

<p><b>The Jewish Movements Locally</b></p> 	<p><b>Orthodox</b> (Many United Synagogues including Finchley (Kinloss), Barnet, Woodside Park, Golders Green (Dunstan Road), many Federation Synagogues and Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations and Shteibels, also Sephardi and Mizrahi congregations)</p>	<p><b>Masorti</b> (New North London in Finchley, Kol Nefesh and Edgware Masorti)</p>	<p><b>Reform</b> (Alyth - North Western Reform NW11, Finchley Reform, Shaarei Tzedek N20, Edgware Reform)</p>	<p><b>Liberal</b> (Finchley Progressive)</p>
<p><b>God</b></p>	<p>Personal deity with special relationship with Jewish people. Divine providence and divine reward and punishment are real</p>	<p>Affirms existence of God but non dogmatic - Variety of interpretations</p>	<p>Affirms existence of God but non dogmatic - Variety of interpretations</p>	<p>Affirms existence of God but non dogmatic - Variety of interpretations</p>
<p><b>Origin of Torah</b></p>	<p>Divine origin Handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai.</p>	<p>Revealed but not literal word of God. Product of human transmission</p>	<p>Sinai a metaphorical narrative Torah written by humans with Divine inspiration.</p>	<p>Sinai a metaphorical narrative Torah written by human hands with Divine inspiration.</p>
<p><b>Halachah/ Jewish Law</b></p>	<p>Normative - eternal, binding and irrevocable. Understood as reflecting the will of God</p>	<p>Normative, though acknowledges human aspect in halachah and presence of disagreement in rabbinic material. Seeks to respond to modern needs from <i>within</i> halachic exercise.</p>	<p>Halachah is the product of human endeavour -important and formative but not determining of behaviour. Belief in responsible personal autonomy.</p>	<p>Halachah is the product of human endeavour Ethical aspects tend to be of a more binding nature than ritual ones.</p>
<p><b>Ritual</b></p>	<p>Religious obligations as defined in halachah</p>	<p>Religious obligations as defined in halachah</p>	<p>Driven by the rabbinic exercise but developing. Allows for new ritual and that ritual which is not valuable be questioned.</p>	<p>Ritual is intended to enhance spiritual lives and there is a bias against ritual which does not.</p>
<p><b>Kashrut</b></p>	<p>A religious obligation as interpreted by the rabbinic exercise - requirement for hechsher</p>	<p>A religious obligation as interpreted by the rabbinic exercise</p>	<p>Variety of practice as allowed by personal autonomy. Encourages study to reach own practice with bias in favour of observance of <i>mitzvot</i>. Awareness of other issues in how we produce and eat.</p>	<p>Variety of practice but kashrut not widely followed as not seen as spiritually valuable. Awareness of other issues in how we produce and eat.</p>
<p><b>Shabbat</b></p>	<p>A religious obligation as interpreted by the rabbinic exercise - 39 melachot</p>	<p>A religious obligation as interpreted by the rabbinic exercise - 39 melachot</p>	<p>A religious obligation to remember and keep Shabbat -<i>mitzvot</i> open to personal interpretation</p>	<p>Shabbat is intended to enhance spiritual life and should be done in such a way.</p>
<p><b>Women</b></p>	<p>Different roles and obligations from men. Sit separately in synagogue. Rabbi and cantor are male positions. Women not included in <i>Minyan</i></p>	<p>Differs between synagogues in the UK. With some taking Orthodox position and some having a variety of practice within them..</p>	<p>Egalitarian</p>	<p>Egalitarian</p>
<p><b>Conversion</b></p>	<p>Requires instruction on Jewish life, agreement to fulfil the commandments, <i>brit mila</i> and <i>tevilah</i> (immersion in a ritual bath). Procedure is supervised by <i>Beit din</i></p>	<p>Requires instruction on Jewish life, agreement to fulfil the commandments, <i>brit mila</i> and <i>tevilah</i>. Procedure is supervised by a <i>Beit din</i></p>	<p>Requires study of Jewish life, commitment to live a Jewish life, <i>brit mila</i> and <i>tevilah</i>. Procedure is supervised by a <i>Beit din</i></p>	<p>Requires study of Jewish life, commitment to live a Jewish life, <i>brit mila</i> in most cases. Procedure is supervised by a <i>Beit Din</i></p>

<b>Who is a Jew?</b>	Matrilineal descent or Orthodox conversion.	Matrilineal descent or conversion that includes <i>brit mila</i> and <i>tevilah</i> .	Matrilineal descent or conversion that includes <i>brit mila</i> and <i>tevilah</i> .	Either parent Jewish and a Jewish education with public identification
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### The Synagogue - Orthodox and Reform

Feature	Orthodox	Reform	Comments
<b>Ark (<i>Aron ha Kodesh</i>)</b>	Yes	Yes	
<b>Inscription above ark</b>	Yes	Yes	The one above the ark at Alyth reads "Worship God with happiness, come before God with joy"
<b>Everlasting Light (<i>Ner Tamid</i>)</b>	Yes	Yes	A few synagogues have an oil fired <i>Ner Tamid</i>
<b>Torah Scrolls (<i>Sifrei Torah</i>)</b>	Yes - Ashkenazi (German, Polish, Eastern Europe) or Sephardi (Spanish, Arab) style, depending on synagogue	Yes - Can be mix of styles	As Reform synagogues do not distinguish between Ashkenazi and Sephardi ritual they can have a mix of types of scroll. Also they are often less elaborately adorned in a Reform Synagogue and rarely publicise the name of the donor.
<b>Bimah (Raised Platform)</b>	Yes - In Ashkenazi Synagogue one at centre and one at front. In Sephardi Synagogue one at back and one at front.	Yes - Normally at front only	The first Synagogue with a Bimah at the front only was in Sessen, Germany in 1801. The advantage of this layout is that it tends to encourage greater decorum.
<b>Seating</b>	Yes - Normally fixed seating with storage space underneath so that <i>Tallit</i> and <i>Siddur</i> can be kept at the Synagogue in order to observe Orthodox Shabbat regulations. Many seats therefore reserved for "seat-holders."	Yes - Normally flexible seating so that the reservation of seats is discouraged. Storage under seats unnecessary.	The insistence on the <u>equality</u> of all the congregation which is a key factor in Reform Judaism has tended to result in the construction of plainer, more flexible synagogue buildings.
<b>Women's Seating</b>	Yes - In gallery or at back of Synagogue often with a <i>mehitzah</i> (screen) separating them from the men.	No- Men and women sit together.	Men and women sit together in all Liberal & Reform Synagogues. They sit separately in most Masorti synagogues. Men and women can be Rabbis in Liberal and Reform Synagogues. Only men can be Rabbis in Orthodox synagogues.
<b>Prayer book (<i>Siddur</i>)</b>	Yes - The two most popular in England are "Singers" (named after Rev Singer) and the "Artscroll"	Yes - A different prayer book from Orthodox Synagogues. <i>Seder Ha Tefillot</i> is the current Reform prayer book	Liberal Synagogues currently use the prayer book " <i>Siddur lev Chadash</i> ". Masorti Synagogues normally use the Orthodox prayer books. All synagogues use special prayer books for <i>Rosh HaShanah</i> and <i>Yom Kippur</i> . Much more English used in Liberal & Reform.
<b>Prayer wear (<i>Tallit</i> and <i>Kippah</i>)</b>	<i>Kippah</i> is obligatory for men at all times. <i>Tallit</i> is obligatory at morning services only. <i>Teffilin</i> are worn at weekday morning services.	Men wear <i>Kippah</i> during services and many wear <i>Tallit</i> during morning services, some at evening services. Women may also wear <i>Tallit</i> and <i>Kippah</i> .	Reform Jews tend to use their prayer wear at times that they personally consider meaningful.
<b>Decoration</b>	No pictures of human beings due to the Second Commandment	No pictures of human beings due to the Second Commandment	Inscriptions of passages from the Bible are popular forms of decoration for synagogues.
<b>Musical Instruments</b>	Organ or other musical instruments are often used for weddings but never for Shabbat services	Piano, Organ or other musical instruments are often an integral part of all services	No musical instruments are used on Shabbat in the Orthodox Synagogue as a sign of mourning for the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70CE (Common era)
<b>Hand wash basin</b>	Yes - at front door of Synagogue for purposes of ritual purity	No	The ritual purity laws are not part of Reform Judaism
<b>Nomenclature</b>	United, Federation, Adath, Chassidic, Sephardi	Liberal, Progressive, Reform	Liberal Synagogues are broadly similar to Reform Synagogues in style and practice. Masorti Synagogues are broadly similar to Orthodox Synagogues in style and practice.