

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
RESOLUTION
COMMITTEE ON RELIGIOUS STANDARDS
1980

The Reconstructionist concept of halakhah not only recognizes the need to adjust Jewish law to the ever-changing conditions of life, but also insists that the authority of law must be rooted in the Jewish people. The Jewish community, in order to assure dynamic and responsible progress, must itself be regarded as the source of authority for its religious standards.

We, the rabbis of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, in conjunction with the congregations we serve, find ourselves increasingly challenged to formulate realistic religious standards that are within the spirit of Jewish tradition. We must not act unilaterally, but must seek to involve our congregations in a thorough study of both Jewish tradition and contemporary wisdom in order that we may arrive at standards that will have the full authority and support of our congregation.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, therefore, urges its members to institute Committees on Religious Standards in their congregations, under the educational and spiritual guidance of the Rabbi, Lay people involved must be prepared not only to commit themselves to serious study over a period of time, but should also assist the rabbi in the educational process required to maximize adherence throughout the congregation. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association should serve as the national clearinghouse for the dissemination of the results of such local decisions.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association will provide its members with information on ritual matters in those areas that call for special expertise. However, this information should not be construed as authoritative, since we encourage each congregation to evolve its minhag (local custom) democratically.

However, in areas of interpersonal status that call for the officiation of rabbis, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association will appoint special commissions to write guidelines for its members. (e.g. marriage, divorce and conversion, etc.)