an unproven science which is atheistic and

consequently hostile and whose tenets seek to rule people. Dr Gasson never told people what to do regarding their beliefs and ideas.

He has been unfairly criticised for being biased about spiritualism but his personal involvement and factual experiences are not based on bias.

Dr Gasson became a Christian in 1946 and knew an inner peace. He devoted his life to Christ and to the community which he served well.

I became involved in spiritualism unintentionally and saw first hand the evil of it and this was before I knew about Dr Gasson's involvement. I have literally seen people go mad and be confined to mental hospitals because of spiritualism, mediums and physics. For everyone in a mental institution because of some aspect of Christianity there are 78 confined because of evil paranormal activity. There is a high rate of suicides connected with those involved with evil spiritual teachings.

He married his childhood sweetheart Eva Patricia in 1949. They adopted a son, Keith, in 1950. Raphael and Eva were devoted to each other.

Raphael was a music examiner for the Associated Exam Board. He was also the Chief Examiner for a Bible college.

He retired to the Isle of Wight in 1980 and two years later set up the Disabled Motorist Caring Association which is a non-fund raising organisation. He was the President and Vice Chairman since its inauguration. The DMCA helps people with their benefit entitlements and other problems and Dr Gasson assisted people at tribunals and appeals and has had overwhelming success. He is known to have had 100 cases in a year. Someone described the DMCA as a miracle success story.

He was badly treated because he was a Jew. I was present when offensive calls come through on the loudspeaker on his telephone and once a rifle shot was fired through his window. This is why both he and I deplore those, including politicians, who hate Jews.

Dr Gasson was a valued member of the brethren assembly at the Gospel Hall, Shanklin until about 1990 when he and another member were treated unfairly. That other member was me and we were disliked because of our academic status. Raphael could not accept the teaching that Solomon was typical of God and His love for Israel or that Solomon was a picture of Christ and the Song of Songs is a picture of Christ's love for the church. Solomon was a serial idolator and adulterer, nothing like God or the Lord Jesus. I had these views before I knew Raphael's views.

The Shanklin assembly was doing well until a man, who came from the mainland, joined us and wanted to take over and eventually did.

For 20 years, Dr Gasson was associated with the Federation of Island Societies and for about ten years was their vice-president.

In 2002, he was awarded the MBE from the Queen.

His wife Eva died in February 2011.

However, his welfare and community work still continued unabated despite his increasing ill-health with two cancers and regular chest infections.

He remarried in May 2012 to Iris and thereby inherited her family.

He has written scholarly books some of which are published by Bridge Publishing.

His Jewish roots stood him in very good stead in understanding and explaining Jewish customs and matters in the Old Testament with clarity. He spoke the languages of the Bible, But whatever Dr Gasson explained was correct and authoritative and did not contradict the Bible.

He deserved further recognition for his years of sacrificing devotion to others. He was entitled to further awards but they were not made in his lifetime.

He died on September 8, 2015 at St Mary's Hospital, Newport, Isle of Wight. He was due to go into the hospice the next day.

He regularly expressed his clear and unchangeable wish to be buried with his first wife at Lake Cemetery and to have a Christian service in a church conducted by a male minister. But this did not happen. He had a non Christian service at the crematorium. As a Jew, Raphael deplored cremation saying that you burn only rubbish. His express wishes should have been carried out.

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