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**OPEN HOUSE WITH PROF. RAPHAEL COHEN-ALMAGOR**

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Dear Sir,

Greetings from GNLU!

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, the GNLU Centre for Law and Society conducted its first Open House of 2018, inviting Prof. Raphael Cohen-Almagor (Director, MESH, School of Law and Politics University of Hull, United Kingdom) to share his views with students on the subject of “**Liberalism, Tolerance and Multiculturalism: The Bounds of Liberal Intervention in Affairs of Minority Culture.**”

Prof. Raphael began his discussion by sharing with the audience his intention to use the day’s session as a sounding board for his ideas, which were soon to be compiled into a book. He started by demarcating individual action into two kinds: self-regarding and other-regarding, explaining how intervention in both cases can be justified. He quoted examples such as the *Jain* practice of *Santhara* as well as the practice of scarring followed in Africa as a part of self-inflicted pain. He also discussed about practices affecting others, such as female circumcision, sati, honour killing and infanticide. He explained how in such cultural practices, it was always the women and children who would have to bear the maximum burden.

Prof Raphael went on to discuss the level of tolerance prevalent in a liberal society and how any liberal democracy cannot tolerate harm to others He also referred to the necessity of an exit principle, allowing persons to choose whether they wish to partake in a religious practice or not. He also referred to examples of closed groups such as the Bedouin Tribes as well as the Amish Christians to illustrate how often persons are forced to follow a culture in the absence of any other choice.

This was followed by a detailed discussion on the abolition of headscarves in France in schools. A comparative analysis was made with the situation in other jurisdictions like Germany and Netherlands. The Professor also opened the floor to further discussion as well as an analysis of the strict secular policy adopted by France and its impact on minority rights.

Prof. Raphael also opened the floor to questions at the end, answering queries on various subjects such as Brexit and Colonialism, as well as touching on the subject of LGBT+ Rights and their criminalisation in India. It was a deeply invigorating which introduced students to newer aspects of liberal thinking and the importance of deliberative democracy to sustain a liberal society.

For any further details, please contact Mr. Saurabh Anand, Director, GNLU Centre for Law and Society (+91-8128650808) or Ms. Aparajita (+91-7226062677).





# Gujarat National Law University

Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India

