



Medical and moral dilemmas for Jews

Emeritus Professor David Katz from University College London gave a talk for Ruislip Synagogue on medical ethics from a Jewish standpoint on 11 February 2019. He specialises in immunopathology.

He explained how he became interested in that field through reading Franz Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption*, and later being influenced by the former Chief Rabbi Jacobovits' work on Jewish Medical Ethics.

When Israel came into being in 1948, laws were created to cover all faiths, not just Judaism. This meant that many laws and procedures deviated from that of the UK, such as those governing autopsies.

He gave examples of medical dilemmas, highlighting what medical consent means, and how it is interpreted in various circumstances such as Brit Mila, stem cell applications, end of life care, organ donation etc. In many of these situations not only was the Israeli system different to the UK, but there was more than one interpretation of what test should be applied in this country.

All in all, it became apparent that Medical Ethics and the application of Jewish Halacha is very complex and indeed a moral maze, often raising more questions than answers.

By Menahem Briskman

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