



CONGREGATION ANSHEI ISRAEL

THE HEART OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM IN TUCSON SINCE 1930

Rabbi

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Myth:

There is no place for women in Conservative Judaism.

Fact:

Congregation Anshei Israel extends equal rights and responsibilities to men and women.

The following is taken from Emet Ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism, endorsed by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, The Rabbinical Assembly and The Jewish Theological Seminary. To purchase the complete text, visit www.uscj.org/booksvc, the USCJ's Web site. Copies are \$4.



ON WOMEN

The dignity of every human being has always been central to Judaism. This fundamental premise is derived from the biblical assertions in Genesis 1:27 and 5:11 that God created humanity, both male and female, in the divine image.

The equality of the sexes is explicitly affirmed in the Conservative Prayerbook, in the blessing in which both men and women thank God for having been created in His image. Access to Jewish education for women has been a hallmark of Conservative Judaism since the days of Solomon Schechter. In almost all our synagogues, men and women are seated together. The *bat mitzvah* ceremony, now celebrated in virtually all synagogues, was originated in the Conservative movement by Professor Mordecai M. Kaplan. Over the years, our movement has encouraged women to assume roles of communal service and leadership both in a professional and in a lay capacity. In recent days, the discussion of the role of women has rekindled interest in some quarters in areas as diverse as *tohorat ha-mishpahah* (the system of family purity revolving around the use of the *mikveh* [ritual bath]), the creation of naming ceremonies for girls, and special women's observances of *Rosh Hodesh*.

We are convinced that justice and dignity for each human being can be achieved within the framework of Halakhah, thus obviating the inequalities which lead to situations like that of *agunot* (women who cannot remarry without their husbands' initiating divorce). After years of research and trial by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, the Conservative movement has provided satisfactory practical solutions to many of the knotty problems in this area.

There is a wide spectrum of opinion within our movement with regard to the role of women in Jewish ritual. Many believe that women should assume the full rights and responsibilities of ritual participation, including serving as rabbis and cantors. Indeed, the Jewish Theological Seminary now ordains women as rabbis and certifies them as cantors, and the Rabbinical Assembly accepts women as members. On the other hand, many within the movement believe that women today can find religious fulfillment in the context of traditional practice.

All the various views on the specifics of women's roles and rights accept Halakhah as the governing framework for Jewish life.

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