

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
RESOLUTION**

SALMAN RUSHDIE & THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

1993

Whereas on the fourth anniversary of the fatwa, the death edict pronounced by the Ayatola of Iran against Salman Rushdie, for his authorship of The Satanic Verses, the author remains in mortal peril;

Whereas few organizations, religious or secular, and among nations, only the United Kingdom and Germany have been willing to come to the aid or support of Salman Rushdie;

Whereas neither former President of the United States George Bush nor the leadership of Congress were willing to offer an audience to Salman Rushdie during his recent visit to the United States;

Whereas the spokesperson for President of the United states Bill Clinton recently stated: "We do not believe people should be killed for writing books... We regard the fatwa as a violation of Mr. Rushdie's basic human rights, and therefore a violation of international law."

Whereas contemporary Jewish, as well as American and Canadian democratic values affirm freedom of expression as a basic human right;

Whereas this value is central to Reconstructionism, in the words of Mordecai Kaplan, "All human beings, regardless of race, nation, or creed, are equally entitled to be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means to the satisfaction of other people's desires... entitled to realize their creative potentialities. This means that society must seek to provide men (sic) with the economic and cultural opportunities necessary for their maximum self-realization as persons. This is what is meant in the affirmation that men are created equal..." (The Future of the American Jew, p. 207).

Whereas the safety of Salman Rushdie is critical not only because of the inherent value of respecting the sanctity of human life, but because it bears a symbolic power representative of the human rights of all people and specifically their freedom of expression;

Whereas the government of Iran has reaffirmed the death edict against Salman Rushdie, whose Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, continues to view this position as morally correct;

Whereas the community of nations continues to neither hold Iran responsible for its actions, nor has it taken substantive action to bring necessary pressure to bear on Iran towards a change in policy;

Therefore, we affirm that freedom of expression is an inviolable human right that has been grossly denied in the case of Salman Rushdie;

Therefore, we urge members of the RRA to write world leaders, most specifically the President of the United states and the Prime Minister of Canada, to call for Iran to lift the fatwa, the death edict, against Salman Rushdie;

Therefore, we call upon members of the RRA to write the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada, urging them to sponsor a United Nations resolution condemning the death edict, declaring it to be a violation of international law, and calling for international action to press for its lifting; actions should bring diplomatic, economic, and cultural means of pressure to bear against Iran, linking the maintenance of normalized relations with the lifting of the death edict;

Therefore, we call upon members of the RRA to write the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada urging them to declare that linkage between normalized relations and the lifting of the death threat will hence force guide their future policies and that any discussions about normalized relations with Iran will require the lifting of the death threat as a precondition;

Therefore, we call upon members of the RRA to write Jewish organizations urging them to adopt resolutions in support of Salman Rushdie's freedom of expression and condemning the edict against his life;

Therefore, we call upon member of the RRA to write the President of the United states and the Prime Minister of Canada, urging them to press for the adoption of policies by all nations of the world that protect freedom of expression as a basic human right, and guaranteeing freedom from persecution as consequence of that expression, to be implemented by such means as are recommended here.