

Kehilla Resolution on the Death Penalty

The following resolution was drafted by Rabbi David Cooper and adopted by Kehilla's Board in October, 2000. It was updated in January, 2009, to conform with recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

“Whereas Kehilla Community Synagogue is committed to the biblical mandates to choose life and not to kill, and to see the image of the divine in each person, and whereas Kehilla is dedicated to the vision of the prophets of justice and mercy;

And whereas the Talmud's reinterpretation of the Biblical death penalty indicates the necessity for such a high level of our due process protection for the accused in a capital offense such that no earthly court could ever successfully meet such a standard;

And whereas the current reality in American jurisprudence shows recurring circumstances of racial and class bias, arbitrariness, and the execution of those with mental illness, and of the innocent in the application of the death penalty;

And whereas the use of the death penalty cannot be substantiated nor justified as a deterrent to murder, nor as a means of achieving resolution in the aftermath of a murder;

And whereas Kehilla believes that the use of the death penalty promotes a disrespect for the sanctity of human life;

Therefore, be it resolved that Kehilla Community Synagogue opposes the death penalty and will authorize representatives from Kehilla to advocate our opposition in appropriate forums and activities;

Therefore, be it further resolved that Kehilla Community Synagogue calls on the governors of all states, state legislatures, the President and the United States Congress to enact and adopt legislation imposing a moratorium on executions based on the above cited inequities;

Therefore, be it further resolved that Kehilla Community Synagogue believes that this moratorium on executions be viewed as a necessary step in the eventual abolition of the death penalty in the United States.”