

**TEXAS RABBIS' AND CANTORS' STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO THE DEATH
PENALTY**

We acknowledge that the Bible permits and even imposes the death penalty for certain situations. Yet the Talmud, the most authoritative Jewish work of Jewish law and practice today, severely limits the possibility of executing criminals, even murderers, and makes its application nearly impossible.

In the Talmud, the Rabbis observe that a court that executes a criminal even once in 70 years is a bloody court. Thus it is clear that Rabbis of the Talmud considered capital punishment to be repugnant, even though they could not completely abolish it because of its Biblical precedent.

Embracing this Rabbinic perspective, the State of Israel does not impose the death penalty, even for terrorists who have murdered countless numbers of its citizens. In its 64-year history, it has executed only one criminal, Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi leader responsible for the deaths of millions of Jews during the Holocaust.

We also have learned that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime and that the possibility of error in mistaken executions is exceedingly great. Because our Jewish tradition emphasizes the sanctity of human life, we are convinced such sanctity, already violated by murder, is not enhanced by capital punishment.

Therefore, we, the Rabbis and Cantors of Texas, representing diverse Jewish denominations, vigorously oppose the death penalty and strongly support its abolition in Texas.

Signed,

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