

Religious Reasons Not To Circumcise

Together with Paul, he [St. Barnabas] then went to the so-called Council of Jerusalem where after a profound examination of the question, the Apostles with the Elders decided to discontinue the practice of circumcision so that it was no longer a feature of the Christian identity. – Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, January 31, 2007

There are three main religions of the world that practice circumcision: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many people refer to these religions as Abrahamic faiths, after Abraham of the Old Testament. When looking for justification for circumcision, many adherents of these religions refer to Abraham's children being circumcised as justification to continue the practice.

Using Abraham's actions as justification for genital mutilation is irrational. By today's standards, Abraham was certifiably insane. He committed adultery by sleeping with a servant girl, he believed he heard God's voice commanding him to do things, and he built an altar in order to murder his son because he believed he was following God's wishes. At the last moment, he believed God wanted him to stay his hand. For these and other reasons, Abraham makes a poor role model by today's standards. Most of us would be hard pressed to find a priest, rabbi, or imam who would tell anyone to follow God's commands if they were to hear his voice commanding them to kill a family member.

The belief that God wants you to murder your child is seen as profoundly insane, but the belief that God wants you to sacrifice the most sensitive part of your son's penis is still seen as routine, and normal in the U.S. and Canada, but not in any other developed country. Routine infant circumcision is

not normal for most Europeans, Australians, Asians, Latin Americans, or New Zealanders.

Jewish arguments in favor of circumcision are so commonplace now as to be axiomatic. What isn't commonly known are the arguments that oppose circumcision on Judaic religious grounds. Because circumcision originated with Abraham, Jewish people commonly believed that in order to be Jewish, one must be circumcised. The idea that removal of the foreskin is what makes someone truly authentically Jewish cannot be historically supported.

Moses was not circumcised and he prohibited circumcision during the 40 years he and his followers spent in the wilderness. The Jewish people have never questioned Moses' authenticity as a Jew, so if circumcision was not required of Moses to be Jewish, why would it be a requirement today? In addition, Theodor Hertzl, the founder of Zionism, also refused to have his son circumcised. Many prominent Jewish celebrities are opposed to circumcision including Roseanna Barr, Alicia Silverstone, Howard Stern, and Billy Joel.

Thousands of years after circumcision had been widely practiced, around 140 A.D, the procedure was radically altered . The Jewish authorities sought to modify the procedure so as to make it impossible for anyone Jewish to be mistaken as being intact or uncircumcised. (The ignominy of being mistaken for a Greek was somehow more disturbing than the practice of truly mutilating genitals). Until this time, the tip of the foreskin was removed, the part of the foreskin that isn't initially fused to the glans of the penis. In this new procedure, referred to as peri'ah, the foreskin is completely stripped away from the glans, and then the next step in the procedure is known today as synechotomy, wherein almost all of the foreskin is removed and the extent of the injury to the penis is correspondingly more extensive. These changes to circumcision made it much more difficult to make restorative efforts on the remaining foreskin after a circumcision. This

significantly more harmful and relatively recent approach to circumcision is the style of genital mutilation preferred by medical and religious professionals today. There is absolutely no chance that Abraham's children, Moses (intact) or his children, or Jesus of Nazareth were circumcised in this manner. Furthermore, when God made Adam he made him perfect, and he wasn't circumcised.

Other biblical imperatives: animal sacrifice, slavery, stoning of adulterous women, mandates against homosexuality – these have mostly fallen by the wayside. Judaism, except for the Ultra-Orthodox, has bridged the gap from ancient lore to modern day scientific enlightenment. Most Jews do not maintain kosher dietary laws, nor do they believe in laws forbidding travel or work on Shabbat. Why do they stubbornly maintain the atavistic ritual of circumcision? –Mark Reiss M.D.

According to Jewish law, *Halacha*, Jewish identity is purely matrilineal. If your mother is Jewish, you are Jewish, regardless of your circumcision status. Believing that one must be circumcised in order to be Jewish does not make it true, or historically accurate.

The Jewish alternative to circumcision is known as a Brit Shalom. This is a Jewish naming ceremony without circumcision. Begun over 150 years ago, this alternative service maintains the integrity of the Bris, while showing compassion and reason more respective of modern day understanding.

The Christian Religion Is Fundamentally Incompatible With Genital Mutilation

Christians took an adamant stance against circumcision in the earliest days of the Church. St. Paul, apostle to the

gentiles, ardently opposed circumcision. As clarified by Paul's teachings, circumcision directly contradicts Christian faith and teachings. The new covenant with God for Christians mandates forgiveness, compassion, and faith, not sacrifice. All Christian parents have a Christian obligation to love, nurture, and protect their children. Obviously these obligations would preclude unnecessary and harmful surgeries that offer no benefit and could potentially castrate or kill the child.

In the New Testament it reads:

Gal 5:2 – *Behold, I, Paul tell you that if you be circumcised, Christ will be of no advantage to you.*

Gal 6:13 – *And even those who advocate circumcision don't really keep the whole law. They only want you to be circumcised so they can brag about it and claim you as their disciples.*

Titus 1:10-11 – *For there are many who rebel against right teaching; they engage in useless talk and deceive people. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation. They must be silenced. By their wrong teaching, they have already turned whole families away from the truth. Such teachers only want your money.*

Gal 5:3 – *And I testify again to every male who receives circumcision, that he is in debt to keep the whole LAW you who do so have been severed from Christ... You have fallen from grace."*

Phil 3:2-3 – *Watch out for those wicked men – dangerous dogs, I call them – who say you must be circumcised. Beware of the evil doers. Beware of the mutilation. For it isn't the cutting of our bodies that makes us children of God; it is worshipping him...with our spirits.*

Even if your interpretation of Christianity differs from St.

Paul's, it should be noted that Jesus never forced his views on anyone. Religious tyranny is antithetical to Christ's example. Religious freedom means the right to choose one's own religion, not the right to impose circumscitious beliefs upon others. There are more than a hundred fatalities a year due to circumscisions. Castrations and other complications do occur. These children have been sacrificed for an ancient superstition, not true religious mandates. The Quran never once mentions circumcision. Islamic scholars are in dispute over the necessity of circumcision and in dispute over whether or not Muhammad was circumscised or born without foreskin.

Brit Milah

A Brit Milah is the traditional Jewish naming ceremony, which is when circumcision traditionally takes place. The term Brit Shalom means "Covenant of Peace". It is a non-cutting, peaceful alternative to the violent traditional Jewish cutting ceremony.

Circumcision stands in direct opposition to religious teaching prohibiting violence and sexual contact outside of marriage. Within the context of circumcision it seems any other molestation is culturally permissible. If we are to fall under the delusion that circumcision is somehow required of the faithful, we can overlook anything. But when you really think about it how could it be possible that circumcision is an innocent sexual mutilation? It manifests itself as deep perversions of the human spirit. This perversion is evidenced in the Messisa or Metzitzah, a third step not introduced until the Talmudic period (500-625 A.D.) wherein the mohel (in an act of pedophilia) sucks blood from the penis of the circumscised infant. Unbelievably the Rabbi explains that in order to more "easily" perform a circumcision the infant should be in a state of sexual arousal. According to the late Rabbi Snowman author of the book *The Surgery of Ritual Circumcision*.

When the penis of an infant is in a state of erection the operation is more easily performed and the dressing more efficiently applied. The manipulation of the organ necessary to grasp the prepuce is generally sufficient to stimulate the increased blood supply requisite for an erection.

When agreeing to have their child circumcised parents are fundamentally agreeing to a violent and sexual act to be done to their child. There are many people that do not need any religious justification for why that would be immoral and cruel thing to have done to their child, but for those that do, these are just some of the religious reasons not to circumcise.

Further Reading:

- *10 Circumcision Myths – Let's Get the Facts Straight*
- *Circumcision, the Primal Cut – A Human Rights Violation*
- *Celebrities Against Circumcision*
- *Common Bad Parenting Advice You Should Ignore*
- *Scientists Against GMOs – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*
- *Doctors Against Vaccines – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*

Sources:

- *Brit Shalom: An Alternative Naming Ceremony*– Mark Reiss, M.D.
- Jewish Circumcision Resource Center
- History of Circumcision
- *Christian Parents and the Circumcision Issue – Circumcision Information and Resource Pages*
- *Why Christians Need not be Circumcised – Circumstitions*
- *Did You Know Prophet Muhammad Wasn't Circumcised? – The American Muslim*
- *Islam and circumcision – Circumstitions*