

## Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association RESOLUTION

### STATEMENT ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION AND SELECTIVE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

1981

The Jewish people have historically placed great value on peace. Judaism identifies Shalom (Peace) as a Divine Name. (Vayikra Rabba 9:9)

The responsibility to "seek and pursue it" (Ps. 34:15) extends even to those tragic situations where war seems inevitable. Maimonides, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, wrote "You are prohibited from waging war against anyone in the world until you have attempted a peaceful solution of the problem." (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 6:1) In this period of increased international tensions, the need for seeking peaceful solutions is paramount.

We see this obligation to seek peace as incumbent on all people of good will. Warfare and violence diminish our common humanity and our share in the divine image. Peace should be pursued among nations, within our country, within our communities, and within our families.

Judaism is not monolithic in its approach to carrying out the obligation of peace. It acknowledges that there may be various answers to particular moral dilemmas.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association recognizes that many Jews will find in our tradition and experience sanction for participation in military service. But we also recognize that many Jews will find that they cannot endorse or participate in military service. We recognize the right of men and women, basing themselves in the Jewish tradition, to take a position of conscience against participation in warfare. This may be either as Conscientious Objectors or as Selective Conscientious Objectors to a specific war or type of wars.

We therefore urge the Government of the United States to uphold the rights of those who are Conscientious Objectors to any war and or Selective Conscientious Objectors to specific wars or types of wars.

We urge our members, congregations, and communities to make information on the draft, including the nature of C.O. status, available to young people now that registration has been reinstated.

Finally, we urge that a spirit of seeking peace unite those who may actually face the difficult decisions regarding military service or Conscientious Objection. Neither position can be an end in itself.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association will support the needs of those who choose to serve in the military as well as those who are compelled to take a moral stand against military conscription. We will support efforts to discuss war and peace, to increase understanding among conflicting groups, and to reduce the threats of warfare and nuclear annihilation.