

Liberal Judaism Hosts First Seminar on Circumcision for the Progressive Movement – Brit Milah from All Angles

In the first such seminar of its kind, Liberal Judaism, in partnership with its own Rabbinic Conference and Reform Judaism's Assembly of Rabbis, brought together rabbis, mohalim, medical practitioners and others to examine the many aspects of this ritual.

Chaired by Reform Bet Din Convenor, Rabbi Rodney Mariner, the meeting heard from two experts on circumcision. First Kingston Liberal Synagogue member, local GP, father of four children and Chair of the Association of Reform & Liberal Mohalim reflected on his fifteen years experience as a mohel and shared a range of statistics including numbers of britot and rates of infection and numbers of complications. The rabbinic view was presented by trained psychiatric social worker and mother of three children, Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild of Wimbledon & District Synagogue.

The purposes of the gathering were to recruit the next generation of mohalim and to promote a wide ranging discussion. Topics covered included the pain and psychological damage to the infant, adult circumcision, support to parents in 'mixed faith' relationships, and whether it was right to impose circumcision on infants who were unable to consent.

Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive of Liberal Judaism commented, "My colleague Rabbi Alexandra Wright of the LJS who organised the event with Liberal Judaism Education Consultant Judy Thwaites seemed pleased both with the content and the numbers attending. Both the Liberal and Reform movements recommend circumcision and it was right and proper that together our rabbis and mohalim should consider the issues and challenges surrounding circumcision in a serious and professional manner. I hope this will be the first of a series of rabbinic/lay seminars."

Date:

Embargo:

- Ends -

Notes:

Liberal Judaism - one of the three major strands of Judaism in the UK with over 30 congregations and 10,000 members across the country - seeks to make Jewish life relevant to the modern world.

The main difference between Liberal Judaism and traditional (Orthodox) Judaism is in their respective attitudes to the bible. While preserving the core beliefs and practices that underpin the religion, Liberal Judaism believes that ancient laws must be interpreted to ensure that ethical values and practices take account of what we know and the world as it is today. Ethical behaviour and social action take priority over ritual.

Liberal Judaism believes in the equality of each individual, regardless of race, gender or sexuality. We apply this belief in practice, with support for mixed-faith and same-sex relationships. Liberal Jewish men and women have equality of opportunity in all aspects of religious life, including practice and education.

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