

CCAR Resolution Calling Upon the Government Of Israel To Recognize Rabbi Miri Gold And To Cease Discrimination Against Non-Orthodox Jews

Adopted at the 120th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis

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Background

Over the years, the Central Conference of American Rabbis has adopted several resolutions concerning policies and practices of the Government of Israel which discriminate against non-Orthodox branches of Judaism.¹ The present controversy concerning Rabbi Miri Gold, a Reform woman rabbi holding the pulpit at Congregation Birkat Shalom in Kibutz Gezer, is an all-too-vivid example of how such discriminatory practices impede the religious lives of many Israelis, prejudice non-Orthodox Jews (and some Orthodox Jews as well) both within and outside of Israel, and are unjustifiable under any principled standard.

Rabbi Gold is one of 16 Rabbis serving the Gezer Region. Fifteen of these Rabbis—all Orthodox men—are recognized by the Government and receive a Government salary. Only Rabbi Gold receives neither Government recognition nor a Government salary, despite the facts that:

- Rabbi Gold serves as the Rabbi to a large number of Gezer residents.
- The Municipal Council of Gezer has acknowledged her as a Rabbi in that region.
- The Israel Supreme Court has declared that all branches of Judaism should be accorded equal treatment by the Government.
- A state committee studying the issue of rabbinic posts in regional councils has acknowledged a state obligation to fund non-Orthodox religious services.
- Only a small minority of the Gezer residents are Orthodox.
- Aside from reciting fundamentalist dogma, not even the beneficiaries of the discrimination have attempted to justify it on any principled ground.

¹ These resolutions include, among many others:
Resolutions on Jewish Religious Pluralism in Israel (1977, 1983, and 1984)
Knesset Conversion Bill (1998)
Support for Religious Freedom in Israel (2000)
Israel Supreme Court's Affirmation of Non-Orthodox Conversions in Israel (2002)
Progressive Judaism in the State of Israel (2002)
Non-Orthodox Marriage and Divorce in Israel (2006)

Litigation on behalf of Rabbi Gold is pending in the Israel Supreme Court, but the State has managed to delay it for over three years, and there is still no decision on the merits.

Most CCAR members live in North America; however, our membership includes scores of progressive Rabbis in Israel. Miri Gold is our colleague and our member. All of us, whether we live and serve in Israel, North America, Europe, Australia, Latin America, or anywhere in the world, share an interest in Rabbi Gold's case. Discrimination against non-Orthodox Jews and practices affects Jews throughout the world.

Therefore, while remaining firm in its commitment to continuing to build and uphold the strongest possible affinity between Jews of all streams and the State of Israel, the Central Conference of American Rabbis resolves to:

1. Reaffirm its prior resolutions concerning discrimination against non-Orthodox branches of Judaism.
2. Call on the government of Israel to recognize immediately Miri Gold as an official Rabbi of the Gezer Community.
3. Call on the government of Israel to apply government funding to support the work of Rabbi Gold and her peers, and to provide equal support, including financial support, to all streams of Judaism in the spirit of *klal Yisrael*, thereby fulfilling the religious pluralism and freedom that should be the hallmarks of the only Jewish and democratic state.
4. Continue to build and uphold the strongest possible affinity between Jews of all streams and the State of Israel; and
5. Call upon all of its members, the synagogues and other institutions they serve, and all Jews throughout the world, irrespective of denomination or nationality, to urge the Government of Israel (a) to recognize Rabbi Gold as an official rabbi of the Gezer Community, (b) to support her in the same manner and to the same extent as it supports other rabbis in that Community, and (c) to cease all discrimination against non-Orthodox branches of Judaism.

Rabbi Peter Knobel
President

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