

THE REFORM MOVEMENT'S TRAINING OF PARA-RABBINIC  
PROFESSIONALS:  
DOES THE NEED FOR THESE PROGRAMS STILL EXIST?

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion

May, 2011

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## DIGEST

The Reform movement has been training lay leaders to serve in a rabbinic capacity for certain situations when a rabbi is not available. These programs had various names over their more than twenty year history, including Rabbinic Aide, Synagogue Skills and Torah Studies Seminar, Para-Rabbinic Fellows, *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates and *Had'rachah* Seminar. To date, there has been little formal documentation of the history and impact of these programs. Starting with the hypothesis that there is an on-going need in the Reform Jewish community for an educated lay leadership, the goal of this thesis is to document the history of the various programs and to determine if there are valid reasons for the Reform Movement to continue devoting resources to such efforts.

Rabbinic officiation at worship services and life-cycle ceremonies is not required by Jewish law, but over time officiation by ordained clergy has become customary, although not always possible. From Talmudic texts we learn that participating in leading worship and life-cycle events is the responsibility of all adult Jews. Yet, a professional rabbinate developed and *s'mikhah*, 'rabbinic ordination,' differentiates rabbis from 'para-rabbis.'

Congregational rabbis have the ability to train lay leaders, but in many congregations the heavy demands placed on professional staff do not allow time for the training of laity. Education through programs sponsored by the Reform movement serve both large and small congregations, but in small congregations, which can not afford full-time rabbinic leadership, these programs are often the only option for lay leaders to learn and enhance a basic skill set with which to serve their communities. Examining the experiences of para-rabbinic program participants and their impact on their congregations shows that a cadre of educated lay leaders can enhance and enrich congregational life and is worth continued dedication of resources by the Reform Movement.

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

A ‘paramedic’ is defined as a specially trained medical technician certified to provide basic emergency services (such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation) before and during transportation to a hospital.<sup>1</sup> A paramedic’s scope of practice is well defined and paramedics are licensed by the state in which they practice. A ‘paraprofessional’ is defined as a trained aide who assists a professional person. For example a ‘paralegal’ is a paraprofessional who assists a lawyer. There is no standardized training for paralegals. Paralegals are neither certified nor licensed. According to one lawyer I know, and based on my own pre-rabbinical school experiences, professional career in investment banking, a paralegal’s role is to facilitate transactions. They do not interpret law, nor do they provide legal advice. Unauthorized practice of law is punishable by state law. There is wide-use and acceptance of paralegals in professional law firms. While their individual responsibilities may vary from firm to firm, there is general industry-wide acceptance of their role. Ultimately the professionals for whom they work are held responsible for their efforts.

Unfortunately the words ‘pararabbi’ or ‘pararabbinic’ are not found in the dictionary. However, para-rabbinic<sup>2</sup> programs have existed in the Reform Movement since 1989. More akin to paralegals than paramedics, there is no standard definition of the skills a para-rabbinic can be assumed to possess or the responsibilities which a

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<sup>1</sup> This and all other definitions from Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this work the phrase ‘para-rabbinic’ in lower case letters is used as a generic term. Used as an adjective it applies to any of the Reform Movement’s rabbinic skills training programs; used as a noun it refers to an individual who attended any of the programs. When ‘Para-Rabbinic’ with capital letters is used, it refers specifically to the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program held from 1997 to 2001, which is fully described in Chapter III.

participant in a para-rabbinic program is trained to take on. Some para-rabbinics serve in congregations where there is no ordained rabbi. Others assist their congregational rabbi by undertaking what would typically be considered rabbinical tasks. Some congregations have several para-rabbinics, some have one, and many have none. Since the inception of para-rabbinic programs in the Reform Movement, there have been five different versions of these programs, each under a unique name. There has never been an attempt to document how these programs differed or the collective impact they and the individuals who participated in them have had on the Reform Movement.

From 1996 to 2005 I lived in an isolated part of western Washington State. My small, rural Jewish community existed only because of the dedicated lay leaders who invested time and effort into creating and maintaining it. With only 25 to 30 membership units and a budget of only a few thousand dollars, our community rarely benefited from the services of an ordained rabbi. Yet regular worship, holiday observances and a small religious school were all part of our community. A key factor in my ability to serve this community was my participation in the 2003 and 2004 *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Program.

I chose to research and write about the Reform Movement's para-rabbinic programs because my participation in a para-rabbinic program was life changing. My decision to apply to rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion was a direct result of my attendance and ability to serve my home congregation with the skills I learned in the SK/SA program. More importantly, because I saw first hand the significant impact that an educated lay leadership can have on Jewish communal

life, I felt the need to investigate the wider impact these programs have had on the Reform Movement as a whole.

At the outset of this effort a number of essential questions arose which impacted the approach to researching para-rabbinic programs in the Reform Movement. The first steps in comparing rabbis and ‘para-rabbis’ is to understand ‘who is a rabbi’ and if there are differences between the responsibilities of rabbis and Jewish laity. The question of what role a ‘para-rabbi’ might play in a community necessitated looking at two things: first rabbinic ordination, and second, the historic progression of professionalization of the rabbinate. Only by knowing what we mean by ‘rabbi’ can we decode the meaning of ‘para-rabbi.’ Other questions also arose. ‘From where does the authority for Jewish laity to serve in a rabbinic capacity arise?’ ‘How has the changing role of the rabbi over the course of modern times affect the way rabbinic authority overlaps with that of lay leaders in the Reform Movement?’ Most of these issues are unpacked in Chapter I, Sources of Rabbinic and Lay Authority. However, the discussion of the differences between ordained rabbis and para-rabbis (also referred to as ‘para-rabbinics’) appears in Chapter IV, after a detailed presentation of the programs provided in Chapter III. Understanding the specific skills taught in the programs and the post-program experiences of participants more readily brings to light the differences between para-rabbinic training and the intense 5-year course of study undertaken for ordination in the Reform Movement. Finally, given certain changes which have taken place in the Reform Movement over the more than twenty years these programs have been in existence, I address whether the need for a para-rabbinic program still exists within the Reform Movement. This discussion is presented in the Conclusion.

## **Interviews**

Relatively few files documenting the para-rabbinic programs from 1989 to 2005 were located during the research conducted for this study. Much of the para-rabbinic program information contained herein resulted from over fifty separate interviews conducted by the author between November 2009 and January 2011 with forty-eight different people. A list of the individuals interviewed is included directly after the bibliography. Some of these individuals provided notes, handouts and other material from their time in a para-rabbinic program. Others were able to provide daily schedules and participant lists. In some instances program schedules were available in files at the URJ offices. While none of the individuals interviewed asked for total anonymity, many remarks were made off the record and some degree of confidentiality was assumed. Therefore, quotes used throughout this document are attributed by type of interviewee, rather than attributed to specific individuals. For example, ‘one participant said...’ or ‘according to one program administrator...’ are used to indicate sources for quotes provided during interviews.

The para-rabbinic programs were conducted under the auspices of several organizations at different points in time and responsibility for their design and implementation was shouldered by many different professionals. The organizations included the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (known since 2003 as the Union for Reform Judaism), HUC-JIR and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Most of the individuals involved no longer work at the various organizations. In addition, Union offices moved during this time. Program files which they left behind when program administrators left the Union to pursue other professional interests can no longer be

located. Planned renovations at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, from where the program was administered from 2001 to 2006, required the removal of files from the specific offices and computers used by program administrators. Unfortunately, the end result of all these moves and personnel changes is that very few files which document these programs still exist. The most recent program, the *Had'rachah* Seminar, is under the direction of Cantor Alane Katzew, a URJ music and worship specialist. Cantor Katzew's office at 633 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave in New York City currently houses files related to the *Had'rachah* Seminar, and serves as a repository for one file drawer and one box of remaining files from earlier versions of the program. Although this material was extremely useful in researching this thesis, a significant amount of information was gleaned from personal interviews conducted by the author.

Research conducted through the vehicle of interviews is often, but erroneously, referred to as 'oral history.' Although an interview does relate an individual, personal experience, it becomes an oral history only when recorded, processed, indexed and made available in an archive, library or other repository.<sup>3</sup> Still, interviews for scholarly research which are not destined to become oral histories constitute a valid method of obtaining reliable information. Interviews conducted in researching this thesis, almost all of which were conducted by telephone, were not documented or archived in the manner of oral histories. However, every attempt possible was made to ensure the information gathered was as reliable as possible. For example, when an individual claimed responsibility for initiating or having significant responsibility in putting together a program, the fact was not reported unless it was cross checked with a different source. During the interviews

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<sup>3</sup> Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 24.

specific care was taken to differentiate between objective and subjective information. For example, an interviewee's recurring tendency to produce stereotyped generalizations resulted in the interviewee being viewed as a source of symbolic attitudes, but not as a source of reliable factual details.

Studies show that while individuals differ in their ability to remember, "accurate memory is much more likely when it meets a social interest and need."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, those participants who were most motivated to study in the para-rabbinic programs and enthusiastic about applying the skills they learned back at their congregations would have the best recall of program experiences. This proved true during the interview process. Therefore, interviewee self-selection and willingness to devote time to assisting in the thesis research enhanced the probability of amassing reliable information.

Sources related to conducting oral histories provide valuable guidance in how to assess information obtained during interviews. Signs that an interview might not produce worthwhile data include a constant flow of self-serving remarks or recall of an overwhelming number of events that cast the interviewee in an exceptionally good light. Honest admission when unable to recall names or dates could be considered an indication that the recollections which are offered are in fact genuine. In other words, getting the most out of what is told requires balancing faith in the individual's ability for honest recall with a small but healthy dose of skepticism.

Interviewees were grouped into specific cohorts, and each cohort interviewed with a standard set of questions. The cohorts were program administrators, program

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<sup>4</sup> Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. 3rd ed, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 132.

participants and sponsoring rabbis.<sup>5</sup> Through questions and responses, interviewer and interviewee together produce the product of the interview. Standard interview questions for the three cohorts are included in Appendix D. While these core questions applied to everyone, individual interviewees may have had unique experiences which could not have been anticipated. In compiling information for this work, unique self-expression was valued more highly than the ability to directly compare participants' experiences. A willingness to deviate from prepared questions when something unexpected or interesting came to light was essential in these interviews. Other deviations also occurred. For example, of the five sponsoring rabbis interviewed, some were asked questions specific to the para-rabbinics serving in their congregations. In addition to participants and sponsoring rabbis, ten program administrators were interviewed for this work.

A group comprised of five top level officials at the CCAR, the URJ and HUC-JIR, who were either directly involved or ultimately responsible for these programs were also interviewed, but for these interviews the questions were formatted based on the specific roles and responsibilities of each interviewee.

Lists of program attendees during specific years or periods of time do exist, but there is no master list of all attendees or of all sponsoring rabbis. Although today existing technology would be readily available to document and sort participants according to geographic location, size of home congregation and other relevant data, in 1989 such technology was not widely in use. There is no official count or estimate of how many participants have attended para-rabbinic programs. Through combining administrator estimates of attendance in given years with available participant lists, I estimate that there

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<sup>5</sup> In many of the programs participants' applications had to be endorsed by ordained clergy. The role of these 'sponsoring rabbis' is further explained in chapter III.

are anywhere from 350 to 400 individuals who participated in some version of a para-rabbinic program sponsored by the Reform Movement. The ability to make this estimate, which is nothing more than an approximation, is made even more difficult by the fact that when the program included two levels in consecutive years some participants only attended the first level or may not have attended the second level in the succeeding calendar year. Although a discussion of the total number of program participants may be better suited to the conclusion, it is incorporated here to indicate that a significant number of participant interviews were conducted. The twenty-eight program participants interviewed likely represents between seven and eight percent of the total cohort. Given the lack of existing program information, it was impossible for participants to be selected for interviews in a statistically relevant manner, but strategic selection resulted in participants from each of the four major programs being adequately represented.<sup>6</sup> The selection of participants for interviews was determined by ability to establish contact, identification in prior interviews and interest in participating in the interview process. In addition, self-selection took place with some participants coming forward after a solicitation for help was made through the URJ iworship list-serve. The lists of program administrators and organizational officials interviewed were also strategically, rather than statistically selected.

Overall, I have a great deal of confidence in the information presented herein. Yet, it would be disingenuous not to recognize the possibility that some recollections are more accurate than others. Given the lack of existing documentation, by necessity I relied on the memories of many individuals in order to create a portrait of the more than 20

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<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, no participants in the one-year, 1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Studies Seminar were located. However, an instructor in the program did verify that the Seminar did, in fact, take place.



years of para-rabbinic programs. I am honored that so many individuals chose to give of their time and share their stories with me. I have earnestly attempted to honor their efforts on behalf of the congregations and organizations they serve with an objective and honest representation of the programs with which they were involved.

## II

### **SOURCES OF RABBINIC AND LAY AUTHORITY**

A discussion of the relationships among rabbi, para-rabbis and other lay leaders in a community requires defining for each their source of authority and the role and responsibilities they have in the community. Although the existence of para-rabbis is a relatively new phenomenon, relationships between rabbis and lay leaders in the Jewish tradition have existed for hundreds of years. While there are unique sources of authority for each, some sources are shared. Because rabbis and lay leaders sometimes exercise their authority at the same time, tensions can result. Para-rabbis are often community leaders, yet in their role as para-rabbis their authority should be subordinate to that of the rabbi. To examine the role of para-rabbis in our Movement's communities, we must understand the role and defined responsibilities of the rabbi, and how this role has changed over time. Only then can we seek to examine how the authority of lay-leaders can encroach on rabbinic authority and the resultant consequences to the community.

#### **Rabbinic Authority in Texts**

Rabbinic responsibilities have changed significantly over time. Partly in response to world and local events, as well as in response to changes in societal norms, rabbis have had to adapt to the changing expectations of their community leaders. As times have changed, so have some of the rabbis' sources of authority. Because one of the key differences between a rabbi and para-rabbinic is that the former possesses rabbinic ordination, we begin with a discussion of how ordination began and developed over time.

Today's rabbinic ordination has its origin in Scripture. The modern Hebrew word *s'mikhah*, *s'mikhah*, meaning 'ordination' is derived from Numbers 27:18 which describes the appointment of Joshua as successor to Moses.

Numbers 27:18 <sup>WTT</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה קַח-לָךְ אֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
בֶּן-נּוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסָמַכְתָּ אֶת-יָדְךָ עָלָיו:

<sup>TNK</sup> **Numbers 27:18** And the LORD answered Moses, "Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him.

Thus, through the laying of hands, Moses invests Joshua with authority.

Numbers 27:20 <sup>WTT</sup> וְנָתַתָּה מִהוֹדְךָ עָלָיו לְמַעַן יִשְׁמָעוּ  
כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

<sup>TNK</sup> **Numbers 27:20** Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community may obey.

We learn from Scripture and Mishnah of the succession of authority from Joshua to the seventy elders to the prophets to the men of the Great Assembly.<sup>7</sup> Through successive ordinations there exists an unbroken chain of ordination from Moses down to the time of the Second Temple. As *musmakhim*, 'ordained judges,' these scholars were entitled to exercise the full range of legislative, judicial and executive powers of the seventy elders. The succession of scholars to seats on the Sanhedrin is also described in the Mishnah.<sup>8</sup> Through an unbroken chain of ordination the rabbis of the Mishnah and Talmud were established as successors to the *musmakhim*, and served as interpreters of both the Biblical and Oral Law.

In *Eretz Israel s'mikhah* continued because it could be traced back to the line of Moses. *S'mikhah* could only be granted by scholars residing in *Eretz Israel* to scholars present in *Eretz Israel* at the time of their ordination. Once ordained, a scholar could

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<sup>7</sup> Joshua 24:31 and *Avot* 1:1

<sup>8</sup> Sanhedrin 4:4

exercise his full authority outside the borders of *Erez Israel*. The title "*rabbi*" is therefore not used for Babylonian *amoraim*, since they did not possess *s'mikhah*. In Babylonia the title "*rav*" was used, and Talmudic literature maintains the distinction. The title 'rabbi' meant that a man could issue *halakhic* rulings, judge monetary claims, and declare animals fit for sacrifice.<sup>9</sup> After the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132–35 C.E.), the Roman emperor Hadrian attempted to end the authority still wielded by the Sanhedrin by forbidding the granting of *s'mikhah*. Although it was punishable by death, *s'mikhah* continued. Scholars differ on exactly how long, but it is generally believed that *s'mikhah* continued until the latter part of the fourth century.<sup>10</sup>

Although any qualified Jewish person could serve as a judge in civil cases, *s'mikhah* was required to adjudicate in criminal matters involving capital punishment, as well as “to judge cases involving corporal punishment and fines, to intercalate months and years, to release the firstborn animals for profane use due to disqualifying blemishes, to annul vows, and to pass the ban of excommunication.”<sup>11</sup> Moses Maimonides (Rambam) addresses his understanding of *s'mikhah* in his *Mishneh Torah*, even going as far as to suggest a way in which it could be re-established.<sup>12</sup>

Little is known of western Jewish history between the fall of the Roman Empire and the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Re-emerged Jewish life was not accompanied by centralized Jewish institutions, and ordination was relatively unknown. Evidence of a new rabbinate emerges in the 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century, “when there are more and more cases of open election

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<sup>9</sup> See Sanhedrin 5a and b

<sup>10</sup> Schwarzfuchs, Simon, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1993, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, Eds. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, s.v. “Semikhah.”

<sup>12</sup> See *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Sanhedrin*, Chapter 4.

by the community of a spiritual and moral leader.<sup>13</sup> The rise of Jewish communities in 11<sup>th</sup> century Europe combined with a favorable attitude for Jewish self government by the ruling German Kingdom led to notables and learned men serving as judges. As these communities grew so did the complexities of business, and the services of a scholar of Jewish law were required. Over time the distinction was made between the administration of the community and the administration of the law. Those involved with the latter were called Ha-rav. The rabbi of the Middle Ages, in which there is a gradual institutionalization of the office, is the first to resemble the modern idea of a rabbi, because in addition to deciding matters of law, he is teacher, preacher and spiritual head of the Jewish community. Eventually in this period each community came to have its own Rabbi, whose authority was limited to the community which had chosen him. During this time neither *s'mikhah* nor the title *Harav* is associated with the priestly authority or functions of the ordination of ancient times. In the 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> century different areas have different ways of attesting to rabbinic authority. For example, there is a type of ordination evidenced by “a *ketav masmikh*, ‘certificate of judging.’ This effectively ordains the student to be called *hakham* ‘the scholar,’ or rabbi, but this ordination is not affected by the laying on of hands. Ordination is achieved through the writing of a certificate of ordination.”<sup>14</sup>

*S'mikhah*, no longer in use since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, makes a reappearance in the literature of the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the uprooting of Jewish communities and migrations of Jewish scholars created a need to safeguard the continuity of academic

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<sup>13</sup> *Rabbi, Rabbinate*. Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, Alexander Carlebach, Wolfe Kelman, Judith Baskin, and Louis Rabinowitz. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 17. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, p. 11-19. 22 vols.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

traditions. In the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Black Death decimated many European communities. Not only was there a reduction in rabbinic studies, but the continuity of medieval institutions was almost non-existent. At the time there was much uncertainty as to the qualifications of candidates to rabbinic posts. In order to restore sacred studies, there arose a need for something which would qualify a candidate. In Germany the title *Morenu harav* “Our teacher the rabbi” was conferred in writing<sup>15</sup> along with *hattarat hora’ah* ‘the authorization to render decisions.’ Not only were rabbinical candidates judged on intellectual qualifications and moral conduct, but evidence as to who judged them fit to be ordained was also sought. Furthermore, lay leaders were not willing to allow rabbis too much power. A typical *ketav rabbanut*, ‘rabbinic contract’ from the 14<sup>th</sup> century would often severely limit the rabbi’s power. In Venice, for example, use of a ban as an enforcement tool would be totally dependent on lay leader approval.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the title *Morenu* was increasingly used as a symbol of social status in the community, but the ability to exercise authority was dependent on the consent of the community which had bestowed it. In a contract from 17<sup>th</sup> century Venice the rabbi was forbidden to ordain except with the approval of lay leaders.<sup>17</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries it became common for rabbinical students to seek ordination from leading rabbinical figures in addition to that received from their own teacher. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany had become the center for Reform Judaism. The scientific study of Jewish history and religion became equally as important as the

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<sup>15</sup> According to Simon Schwarzfuchs, the granting of such documents may have paralleled medieval universities which granted graduates documents in writing as well. See Schwarzfuchs, Simon, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1993, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> Saperstein, Harold I., *The Origin and Authority of the Rabbi*, in Stevens, Elliot L., ed. *Rabbinic Authority*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Saperstein, Harold I., *The Origin and Authority of the Rabbi*, in Stevens, Elliot L., ed. *Rabbinic Authority*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982, p.19.

knowledge of Talmud. As a result many communities demanded that rabbis also be versed in secular studies.

Today ordained rabbis function as agents of the rabbis who received ancient *s'mikhah*. “today we are all lay judges...[the *s'mikhah*] is merely an attestation by a teacher that the recipient, his student, ‘has attained the requisite knowledge to rule on matters of Jewish law and does so with the permission of the rabbi who has ordained him’... all rabbinical power today flows from the willingness of a community to abide by the rabbi’s rulings.”<sup>18</sup>

Historically and in modern times communities rely heavily on an ordination certificate as an indication of scholarly ability and character when deciding whom to accept as their rabbi. In return the rabbi is able to teach Torah and be the community’s spiritual leader. But compensation for rabbinic services was not always a given.

### **Development of the Professional Rabbinate**

By definition a ‘profession’ is a principal calling, vocation or employment.<sup>19</sup> To ‘employ’ is to provide with a job that pays wages or a salary.<sup>20</sup> The discussion of rabbinic ordination above touches upon rabbis seeking positions as community rabbis, but does not address the issue of compensation in such positions. Understanding the development of a professional rabbinate will provide insight into which professional responsibilities fall under rabbinic prerogative and which matters are appropriate for the role played by a para-rabbinic. In addition, a better understanding of the issue of compensation will assist

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<sup>18</sup> *Who is a Rabbi?* CCAR Respona 5759.3, <http://data.ccarnet.org/cgi-bin/respdisp.pl?file=3&year=5759> accessed on July 18, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

in determining the impact of the compensation process on the authority of the different players in the process.

The prohibition against using Torah in order to make a living is made clear in the Mishnah, in tractate *Avot* 4:5:

“Make [the words of Torah] not a crown with which to make yourself great or a spade with which to dig. Thus Hillel used to say; ‘He that makes worldly use of the crown shall perish. From this you learn that he that makes profit out of the words of the Law removes his life from the world.’”  
The Talmud presents passages both in support of and in opposition to rabbinical

salaries and benefits. Career rabbis are not conceived of in the Talmud. We learn only of a *talmid hacham* ‘disciple of the scholar,’ there is recognition of the tension between studying for the sake of Heaven and earning a living. Rabbis of the Talmud had secular professions by which they supported themselves. Some worked in agriculture or as blacksmiths, tanners, shoemakers, carpenters or merchants. A number of Talmudic passages oppose remuneration for teaching words of Torah. Mishnah *Bekhorot* 4:6 states:

“If one takes payment to act as a judge, his judgments are void; if for bearing witness, his witness is void; if for sprinkling or for mixing the ashes, his waters become the waters of a cavern and his ashes the ashes of a hearth.”

According to this Mishnah, acceptance of monies or other payment for holy work of sprinkling waters or the ashes of a red heifer for purposes of purification would annul the holiness of both the water and ashes, rendering them profane. We read in the *Gemara* to this Mishnah in *Bekhorot* 29a:

“Rab Judah reported in the name of Rab: Scripture says: Behold I have taught you, etc. Just as I teach gratuitously, so you should teach gratuitously.”



The referenced verse is Deuteronomy 4:5 is the referenced verse.<sup>21</sup> Moses is telling the Israelites that just as God taught him, he has imparted to them (the Israelites) the law and rules. Rab Judah intimates that there was no compensation in either case.

Another text from which the prohibition of earning any benefit from the teaching of Torah is derived is found in *Baba Batra* 8a:

“Rabbi once opened his storehouse in a year of scarcity, proclaiming: Let those enter who have studied the Scripture, or the Mishnah, or the Gemara, or the Halakhah, or the Aggadah; there is no admission, however, for the ignorant. R. Jonathan b. Amram pushed his way in and said, ‘Master, give me food.’ He said to him, ‘My son, have you learnt the Scripture?’ He replied, ‘No.’ ‘Have you learnt the Mishnah?’ ‘No.’ ‘If so,’ he said, ‘then how can I give you food?’ He said to him, ‘Feed me as the dog and the raven are fed.’<sup>22</sup> So he gave him some food. After he went away, Rabbi's conscience smote him and he said: Woe is me that I have given my bread to a man without learning! R. Simeon son of Rabbi ventured to say to him: Perhaps it is Jonathan b. Amram your pupil, who all his life has made it a principle not to derive material benefit from the honor paid to the Torah. Inquiries were made and it was found that it was so; whereupon Rabbi said: All may now enter.”

In this story Rabbi's pupil Jonathan b. Amram, even though starving, acts on the principal that one should never receive a benefit or compensation of any kind, not even food, for study of holy texts.

At first Talmudic passages permitting rabbis compensation seem to directly contradict those that expressly forbid it. However, we will see that the sages continue to uphold the prohibitions, but find two basic concepts on which the permissibility of rabbinic compensation is based. The first passage presented, from *Bekhorot* 28b – 29a, makes a distinction between payment for ritual obligation and payment for *tircha*, ‘trouble.’ Mishnah 4:5 of *Bekhorot* states:

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<sup>21</sup> Deuteronomy 4:5 "See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it.

<sup>22</sup> The reference is to Psalm 147:9 which says “who gives the beasts their food, to the raven's brood what they cry for” meaning ‘As God can feed these, so you can feed me.’

“If one takes payment for inspecting firstlings, none may slaughter at his word, unless he was as skilled as Ila in Jabneh whom the sages permitted to accept four issars<sup>23</sup> for small cattle and six for large cattle, whether unblemished or blemished.”

The *Gemara* explains:

“What is the reason? In one case, he has much trouble, whereas in the other case, he has not much trouble.”

Whether Ila pronounced the firstling to be unblemished, and therefore fit for offering, or pronounced that it possessed a permanent blemish, thereby disqualifying it for offering, he would still take full payment for his examination. In this way, there was no possibility that his ruling would be influenced by the promise of payment. The *Gemara* asks why there is a difference in payment between large and small cattle, and it is here that we find a reason on which to allow rabbinic compensation. In both cases in order to inspect the cattle, he must throw the beast to the ground in order to bind it so he is able to examine it. In the case of the large cattle it is more difficult and requires more effort than in the case of smaller cattle, so his meager payment is a bit larger. Ila is not being paid for judging whether the cattle are fit for offering. He is being paid for the trouble (*tircha*) of wrestling the beasts to the ground. The prohibition against compensating for holy work remains in force, but the expert is paid for the trouble (time, expense, etc.) involved in making the ruling.

The second concept on which the sages based the permissibility of rabbinic compensation is *sekhar batalah*<sup>24</sup> (compensation for loss of work). In *Ketubot* 105a a lengthy discussion is found about judges of civil law in Jerusalem:

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<sup>23</sup> Roman coins usually of the value of one twenty-fourth of a denar i.e., a nominal sum.

<sup>24</sup> At times the phrase appears in Aramaic as *agar bateilah*

“Karna used to take one *istira*<sup>25</sup> from the innocent party and one *istira* from the guilty party and then informed them of his decision.”

A discussion of Exodus 23:8 which states "And you shall not take a bribe..."<sup>26</sup> follows, but for purposes of this discussion a portion of the discussion immediately thereafter is more relevant:

“Karna took [the two *istira*] as a fee. But is it permissible [for a judge to take money] as a fee? Have we not in fact learned: The legal decisions of one who takes a fee for acting as judge are null and void?<sup>27</sup> This applies only to a fee for pronouncing judgment, while Karna was only taking compensation for loss of work.”

We learn further in the discussion that Karna was regularly employed at a wine store for which he was paid a fee, but the idea of *sekhar batalah* (compensation for loss of work) is established.

Rabbinic compensation justified on the basis of *tircha* and *sekhar batalah* may be viewed as indirect compensation, but by establishing the permissibility of tax-exemptions for rabbinic scholars, as we see below in the text from *Nedarim* 62b, the Talmud clearly puts forth a supporting argument for financial benefits to rabbis.

“Raba said: A rabbinical scholar may declare, I will not pay poll-tax, for it is written, “it shall not be lawful to impose *mindah* [tribute] *belo* [custom] or *halak* [toll] upon them.”<sup>28</sup> Whereon Rab Judah said: *mindah* is the king's portion [of the crops]; *belo* is a capitation tax, and *halak* is a tax for the sustenance of marching troops.”

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<sup>25</sup> A small coin valued at one-half *dinar*.

<sup>26</sup> Exodus 23:8 "And you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just."

<sup>27</sup> See Kid. 58, Bek. 29a.

<sup>28</sup> Ezra 7:24 We further advise you that it is not permissible to impose tribute, poll tax, or land tax on any priest, Levite, singer, gatekeeper, temple servant, or other servant of this House of God.

There are other passages in the Talmud that further support compensation for rabbinic scholars, but more importantly, we have established that “there is evidence of the Rabbinate as an institution, in service of, and supported by, the Jewish community.”<sup>29</sup>

Rabbinic literature in the post-Talmudic period further supports the professionalized rabbinate. Maimonides was the last of the great scholars to oppose payment to rabbinic sages. One example of comments opposing rabbinic remuneration can be found in his commentary to *Avot* 4.5.<sup>30</sup> He says, “know that the meaning of the saying that ‘one should not make the Torah a spade with which to dig’ is that one should not consider it a means for making a living.” He goes on to say that others have misunderstood this clear statement and have led others astray in thinking that they should support scholars and students whose only occupation is the study of Torah.<sup>31</sup>

The 11<sup>th</sup> century Spanish authority Isaac Alfasi wrote a responsum dealing specifically with the hiring of a Talmudic scholar and the contract between the scholar and community leaders regarding his teaching of Torah. The contract also discusses the compensation the scholar would receive for doing so. There is no attempt on Alfasi’s part to justify the use of Torah for financial gain.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, leading halakists refuted Maimonides’ legal objections to the payment of rabbis.<sup>33</sup> The professionalization of the rabbinate defined by compensation continued through the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and was firmly established by the 16<sup>th</sup> century when a salary for the *rab ha-ir*, ‘community rabbi,’ became common.

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<sup>29</sup> Rheins, Richard Steven, “The Development of the Professional Rabbinate as Evidenced in the Halakhic Sources,” Rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1989, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> The text is presented on page 7.

<sup>31</sup> Based on a translation in Rheins, op. cit., p. 65. For a full discussion of Maimonides commentary on payment to rabbinic sages see Rheins, op. cit., p 63-86.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-50 deals with this responsum and additional commentary by written by Isaac Alfasi.

<sup>33</sup> The consensus is summarized in *Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh De’ah* 246:21, in the gloss by R. Moshe Isserles.

## **The Changing Role of the Rabbi in Modern Times**

The professionalized rabbinate, together with the development of the modern *s'mikhah*, was the precursor of the post-enlightenment, modern rabbinate in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Jewish histories of the period discuss the transitions which took place in great detail, but a number of salient factors which greatly impacted rabbinic authority are worth highlighting.

Historically rabbinic authority lay in mastery of the law and enforcement through compulsion and coercion. The rabbi was the keeper of the law, deciding on matters of ritual. In the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the *Haskalah*, 'the Jewish Enlightenment,' people no longer accepted rabbinic authority as divinely sanctioned. In light of science, democracy and freedom of thought, rabbis lost much of their influence. Emancipation and the establishment of rabbinical seminaries in Europe and America resulted in the replacement of the communal rabbinate with the synagogue and rabbi as the focal point of organized Jewish life. The seminaries which opened at this time attempted to supplant classical training with required new skills. In addition, in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most rabbis in America were immigrants, neither acculturated nor adequately trained in English. American rabbinical schools, to some extent, functioned as finishing schools. However, because of Jewish illiteracy on the part of the laity, the rabbi was still the custodian of Jewish knowledge. Now rabbinic authority, while still dependent on a depth of understanding of Jewish law, also required scholarly accomplishment and acceptance by a synagogue community.

When the German reformers brought their vision of Judaism to American soil, a new rabbinate developed. Modeled on what lay leaders saw as impressive in Christian

clergy, Reform Judaism and its rabbis, attempted to harmonize general and rabbinic culture in what would become known as Classical Reform Judaism. As the central officiant of the public worship service, Reform rabbis “were first and foremost preachers. Ability on the pulpit was invariably the criterion of success or failure.”<sup>34</sup> Sermons were topical and the most eminent preachers combined oratorical skill with knowledge of contemporary intellectual issues. The admiration of lay leaders was expressed through munificent salaries, and rabbis exercised significant influence in their congregations. For the next fifty years Reform Jews would be drawn to synagogue, not by classic Jewish texts or religious themes, but by the sermon of a charismatic preacher, inspired by current events, editorial pages of newspapers and popular books.

In the decades which followed changes in world events changed what Jews heard from the pulpit. During the 1930s and 1940s many of those entering the rabbinate were drawn to it by the prophetic imperative of social justice. The Depression, the New Deal, fascism and the struggle for the creation of a Jewish state were primary concerns. For many, questions of spirituality and the quality of inner life seemed irrelevant in a world that challenged continued Jewish existence. In the aftermath of World War II Jews reflected on the monstrous evil of the Holocaust and the period engendered, for a while at least, a new openness to issues of the spirit. Concern with spiritual matters continued into the early 1960s as America moved to the suburbs. Suburbanization caused the greatest synagogue building boom in America between 1945 and 1965. The building or re-building of more than one thousand synagogues and temples maintained the rabbi as the focal point of the Jewish community.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Meyer, Michael A., *Response to Modernity*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1988, p. 280.

<sup>35</sup> Sarna, Jonathan D., *American Judaism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2004, p. 279.

During the 1950s and 1960s social and universal concerns like world peace, civil rights and inter-faith relations dominated the Jewish consciousness, and social issues were again at the forefront. In subsequent decades, prompted by particularistic concerns such as the survival of the State of Israel, and Soviet Jewry, American Judaism and its rabbis focused inward. At the same time, however, the counter culture of the late 1960s and 1970s was having a profound effect on America. The reverence and respect shown to authority figures in every sphere dropped precipitously, and religious institutions, including the rabbinate, were no exception.

The 1970s ushered in a period of experimentalism and interest in matters of the spirit. In Judaism the emphasis on egalitarianism brought about the *havurah* movement which emphasized do-it-yourself Judaism. While the *havurah* movement never replaced synagogue-based Judaism, its countercultural ideals, focus on community and relaxed decorum greatly impacted mainstream Judaism. Along with an empowered laity (which is discussed below) came discussion-based learning, group singing and participatory prayer, all of which changed the role of the rabbi in the Reform movement. No longer was the intellectual, social activist orator venerated by congregational leaders. A more approachable, spiritually- engaged pastoral presence was desired.

### **Today's Rabbinic Authority**

In part rabbinic authority is derived from the age-old Jewish concept of *Kavod Harav*, 'honor due the rabbi.'

"There is no greater honor than that due a teacher, and no greater awe than that due a teacher. Our Sages declared: 'Your fear of your teacher should be equivalent to your fear of Heaven.'"

---*Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah Chapter 5:1*

As Jewish society and the larger American society in which it exists have changed, the roles rabbis play have changed as well. In turn, rabbinic authority has also been affected. *While Kavod Harav* still exists, its bestowal is no longer protected by divine sanction.

Studies show that America has seen a distinct decline in religious authority.<sup>36</sup> Cultural shifts noted by sociologists include declining respect for authority and declining confidence in established religious institutions.<sup>37</sup> Even rabbis are not immune to many of the same forces at work in our larger society. Rabbis, just as other religious figures, are sometimes involved in extramarital affairs or other inappropriate sexual relationships. Rabbis have been known to use financial funds inappropriately and otherwise abuse their positions of authority. Unfortunately one individual's inappropriate behavior often reflects on all clergy. In 2003 an article by Jack Wertheimer, Provost of The Jewish Theological Seminary, cited the declining prestige of the rabbinate as one of the reasons why Conservative and Reform synagogues were finding it difficult to attract rabbinic leadership.<sup>38</sup>

Today, in addition to the possible display of questionable behavior, the rabbi is no longer the most highly educated individual in the congregation. As an expert in Torah the rabbi's knowledge has the breadth of the full spectrum of Jewish values, liturgy and observance, but the existence of university Jewish studies programs and well-educated laity has produced a cadre of learned individuals in Jewish history, literature and philosophy. While the rabbi has some knowledge of these subjects, there is likely someone in the congregation who knows even more.

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<sup>36</sup> Wuthnow (1988) cited in Waxman, Chaim I., "The Role and Authority of the Rabbi in American Society", in Stone, Suzanne Last, ed., *Rabbinic and Lay Communal Authority*, Yeshiva University Press, New York, 2006, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>38</sup> Wertheimer, Jack, "The Rabbi Crisis," in *Commentary*, 2003, p. 35-39.



By virtue of title and position, the rabbi is seen as a vehicle for bringing God into congregants' lives. It is the quality and impact of the rabbi's personality, sincerity, commitment and caring ministry which can earn respect and admiration, and even, affection and loyalty from the congregation. *Kavod Harav* is still evident in the Reform Movement. Today, as in the past, rabbinic honor and authority are derived from scholarly achievement and moral standing, but perceived authenticity, powers of persuasion and personal religiosity are factors as well. Some argue that the importance of the rabbi's role as interpreter of an evolving tradition is being usurped by personality and the rapport he develops with the congregation.<sup>39</sup> Yet, by virtue of the congregation's hiring the rabbi, it chooses, without feeling compelled, to accept that rabbi's authority, and personality definitely plays a role. Today's rabbi does not compel, but urges; she does not enforce, but explains.

Today, *s'mikhah* and the title 'rabbi' have no power to confer authority. In theory, they are evidence of potential authority to be granted by a community. However, today's Reform rabbinic authority is limited to only guidance and inspiration.

### **Lay Leader Authority**

As established above the ability to hire and fire rabbis has always given lay leaders a tremendous amount of power in each individual synagogue community. Today, in addition to exercising significant authority locally, Reform Movement laity acts through the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), formerly the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). When the UAHC was established in 1873 its only goal was the creation of a rabbinical seminary. Today, comprised of more than 900

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<sup>39</sup> See Kroloff, Charles A., *Unity Within Diversity*, in Glasser, Joseph B., ed. *Tanu Rabbanan: Our Rabbis Taught*, New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1990, p. 98.

congregations, the URJ “provides vision, direction and leadership to Reform Jews and congregations on spiritual, ethical, social justice and management issues, offering programming support to Reform Jewish congregations and strengthening individual Jewish identity and growth.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, through committees, programs and initiatives, there is no Jewish matter in which laity does not have a voice.

The root from which springs laity’s authority is, of course, textual. The fact that all Jews are required to observe the 613 *mitzvot* is what gives lay people the responsibility to carry out the skills taught in the Reform Movement’s para-rabbinic programs. Any Jew who is obligated to perform a *mitzvah* may assist another in fulfilling that obligation. In Section 589:1 of the *Shulkhan Aruch* we read:

“Whenever one has no obligation to [perform] a matter, his performance of it may not serve for others who are obligated to perform it to fulfill their obligation in the matter.”

While this text appears not to address the situation of the para-rabbinic, an explanation in the *Mishnah Berurah*,<sup>41</sup> a work of *halakhah* by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (Poland, 1838–1933) better known as the *Chofetz Chaim*, shows that it does. The *Mishnah Berurah* to the *Shulkhan Aruch Orach Chayim* 589 No. 1 explains that for “one who has no obligation to perform a matter, the statement above holds true. However, if the obligation to perform the matter is relevant for him, but he happens to have no obligation now

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<sup>40</sup> Union of Reform Judaism webpage, <http://urj.org/about/union/> accessed on December 25, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> The *Mishnah Berurah* is a commentary on *Orach Chayim*, the first section of the *Shulkhan Aruch* which addresses laws of prayer, *synagogue*, *Shabbat* and *holidays*. The *Mishnah Berurah* summarizes the opinions of the *Acharonim* (post-Medieval rabbinic authorities) on *Orach Chayim*.

because he already fulfilled his own obligation, his act may serve for his fellow to fulfill his obligation.” It further states that “he may even make the blessing for his fellow.”<sup>42</sup>

The para-rabbinic’s authority to lead services and participate in life cycle events without the presence of ordained or invested clergy is part of our Jewish tradition. The relevance and applicability of traditional Jewish sources to the para-rabbinic programs puts more focus on *who* is qualified to perform these functions, rather than on the functions themselves. The para-rabbinic does not need or have any authority that distinguishes him from all other adult Jews, because there is no such authority. Any Jew who has the skill set to lead a service may do so, but our communities have historically sought for that function individuals who are distinguished by certain moral characteristics. Section 53:4-5 of the *Shulkhan Aruch Orach Chayim* reads as follows:

“4. A community prayer leader<sup>43</sup> must be worthy [of this post]. One is considered worthy if he is free of transgression, has not incurred a bad name even in his youth, is modest, is acceptable to the public, has a pleasant and sweet voice and is accustomed to reading Torah, Prophets and Writings. 5. If one can not find a person who has all these virtues, one should choose the best [available member] of the community from [the point of view of] wisdom and good deeds.

We see that there is a preference for a prayer leader to be a moral individual who is well respected, even liked, by those whom he is to lead in prayer. Knowledge of Hebrew is essential,<sup>44</sup> so that he can pronounce the Biblical verses which appear in the liturgy. If, however, these qualities are lacking in the individuals present, clearly it is still better to have a service leader than to do without, and the best of those available should lead.

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<sup>42</sup> See *Mishnah Berurah* to the *Shulkhan Aruch Orach Chayim* 589 No. 1.

<sup>43</sup> The Hebrew uses the abbreviation ת"ש meaning ‘*sh'liach tzibbur*.’

<sup>44</sup> See *Mishnah Berurah ad loc.*, note 18.

The text then goes on to establish issues related to gender and age<sup>45</sup>, but in Section 53:11 there is a discussion related to an individual's motivation to be a service leader.

“If a community prayer leader prolongs his praying so that his pleasant voice should be heard [then, if] the reason why he does so is that he is inwardly happy at giving thanks lyrically to *Ha-Shem*, Blessed be He, he is worthy of blessing, provided that he prays with gravity and stands in awe and fear of his Maker. However, if he intends his voice to be heard and rejoices in the quality of his voice, this is shameful behavior. Nevertheless, any community prayer who prolongs his praying does not act commendably, because he burdens the congregation.”

This is directly applicable to individuals serving as para-rabbinics. We learn that their motivation must not be their own aggrandizement. They must only take on the para-rabbinic role if their intent is to serve the community, and do so without overburdening it with prayers whose duration are longer than what is customary. In other words, the service leader must put the congregation's prayer experience before his own.

Another portion of the text which is directly related to a community's use of para-rabbinics is Section 53:22 which states:

“A community prayer leader employed for remuneration is more desirable [than one who serves] gratuitously.”

In the *Mishnah Berurah* to the *Shulkhan Aruch Orach Chayim* 589 No. 63 it states

“a paid community prayer leader will himself be more careful with his praying and his standards, since he is a hireling...Even when there is someone available who is prepared to serve free of charge...a paid community prayer is more desirable.”

This is particularly relevant with regard to congregations who are using the services of a para-rabbinic in lieu of a paid professional. In other words, the *halakhah* fully accepts the

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<sup>45</sup> Since modern sensibilities render gender and physical handicaps non-issues in the Reform movement, sections of the text dealing with determining suitability based on gender, age and physical traits, such as those used to determine the onset of puberty and those considered 'defects,' are omitted.

concept of a ‘professional’ prayer leader, who is paid to perform the role. Payment by the community to a professional ensures that those who facilitate ritual life meet certain standards of performance.

There are two functions which para-rabbinic program organizers have always maintained must remain rabbinic prerogatives, weddings and conversions. However, there is nothing in traditional Jewish literature which demands the presence of a rabbi or cantor at a funeral, wedding or any other Jewish life cycle observance. “The evolution of the rabbinate to its present state, in which the rabbi leads services and conducts weddings, funerals. etc., is part of the specialization of modern society as well as the feeling of inadequacy on the part of many Jews, Orthodox, Conservative or Reform, in conducting Jewish ceremonies.”<sup>46</sup> In Talmudic times laymen were able to perform weddings and conversions. However, it was stated that “he who does not know well the subject of divorce and betrothals should not be involved with them.”<sup>47</sup> So, based on the intricacies of the laws of marriage and divorce, scholars required learned men to be present at the wedding ceremony. Maimonides decreed that there could be no marriage or divorce in the Jewish community without an ordained rabbi.<sup>48</sup> With regard to conversions, it is only through ordained rabbis that the Jewish community may “insure the quality and the validity of conversions procedures.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>“Funeral Without Rabbi or Cantor” in Jacob, Walter, *Contemporary American Reform Responsa*, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1987, pp. 150-151.

<sup>47</sup> *Kiddushin* 6a and 13a.

<sup>48</sup> Maimonides, Responsa, 156 quoted in Jacob, Walter, *American Reform Responsa*, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, 1983, p. 403.

<sup>49</sup> “Who is a Rabbi? 5759.3,” in Washofsky, Mark, ed., *Reform Responsa for the Twenty-First Century: Sh'eilot Ut'shuvot*, Vol. 1, 1996-1999/5756-5759, CCAR, New York, 2010, pp. 319-329.

## **UAHC/URJ Initiatives**

Under the Presidency of Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, z”l, the UAHC grew from 400 congregations in 1973 to almost 900 in 1996. One of the resultant issues was finding rabbis to serve these congregations. In 1989 writing about the next century on the occasion of the Central Conference of American Rabbis’ 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Rabbi Peter J. Rubinstein predicted the shortage of rabbis would be one of the issues facing the rabbinate in the future. In the last few decades enrollment at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion has ebbed and flowed. In response to economic conditions and perceived job satisfaction and availability upon ordination, enrollment has been cyclical. When enrollment rose in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a perception developed that perhaps there was an oversupply of rabbis. Partially in response to that perception enrollment dropped in the late 1990s. The perception of a professional shortage was fueled by mid-sized congregations not always attracting their choice of candidates for Assistant positions and the fact that pulpits at smaller, less affluent congregations in isolated Jewish communities would often remain unfilled. These congregations had trouble attracting and retaining clergy, but the shortage of Jewish professionals included more than just rabbis. It also encompassed cantors, educators and administrators. In late 1999 the Reform Movement created the Reform Leadership Task Force on the Shortage of Jewish Professionals.

The group investigated many questions regarding how to expand the future supply of Jewish professionals. Among those questions was “How can we re-divide the congregational pie to allocate more tasks to informed volunteers, leveraging the time of

our professionals? How do we train those volunteers appropriately?”<sup>50</sup> In one of four key recommendations of its Final Report, the Task Force noted the issue of clergy burn-out, and suggested “enhancing the notion of lay-professional partnership” as a way to address it. In addition, the final report of the Task Force cites its’ assistance in initiating the *Sh’liach K’hilah*/Synagogue Associate program, one of the para-rabbinic programs described in Chapter III.

In 1996 UAHC leadership passed to Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, and in the first few years of his presidency education issues dominated his agenda. Envisioning the synagogue as an interdependent learning community, he instituted a major effort, announced at the 1997 Dallas Biennial, to promote adult learning and literacy. At its center would be the newly created Department of Adult Jewish growth.

Rabbie Yoffie also recognized that to stay current and engaging Reform congregations needed to take advantage of the new enthusiasm for spirituality. He introduced initiatives that encouraged more informal, participatory worship and saw music as key to revolutionizing the worship experience. Under his leadership the Reform Movement came out with the first new prayer book in more than thirty years. Work on the new *siddur* began with a survey, “not of theology and clergy, but of laity... The survey described lay expectations of worship as participating in community and seeking renewal of spirit through ritual, music, and intellectual engagement with the Torah.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Final Report, The Reform Leadership Council Joint Task Force on the Shortage of Jewish Professionals, June 2003, <http://archive.urj.net/leadership/shortage-final/> accessed on October 26, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> Frishman, Elyse D. “Entering *Mishkan T’filah*,” CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly, Fall 2004, Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York 2004, p. 57.

In a nod to the importance of lay leadership, *Mishkan T'filah*, in both the weekday morning service and Shabbat Morning Service I, includes the following reading attributed to Paula Ackerman<sup>52</sup>. It is offered as an alternative to *Eilu D'varim*,<sup>53</sup>

“We need Jewish men and women to become a Jewishly inspired and informed leadership – not only rabbinical but also lay. We need Jews more conversant with the thought and teachings of Judaism, to whom Judaism is no cold remote theology and Hebrew learning a matter of mystical ignorance, and to whom Jewish culture is no proxied culture. We need a reassertion of faith and a reawakening of interest in a cultural heritage that is all too rapidly being relegated to the exclusive possession of graduates of rabbinical seminaries... We desperately need such lay leaders today with vision and fortitude.”

Although it was not until 2006 that the new *siddur* was formally introduced into Reform congregations movement-wide, other initiatives continued to empower the movement's laity by increasing Jewish literacy. In 1996 Rabbi Yoffie introduced *Torat Hayim*, an online and e-mail weekly commentary on the *parashah*. In November 1997, Rabbi Yoffie unveiled an initiative to encourage every Reform Jew to read significant Jewish books. Since then, the Union has selected eight volumes each year and prepared accompanying study guides to facilitate self and group instruction. In 2002 Rabbi Yoffie called upon Reform Jews to commit 10 minutes a day to the study of a Jewish text, launching “10 Minutes of Torah.”

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<sup>52</sup> Paula Ackerman was married to Dr. William Ackerman, the Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel in Meridian, Mississippi. Upon his death in November, 1950, the congregations asked then President of the UAHC, Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, for permission to have her succeed her deceased husband in the pulpit. Although Eisendrath had informally already given permission, he later withdrew his approval. However, the congregation allowed her to serve as spiritual leader for two and one-half years, conducting services, preaching, teaching, and performing marriages, funerals, and conversions. For more see Umansky, Ellen, “Paula Ackerman,” Jewish Women's Archive, <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/ackerman-paula> accessed October 15, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> “These are the things...,” the prayer which denotes real world responsibilities “of which a person enjoys the fruit of the world, while the principal remains in the world to come.” *Mishkan T'filah*, pp. 44 and 206.



At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Yoffie called for a revolution in worship with an unprecedented partnership between clergy and laity. In his sermon delivered at the 65<sup>th</sup> UAHC Biennial Convention in 1999, he shared his view for the future of the Reform Movement:

“We do not want to be rabbis who are spiritual imperialists, insisting that worship is ours alone; we do not want to be cantors who are operatic obstructionists, intent on performance at the expense of prayer; and we do not want to be lay people who are conscientious objectors, objecting to everything that is not as it was.

What we do want is for our members to join together with rabbi and cantor in creating worship that leaves us all uplifted – connected to ancient wisdom and to our deepest selves.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Overlap of Lay and Rabbinic Authority**

Reform Judaism developed in America’s democratic society and its theological base promotes personal autonomy above dogma. Both these factors, along with UAHC initiatives, empowered Reform laity to exert themselves in all aspects of religious life. In the first few decades of the 1900s lay leadership in American Reform synagogues focused on temple administration, while religious matters were left to the rabbi. After its first few decades the UAHC emphasized increased lay participation in all areas of synagogue life. Ritual observance, liturgical and ceremonial issues, once the sole purview of ordained clergy, today fall under shared authority. Synagogue boards and ritual committees engage in discussion, negotiation, compromise, concession and decision making with, and sometimes even without, clergy.

The community’s willingness to abide by a rabbi’s interpretations and rulings is based on the long-standing *minhag*, ‘local, common practice,’ of turning to Jewish scholars and sages, but the power of *minhag* can also been used as a tool by laity to

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<sup>54</sup> Yoffie, Rabbi Eric, *Realizing God's Promise: Reform Judaism in the 21st Century*, Sermon delivered at the 65th UAHC Biennial Convention, Orlando, Florida.

impose a particular point of view on the rabbi. This is especially true when a new rabbi comes to a community and finds its *minhag* contrary to his own practice. One of the reasons laity can play such a powerful role is that in Jewish tradition *minhag* is a valid source of Jewish observance and can have greater precedence than *halakah*. Historically when *minhag* may have appeared to contradict *halakhah*, rabbinic authorities did not rush to denounce it. The apparent contradiction was reconciled by first demonstrating that the custom was not forbidden. Then the formal legal rules were reinterpreted so that the practice, hallowed by time and custom, no longer violated *halakhic* principle. In this manner *halakhists* could defend the practices of their communities. In modern times, while a new rabbi might want to influence observance in a new direction, the ritual committee is likely motivated to preserve local *minhag* and continue conducting the ritual as it has always been performed.

Another avenue that lay leaders might use to encroach on rabbinic authority is through the Jewish tradition's reverence for elders. Some lay-leaders may attempt to use their long-standing membership in the congregation to exert undue influence on rabbi. In some congregations past presidents remain on executive boards indefinitely. While the wisdom provided by these elders is of great value, sometimes change is necessary and those who have lived with and become most comfortable with the status quo are often the most resistant to changing it.

Lay encroachment on rabbinic authority is not always a conscious act. Emphasis on informality and clergy approachability is often welcomed by rabbis and lay leaders alike. Friendships between clergy and congregants, calling the rabbi by her first name, relaxed dress at services, all serve to blur lines of authority. Even the priestly blessing

from Numbers 6:24-26,<sup>55</sup> once reserved for rabbis to bless their congregations or participants in life cycle events such as marriages and *b'nai mitzvah* ceremonies, is being used by laity both ceremonially and as communal prayers in services. In addition, as lay leaders become more accomplished in their professional lives, their demeanor and the authority they wield in the world outside the synagogue has a tendency to surface in congregational life.

However, in a system of synagogue management based on democratic ideals, the rabbi-laity leadership model also serves as a system of checks and balances. Some consider this a positive element since Jewish tradition does not have a general rule of rabbinic infallibility. Today it is not unheard of for lay leaders to openly question and disagree with clergy during committee meetings. Temple boards believe they have been invested by the congregational membership to oversee all aspects of religious life. Lay leaders see themselves as having ultimate responsibility for the future of their synagogue communities. In fact, traditionally individuals do have some level of culpability for sins committed in reliance on rabbinic pronouncements.<sup>56</sup> Even more to the point, from the perspective of longevity, in many congregations, laity often outlast clergy.

As a result of the decline in rabbinic authority and aspects within our tradition, movement and society which elevate the status of laity, some lay leaders have become empowered to see themselves as the only driving force behind synagogue life. Others, however, see themselves in partnership with their rabbis sharing the role of congregational leadership, as has been the tradition in Jewish life since the Middle Ages.

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<sup>55</sup> May God bless you and protect you. May God deal kindly and graciously with you. May God bestow favor upon you and grant you peace.

<sup>56</sup> See Horayot 2a.

### III

#### DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VARIOUS PROGRAMS

In the late 1980's the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' (UAHC) Department of Adult Education, concerned about the general lack of educated laity in the Reform Movement, began deliberations on what would constitute the requisite body of knowledge for a literate Reform Jew. According to Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, then Director of Adult Education at UAHC, at about this same time at a Union convention of small congregations it came to light that there were approximately 200 small congregations within the Union which did not enjoy full-time rabbinic support. Both these situations contributed to the Union's development of the Rabbinic Aide Program under his direction, along with that of Union Vice President Rabbi Daniel B. Syme.

#### 1989 to 1995 Rabbinic Aide Program

In the summer of 1989 15 people gathered at the UAHC's Kutz Camp-Institute in Warwick, NY for 15 days of study at the same time as summer camp for Reform youth was in session. While participants in the Rabbinic Aide Program attended their own workshops and classes, the two groups often shared meals, song sessions and Shabbat religious services. According to one participant in 1990 "The [Rabbinic Aide] Program was kind of fun. It was like going to camp."<sup>57</sup>

Within the group there were varying degrees of Hebrew knowledge. There was no Hebrew prerequisite other than to be able to read phonetically. One participant was a *b'nai mitzvah* tutor; another couldn't read Hebrew without transliteration, much less

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with author, October 7, 2010.

understand it.<sup>58</sup> The full range of Hebrew levels was matched by a full range of reasons for attending the program. In the first year of the program all the participants were from small congregations without full time clergy. Over time, participants from larger congregations with full-time rabbis also attended to learn how to participate as leaders in congregational life. For example, some program participants came to learn how to run a *shiva minyan* or lead services. Others came to learn how to conduct Torah studies. Their goal was to provide assistance and support to over-burdened clergy. For the most part, personal enrichment in the form of adult education was of secondary importance to developing and enhancing skills with which to serve the community. For some attendance was suggested by their rabbi who sought assistance in meeting ever-growing congregational needs. In one case, a congregational rabbi suggested the program to one of his congregants as a way of getting “a taste of rabbinical school.” Participants were recruited through letters to congregational presidents and rabbis.

Application to the program was non-selective. A application for the 1995 program is included in Appendix C. Program organizers asked participants to speak with a rabbi prior to applying to the program, and that the rabbi sign-off on their application. The purpose was so participants would have some understanding of the tasks and role they would be taking on as leaders in the community, says Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor.

Although it was made clear to participants that post-program they were not to present themselves as trained to officiate at Jewish weddings or conversions, relevant material was included in the program for the first two years. The material was included so that participants could provide support and education in these areas between congregants’

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<sup>58</sup> By 1993 applicants were expected “to have participated in basic Jewish Study on an adult level.” In addition, it was stated in a recruiting memo to Rabbis and Presidents of UAHC congregations that “It is helpful if the applicant can decode basic Hebrew texts.”

meetings with ordained rabbis. This was perceived as especially helpful to those in isolated rural areas that might go for long periods of time without visits from ordained clergy.

Some participants recall that one or two others came to the program with the goal of later officiating at such life cycle events. Although these individuals were not upfront with program administrators regarding their intention to do so when they applied, according to other participants “their agendas came out over time.” One story often repeated from that first year is that two participants went as far as having business cards printed up with their names and the phrase “Certified Rabbinic Aide” as their title. UAHC officials say they quickly stepped in and successfully thwarted the attempts of these individuals to present themselves as able to officiate at weddings and other life cycle events, although no documentation substantiating this story was found. According to program administrators, shortly after this situation came to light a letter went out to all program participants with a reminder that attendance at the program was aimed at their serving their own communities, not as a vehicle for personal income.<sup>59</sup> Participants were not to receive financial remuneration for their para-rabbinic services.

The program typically began on a Sunday evening with introductions, camp orientation and dinner. From then on a typical day began with breakfast at 8:00 am, followed by *tefilat shacharit*. Program participants were assigned roles as service leaders, preachers and Torah readers throughout their stay. In the first few years of the Rabbinic

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with author.

Aide Program a typical day might look as follows<sup>60</sup> (sample sessions included in parenthesis):

- 8:00 - Breakfast
- 9:15 - **Text Study and Homiletics**  
(Reading Torah / Commentaries / Midrash / Structure of the Sermon / *D'vrai* Torah )
- 10:30 - **Reform Jewish Belief**  
(Torah / Talmud, Law and *Halakhah* / God and Theology) or  
**Introduction to Life Cycle Celebrations**  
(Wedding and Wedding Addresses / *Brit Milah* and *Brit Chayim*)  
or  
**Supervising the Religious School or**  
**Community at Large**  
(Representing the Jewish community / inter-faith relations / joint communal projects) or  
**Pastoral Care**
- 12:30 - Lunch
- 1:30 - **Structure of the Synagogue Service**  
(*Siddur* / Friday evening service / Shabbat morning / Festival services / Rosh Hashanah and its Liturgy / Yom Kippur and its Liturgy) or  
**Introduction to Life Cycle Celebrations**  
(Funerals and Eulogies/ Conversion) or  
**Ethics**  
(The prophetic tradition / Daily Decision Making / Business Practices) or  
**Social Justice**
- 3:30 - **Free time**<sup>61</sup>
- 6:00 - **Hors D'oeuvres**
- 6:30 - Dinner
- 8:00 - **Presentation**  
(UAHC / Small Congregations / Working as a rabbinic aide / Pastoral Care / Marriage and Family / Outreach / The Worship Experience / Music for the Synagogue / *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* / Torah Reading/ the Torah Service / Teaching Texts / Social Justice / Synagogue Management)

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<sup>60</sup> This schedule was compiled from "Rabbinic Aide Program Curricular Outline and Schedule" for the years 1989 through 1993, and 1995 found in files at the offices of the Union for Reform Judaism, 633 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, New York, NY.

<sup>61</sup> Participants often used "free" time to prepare for leading services, practicums and to meet with faculty.

There was practicum in which each participant was assigned a life-cycle event or specialized address, such as a eulogy or *b'nai mitzvah* charge. The address was delivered, and then critiqued by program staff and participants. Service leading was handled the same way.

The programs' fifteen day sessions included two *Shabbatot*, which were typically celebrated with Friday night services and song sessions attend by the entire camp community. After Shabbat morning services participants attended a *parashat hashavuah* study session. Lunch was followed by free time in the afternoon, a barbeque, and then *Havdalah* with the whole camp. The final day of the program fell on Sunday. A morning session dealt with evaluations and goodbyes, after which participants departed.

Program administrators served as faculty, but additional presenters were recruited from rabbis serving in northeast congregations, faculty of HUC-JIR and executives of the UAHC. According to Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor, program administrator, program planning began by identifying the skill set participants would need to serve their congregations. Then experts in each area were recruited to teach sessions in their area of expertise.

In the first year of the program Monty Syme, *z"l*, instructed participants in the art of sitting with bereaved families and drawing out how their deceased loved ones had touched people's lives. Alexander M. Schindler, *z"l*, UAHC President discussed *K'lal Israel* (Reform in relation to other denominations in the context of the larger community of Israel) and taught about leadership.

Other faculty of note in the first year of the program included Rabbis Norman Kahan, Director, UAHC Department of Small Congregations, Stuart Geller, Daniel B.



Syme, Margaret Moers Wenig, Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, and Dr. Norman J. Cohen, Dean of HUC-JIR Rabbinical School in NYC..

As the program continued year after year, organizers continued to attract talented individuals to teach participants. For example in 1990 Dr. Lawrence Hoffman taught about the synagogue service and Rabbi David Saperstein led a session on engaging congregations in social justice issues. That same year Lydia Kukoff and Dr. Kerry Olitzky spoke on conversion and intermarriage. The faculty in 1991 included Rabbi Elyse Frishman, Rabbi Daniel Freeland, Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin and Rabbi Marc Geller.

In 1994 Rabbi Charles Kroloff conducted a session on marriage and family. Midrash was taught by Rabbi Norman Cohen. Rabbi Daniel Freeland, Director of Programs at UAHC presented sessions on Union programs and on Music for the Synagogue. Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin taught about pastoral care, including hospital visitation and crisis counseling and Dr. Seymour Rossel, Director of the UAHC Department of Religious Education presented a session on Supervising the Religious School. Also in that year Rabbi Jack Stern, Jr., Chair, UAHC Ethics Committee and Mel Merians, Chairman of the Board of UAHC presented on Ethics and Responsibilities of Leadership, respectively. Program faculty often returned to teach in later years. Although travel expenses were provided, faculty in the program did not receive compensation or honorariums.

From its onset the program tried to touch on every aspect of congregational life, providing participants with a basic skill set to serve their communities. The UAHC recognized the program as an opportunity to make participants aware of various programs and initiatives. For example in 1992 a session on NFTY and UAHC Youth Programs was

included and in 1994 Ms. Kathy Kahn, then UAHC Outreach Coordinator for the New Jersey West Hudson Valley, conducted an evening session on Outreach which dealt with intermarriage and speaking with intermarried couples, their parents and children. It was also an opportunity to make participants aware of UAHC's Introduction to Judaism class.

Participants in the program were provided with a basic Jewish library. One participant in 1990 remembers receiving the following books while at Kutz:<sup>62</sup>

- Rabbi's Manual, CCAR
- Gates of Song, Transcontinental Music, 1987
- Gates of Prayer, CCAR Press, 1975
- Gates of Repentance, CCAR Press, 1983
- The Torah, A Modern Commentary, Plaut, 1981
- A Tikkun
- A Rabbinic Anthology, Montefiore and Loewe, 1974,
- Gates of Understanding, Hoffman, 1977
- Liberal Judaism, 1984, Borowitz, 1984
- The Talmudic Anthology, ed. Newman and Spitz, 1945
- The Jewish Home, Syme, 1988
- Gates of Understand 2, ed. Hoffman, 1984

In 1993 the cost of the program, which included books, study materials, room and board, had risen to \$1,550 a few hundred dollars more than the program's original cost in 1989.<sup>63</sup>

After the initial program in 1989 word-of-mouth and other publicity brought almost double the number of participants to Kutz Camp in the summer of 1990. Two sessions were held that year and in 1991. Throughout the life of the Rabbinic Aide Program, sessions were purposely limited to 20 participants because of limited space at Kutz Camp-Institute. For many of the participants, especially for those from small

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<sup>62</sup> Cohen, Alex and Dyan, 1990 Rabbinic Aide program participants, Darlington, SC, unprocessed papers.

<sup>63</sup> Participants interviewed remember the program's original cost to be between \$1,000 and \$1,200. No corroborating documentation was found.

congregations in isolated areas, one of the highlights of the program was participants experiencing of Shabbat in a large, enthusiastic Jewish setting. This was achievable only if the Rabbinic Aide sessions were held at the same time as camp was in session. The trade-off was the need to limit the number of participants because of space limitation at Kutz Camp.

In the spring 1992 Reform Judaism carried an article about an unexpected result of the first para-rabbinic program of 1989. Two participants “who had met at Kutz Camp in 1989 at the first UAHC Rabbinic Aide Program, were married last September. Mazel Tov!” The item was accompanied by a wedding picture.<sup>64</sup>

The spring 1993 issue of Reform Judaism magazine carried an article about the Rabbinic Aide program. It began “‘Nine rabbis,’ holds a Jewish proverb, ‘can’t make a *minyan*, but ten cobblers, yes’” The UAHC has been taking this proverb seriously by developing the Rabbinic Aide Program...”<sup>65</sup> Copies of this and all other notices from Reform Judaism Magazine about the para-rabbinic programs are included in Appendix A.

A memo announcing the 1993 program states that “During the summers of 1989 to 1992, eighty-five men and women from large and small UAHC Congregations” had participated, and that “All reports thus far indicate great potential for the program as a vehicle for strengthening our member congregations. Indeed two former participants are now enrolled in HUC-JIR as rabbinic-students.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Reform Judaism Magazine, Spring 1992, p. 63.

<sup>65</sup> Reform Judaism Magazine, Spring 1993, *Rabbinic Aides: Empowering Laity*.

<sup>66</sup> Undated memo from Rabbi Daniel B. Syme and Rabbi Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor to Rabbis and Presidents of UAHC Congregations and the UAHC Board of Trustees in the files of the Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living, at the New York City offices of the Union for Reform Judaism.

In 1995, the last year of the Rabbinic Aide Program, Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, who had served as Dean of the program since its inception, left his position at the UAHC to serve as a congregational rabbi. That summer the program held two sessions, each limited to 20 participants, at Kutz Camp-Institute. Student Rabbi Roz Landis, who had previously served as Assistant Dean in 1994, served as Dean in place of Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor. In addition, Rabbi Michael Matuson served as Rabbi in Residence and taught a significant number of program sessions. Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor attended as a guest lecturer. Other program faculty of note in 1995 were Rabbi Elyse Frishman, who conducted sessions on High Holiday liturgy and Rabbi Eric Yoffie who spoke on the Responsibilities of Leadership.

No program of this nature is without difficulties or detractors. One difficulty which several program administrators discussed during interviews was that not all program participants were well suited to the tasks they envisioned participants would undertake once back at their congregations. With regard to this issue, one para-rabbinic program administrator said “it if was the right person it could be a wonderful thing, but I don’t remember every person [in the program] being the right person.”<sup>67</sup> In the fall of 1995 a group of rabbis and UAHC personnel were convened to review the Rabbinic Aide Program. The committee found that the needs of participants from small congregations differed substantially from those attending from larger congregations, and that the program could be redesigned to better suit the former. The program was criticized for its

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with author.

length, cost, and duplication of topics already featured at biennials and other UAHC sponsored events.<sup>68</sup>

In some circles the program was problematic, because it attracted a number of individuals who unabashedly promoted themselves as clergy-equivalents based on the training they received. The committee believed that by strengthening the application process and by exercising more control over who was admitted into the program, participants whose motives or personality may not have been suitable could be weeded out. In addition, the group recommended eliminating the use of certificates of completion,<sup>69</sup> which had previously been awarded, and a change to the program's title eliminating use of the phrase "Rabbinic Aide."

During this time letters in support of the program from congregational rabbis reached Rabbi Eric Yoffie, then UAHC President-elect.<sup>70</sup> Although the committee believed that the program should be redesigned to only serve smaller congregations without full-time rabbis, many rabbis disagreed. Rabbis with program participants in their congregations felt the individuals had subsequently made significant contributions to their congregations and communities.

In a January 1996 letter to Rabbi Paul Menitoff, Executive Vice President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Daniel Freeland, National Director of

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<sup>68</sup> A draft of the memo evaluating the program exists in the files at the URJ Offices at 633 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, New York, NY.

<sup>69</sup> A reduced-size copy of one of these certificates is included in Appendix B. The actual certificates issued were fourteen inches by eleven inches.

<sup>70</sup> Copies of such letters were found in the URJ files at 633<sup>rd</sup> Ave, New York, NY.

Programs at the UAHC, explained the problem with some program participants from mid-size to larger congregations.<sup>71</sup>

“Even though we have required a Rabbi’s recommendation/endorsement for participation, delegates have arrived with mixed messages about their roles. Some rabbis send them to receive para-rabbinic training, so that the graduates can help the Rabbi cover tasks for which the Rabbi desires assistance...Others arrive as “frustrated Rabbis” who want to either function as Rabbis for Rabbi-less congregations (something we quickly discourage), or subconsciously may want to undermine their own Rabbi by offering to do things the Rabbi doesn’t necessarily desire.”

The Rabbinic Aide program was slated for a one-year hiatus in 1996, but with plans that it be overhauled and reintroduced in 1997.

### **1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Studies Seminar**

In the summer of 1996 a one-week program was made available to representatives of small congregations without full time rabbis. The Synagogue Skills and Torah Studies Seminar was offered in August and held at Olin-Sang Ruby UAHC Camp Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, under the direction of Rabbi Allen S. Kaplan. Its location, shorter duration, and lower fee were all aimed at attracting participants from smaller congregations. No information is available regarding the number of individuals who attended.

The most significant program change instituted at this time was in the application process. The Rabbinic Aide program had required a bare-bones application which asked for name, address, phone number, date of birth and occupation, along with signatures from a rabbi and a congregational president. For the 1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Studies Seminar the application asked for specific information about participants’

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<sup>71</sup> Undated memo from Rabbi Daniel B. Syme and Rabbi Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor to Rabbis and Presidents of UAHC Congregations and the UAHC Board of Trustees in the files of the Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living, at the New York City offices of the Union for Reform Judaism.

motivation for taking the course and expectations of what they hoped to come away with. In addition, a written reference from the applicant's congregational rabbi, president or UAHC regional director was required. Applicants were specifically directed that their references "should evaluate your general mental health, your current skill level, and your aptitude for undertaking a rigorous program of study." Most importantly, the applicants signed their applications indicating that they understood the following:

"The Seminar on Synagogue Skills and Torah Study is intended to enhance the participant's Jewish learning. No certificate is offered. It is not a license or qualification of any kind. The participant understands that this course does not substitute for rabbinic training, and accordingly the course does not qualify the participant to perform a Reform Jewish wedding or to supervise a conversion."<sup>72</sup>

### **1997 to 2001 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program**

The Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program made its debut in 1997. Again applicants were sought through letters to rabbis and congregational presidents, and notices in Reform Judaism Magazine.<sup>73</sup> Promotional materials showed the program was being organized by HUC-JIR New York's Adult Jewish Living and Learning team, but that it was to be held at HUC-JIR's Cincinnati campus. Another significant change was that this program was co-sponsored by UAHC, HUC-JIR and the CCAR. However, the CCAR was, for the most part, a silent partner in day-to-day program operations. The CCAR considered the program under the purview of the Union, but asked to be kept informed of any major developments. One CCAR official remembers that in 1996 the CCAR's major concern was that the program was giving the people going through it just "enough knowledge to be dangerous." Not in every case, but for some participants "the little

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<sup>72</sup> A copy of the 1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Study Seminar application is included in Appendix C.

<sup>73</sup> These notices typically appeared in the 'UAHC & You' or the 'Happenings' column. Copies of such notices are included in Appendix A.

knowledge they had was giving them more authority than they had knowledge to support,” he said.<sup>74</sup> The program’s name was changed from ‘Rabbinic Aide’ to ‘Para-rabbinic Fellows’ in order to address this issue.

According to Rabbi Kenneth E. Ehrlich, Dean, HUC-JIR Cincinnati Campus, there were three reasons for the program’s move to Cincinnati.<sup>75</sup> The faculty in Cincinnati was already experienced in teaching the material covered in the program, so it could offer participants a quality learning experience, and the campus had facilities for hosting participants, including classrooms, dorms and dining facilities. The other motivating factor was a desire to raise the campus’ profile by participating in national Reform Movement initiatives.

The ten-day program cost \$950.00<sup>76</sup> for room, board and all study materials. Participants would be housed in dorm rooms, but the books previously provided in the Rabbinic Aide Program would no longer be provided. Study materials were usually in the form of copies and UAHC promotional materials. The pamphlet used to advertise the program described it as a “unique opportunity to learn” the following:

- How to Set-up a Synagogue School
- How To Lead Worship Services
- How To Assist In Life-Cycle Events
- How To Make Hospital Visits
- How To Counsel Those In Need
- How To Write *D’vrai* Torah

Use of the word “Assist” in reference to life-cycle events may have been aimed at subliminally emphasizing program participants were not being prepared to serve as sole officiants at life-cycle events. Nor were there sessions on how to write or conduct a

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with author.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with author.

<sup>76</sup> In 2000 the fee for the ten-day program was reduced to \$900.00. In the same year the fee for the eight-day Level Two program was \$750.00.



Funeral Service, write a eulogy or officiate at a *b'nai mitzvah* service. A program administrator during this time acknowledges that High Holy Day workshops were aimed at assisting clergy, not at leading services.

Application to the program required a letter of recommendation from the applicant's congregational rabbi or UAHC Regional Director, and introduced the term "Sponsoring Rabbi" for the individual who recommended an applicant. Questions could be addressed to either Adult Jewish Living and Learning at HUC-JIR or UAHC Department of Adult Jewish Growth. The detailed questions that had been asked in the 1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Study Seminar were no longer used to screen applicants.

One new facet of the program was aimed at encouraging and guiding an on-going relationship between participants and their sponsoring rabbi. A Para-Rabbinic Fellows Learning Contract was to be jointly developed by the participant and sponsoring Rabbi, signed by both, as well as the Temple President, and returned to HUC-JIR in New York. A proposed model contract developed by program organizers included the following elements:<sup>77</sup>

- Identification of learning goals
- Description of the Para-Rabbinic Fellow's role within the congregation
- Description and schedule of the Sponsoring Rabbi's supervision of the Para-Rabbinic Fellow
- Plan for the Sponsoring Rabbi's guidance in the Para-Rabbinic Fellow's continuing education.

Perhaps without intention, some of the elements introduced into the 1997 program significantly impacted the direction of the program. The Learning Contract introduced the idea of continued learning. It may have been an attempt on the part of program organizers

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<sup>77</sup> A copy of such a contract is included in Appendix C.

to instill in program participants an appreciation of how much rabbinic training they lacked. Another significant change was that the former title of “Rabbinic Aide” was now supplanted by the title “Para-Rabbinic Fellow.” Although individual interpretations of particular words vary, some may have interpreted the latter designation as having more stature than the former.

Thirty-five participants attended the 1997 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program held at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati. The on-site coordinator was Rabbi Stacia Deutsch, Program Coordinator of the Cincinnati College-Institute’s Department of Adult Jewish Learning and Living. Overseeing the program were Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, National Dean, Adult Jewish Learning and Living, HUC-JIR, and Rabbi Lawrence W. Raphael, Director, Adult Jewish Growth, UAHC

Although there were worthwhile sessions, and some outstanding HUC-JIR faculty from the Cincinnati campus such as Rabbis Richard Sarason and Mark Washofsky and Dr. Samuel Greengus and Liturgical Director Bonia Shur served as teachers, the program did not deliver on many of the promises made in promotional materials. For example, while pre-program material claimed participants would learn “how to set up a synagogue school,” only one 90-minute session was devoted to curriculum texts. After the ten-day session a review by program organizers highlighted changes that should be incorporated in future years. These included greater time spent on *tefilah*, less reliance on student rabbis as instructors and more depth to the academic sessions. Realizing that participants were asked to prepare *d’vrai Torah*, but that there was no procedure for formal feedback on these efforts, such sessions were also suggested. In addition, because only some participants were involved in leading *tefilah*,

the suggestion was made that there be more opportunities so everyone could have some experience leading services. Overall the program was viewed as worthwhile, both by organizers and participants.

In 1998 the program added daily *Mincha* and *Maariv* services, sessions on the Reform *siddur* Gates of Prayer and opportunities for optional *chuggim*, such as Hebrew and cantillation. In another change, while student rabbis were still part of the teaching staff, the need for more experienced instructors was addressed by drawing more heavily from available rabbis at local congregations. The most significant change made in 1998 was that a Level Two session was structured for those participants from previous years who wanted to add more depth to their para-rabbinic studies. The two-level approach, in some form, would be incorporated into all of the Reform Movement's future para-rabbinic programs. In 1998 in both Level One and Level Two *Shabbat* afternoon was used for study. In both levels formal sessions for service reviews were instituted and optional *chuggim* were offered during the period for free time.

Level One ran for ten days, beginning mid-day on Friday and concluding mid-day on Sunday. In 1998 a typical day of Level One in the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program was organized as follows<sup>78</sup> (sample sessions included in parenthesis):

- 8:15 - ***Shacharit* Services**
- 9:00 - Breakfast
- 9:45 - **Service Review**
- 10:30 - **Texts of Jewish Life**  
(Torah / Talmud / *Halakhah* / Torah Study / *Midrash and Aggadah* / Prayerbook )
- 12:30 - Lunch
- 1:15 – **Jewish Customs & Traditions**  
(Music / Synagogue Life / *Brit Milah and Brit Banot*)
- 3:30 – **High Holy Day Workshop**  
(*Tashlich* / *Yom Kippur*: Involving Kids)

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<sup>78</sup> This schedule was compiled from program materials supplied by various participants.

4:30 - **Free Time or Optional Chuggim**  
 5:30 - **Mincha/Maariv**  
 6:00 - Dinner  
 7:00 - **Hands on Judaism**  
       (*Birkat Hamazon* / Moment of Death / Anti-Semitism / *Shiva*  
       *Minyanim* and Unveilings / Interfaith Outreach / Counseling Skills  
       / Hospital Visits)

During its early years Level One of the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program focused on the practical skills of leading worship, but lacked an overarching theme or organization for its other sessions. By 2001 Level One had been restructured down to eight days with much less emphasis on Jewish texts and torah study and more sessions devoted to interfaith issues, such as the role of the Non-Jew in the Synagogue. In addition, preparation of *d'vrai Torah* and eulogies was moved to Level Two. There were 59 participants in Level One of the program in 2001.

In 1998 the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Level Two program began mid-day on Friday and ended at the same time the following Friday. In Level Two evening sessions were devoted to *Chevruta* study and more sessions focused on liturgy and homiletics than in Level One. In the years of the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program a typical day in Level Two was structured as follows<sup>79</sup> (sample sessions included in parenthesis):

8:15 - **Shacharit Services**  
 9:00 - Breakfast  
 9:45 - **Service Review**  
 10:30 – **Liturgy**  
       (Rubrics / Creative Liturgy / Views of God / Music)  
 12:15 - Lunch  
 1:15 – **Homiletics**  
       (*D'vrai Torah* / Persuasive Delivery / Eulogies / Writing a Press  
       Release)  
 3:15 – **Text Study**  
       (Talmud / Torah  
 4:45 - **Free Time or Optional Chuggim**  
 6:00 - Dinner

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<sup>79</sup> This schedule was compiled from program materials supplied by various participants.

7:00 - *Mincha/Maariv*  
7:30 - *Chevruta Study*

Little information is available about the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program in its early days of 1998 and 1999. There is no documentation about the Optional *Chuggim* or *Chevruta* Study introduced in Level Two. There are neither session schedules nor participant lists in the meager program files at the offices of the Union for Reform Judaism. Only one administrator from the period was available for interviewing, but the individual's recall from the period was not extensive. Attendance dropped in 1998 to 12 participants in each of the two levels. No attendance information is available for 1999, but in 2000 Level One attendance swelled to 50 participants. Level Two that year had 14 participants. Some attribute the increased attendance in Level One to rumors that the program would be discontinued, because there were problems with some program participants over-stepping their bounds and having confrontations with rabbis. "What almost killed the program was that [some] students got a certificate and ... felt empowered to tell the rabbi what to do," said one long-time UAHC insider, while simultaneously acknowledging the need for educated lay leadership in congregations and the relative success of the para-rabbinic programs. For this reason no certificates of completion were issued in the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program. After completing each level participants were sent a letter acknowledging completion of either Level One or Level Two. A copy of such a letter is included in Appendix B. While the letter acknowledges the accomplishment of completing the particular year of the program, it emphasizes that the Para-Rabbinic Fellow would serve under the supervision of an

ordained rabbi. Each letter was signed by the President of HUC-JIR, the President of UAHC and the Executive Vice President of CCAR.<sup>80</sup>

By 2000 administration of the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program had moved to Cincinnati, although questions from potential applicants were being fielded both there and in New York by the UAHC Department of Adult Jewish Growth. The program brochure no longer promoted the opportunity to learn “how to set-up a synagogue school” or to “counsel those in need.” Instead, in addition to the learning opportunities afforded in the 1997 brochure, the opportunity to learn “how to prioritize for a synagogue school” was offered.

Another program change instituted by 2000 in an effort to delineate and manage para-rabbinic relationships and responsibilities was the Para-Rabbinic Fellows *Brit*, a copy of which can be found in its entirety in Appendix C. Among the issues dealt with in the *Brit* were:

- Creation of the learning contract.
- Consultations with sponsoring rabbis.
- Recognition that the para-rabbinic is not ordained clergy.
- Prohibition of remuneration.

For the first time the purpose of the program was clearly defined: “to train synagogue volunteers as skilled support persons for synagogue and other types of Jewish religious communities in need of persons with trained synagogue skills.” Not only did the *Brit* firmly establish the need for supervision provided by a rabbi or UAHC Regional Director, it required that the Para-Rabbinic Fellows notify both their supervising rabbi and residing area clergy prior to providing any service or performing any life cycle event.

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<sup>80</sup> This is true of a letter signed in 2001. A similar letter in 2000 was signed by the Director of HUC-JIR’s Department of Outreach Education in Cincinnati, the Director of the Department of Adult Jewish Growth at UAHC and the Executive Vice President of CCAR.

The *Brit* also outlined a series of Ethical Commitments to which the Para-Rabbinic Fellow was to adhere. It is possible to assume that each ethical commitment included in the *Brit* was a result of some Para-Rabbinic Aide or Para-Rabbinic Fellow acting without concern for the specific matter addressed. Using this approach it is possible to conclude that among the problems created by these programs were Para-rabbinic Aides/Fellows presenting themselves as ordained clergy, using the title ‘rabbi,’ and officiating at weddings and conversions. The final element in the list of Ethical Commitments threatened that a Para-Rabbinic Fellow who did not adhere to the *Brit* would no longer be recognized by the three sponsoring organizations as a Para-Rabbinic Fellow. Perhaps the threat of non-recognition unintentionally accorded more stature to those who completed the program than originally intended.

Both the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Learning Contract and *Brit* were attempts to have participants recognize the parameters and limitations of the role the program prepared them to take on. However, even with the stricter application procedures and expanded forms one administrator of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program still had reservations about a significant number of participants. “We attracted people who wanted to be rabbis and didn’t have the time to go to rabbinical school...Some were gays who couldn’t go to HUC-JIR<sup>81</sup> or presidents of congregations who wanted to be rabbis and weren’t. Fifty percent of the people were like that,” she said.<sup>82</sup> While the number of difficult participants seems inflated given information relayed by other administrators interviewed, the sense remains that these issues cast a shadow over the program.

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<sup>81</sup> According to the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation, HUC-JIR published a document stating that sexual orientation is not a barrier to admission in 1990, although this had been the unofficial policy since 1987. Jewish and LGBT History Timeline, Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> Statement made during a telephone interview with the author.

Analysis of the schedule of class sessions for both Level One and Level Two in 2000 reveals no overarching themes or organizational structure to the program, although participants were very satisfied with their experiences. In Level One only two sessions were devoted to liturgy and only one to High Holiday liturgy. Some sessions were less directly related to para-rabbinic work, including a session on Women in Jewish Law, a session on the Jewish response to missionaries and a session on the role of the Non-Jew in the synagogue. There was less emphasis on life-cycle events than in previous years. Although sessions on *Brit Milah* & Baby Namings as well as unveilings and *Shiva Minyanim* were included, there were no sessions on funerals or *b'nai mitzvah*. Three sessions related to music and cantillation, with additional, optional music *chuggim* scheduled. Time slots in the program were included for tours of the American Jewish Archives, the Skirball Museum and a Riverboat Dinner Cruise/ *Havdalah* Service as a group activity to close the program. From the class schedules it appears that in Level One texts of Jewish life had taken a back seat to holiday workshops.

Furthermore, there was a lack of clear differentiation in the content of Level One and Level Two programs. Level Two did include two sessions for homiletics review and one on writings eulogies. However, Level Two sessions on liturgy, responding to missionaries, symbols and symbolism of *Havdalah*, Talmud, Leadership and Rituals of Death & Dying were sessions that were already or could have been offered in Level One.

Two other programming changes in 2000 are noteworthy. Level Two introduced *chevruta*, 'group' or 'partner,' study into the para-rabbinic programs. Participants were assigned into groups for study, to work on homework assignments together and to create innovative worship services. The list of faculty for both Level One and Two still included



a few HUC-JIR luminaries, but some of the more well-known names that had taught in the past were no longer evident.

Given the effort put forth in the 2000 program to make participants especially cognizant that this training should not empower them to think of themselves as rabbis, it is interesting to note that one of the optional *chuggim* offered was a presentation of the HUC-JIR rabbinical school admissions process. The session was re-offered in 2001.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellows program class sessions were basically unchanged when Levels One and Two were offered in 2001. However, the cost of the program rose to \$1,000 for Level One and \$800 for Level Two.

### **2002 to 2006 *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Program**

By 2001 the day-to-day operations of the Para-Rabbinic Fellows program were, for the most part, handled at HUC-JIR Cincinnati. Program development was handled jointly by HUC-JIR in Cincinnati and by UAHC in New York through its Department of Adult Jewish Growth under the direction of Rabbi Lawrence W. Raphael, Director, and Rabbi Stacy Bergman. Implementation of the program changes also fell on the shoulders of the HUC-JIR Cincinnati staff in the Department of Adult Jewish Learning and Living, Rabbi Stacia Deutsch, Director, and Rachel Stern<sup>83</sup>, Coordinator.

After the summer of 2001 the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program underwent major restructuring, and in 2002 was unveiled under the name *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associates Program (*SK/SA*). Changing the program's name and overhauling the application process were aimed at "detering people from believing they were credentialed in some way...it took a tremendous amount of effort to weed people out," according to a program administrator at the time. The decision on the part of program

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<sup>83</sup> At the time Ms. Stern used the last name of Komerofsky.

administrators to change the program's name to *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate was based on a strong belief that the word "rabbinic" had to be removed from the program's title, and on a desire to incorporate Hebrew into the program's name. Although program organizers chose to translate "*Sh'liach K'hilah*" as "Synagogue Associate," the literal meaning is "representative of the community."

Participants were recruited through e-mails and letters to congregations, brochures and word-of-mouth.<sup>84</sup> Applicants to the SK/SA program were interviewed over the telephone after submission of a written application, which was much lengthier than it had been in past programs. A copy of the application for the 2002 SK/SA program can be found in Appendix C. In 2002 application to the program required:

- A resume, including an educational and professional summary and indication of synagogue involvement.
- Two current photographs.
- A brief essay (2 to 4 pages, double spaced) to include:
  - An introduction, including personal and professional experience;
  - A description of any prior, practical training or experience that would help with work in a synagogue;
  - A description of strengths and weaknesses;
  - What was hoped to be learned in the program; and
  - How the applicant hoped to serve the congregation.
- Discussion of any special circumstances or needs the applicant felt should be taken into consideration along with the application.
- Recommendation from a sponsoring rabbi or UAHC Regional Director.
- A minimum of two references, one personal and one professional.
- A signed waiver of the applicant's right to see the completed recommendation form and references.
- A *brit* signed by the applicant, the president of the sponsoring organization and the sponsoring rabbi.

The SK/SA *brit* was slightly different than its predecessor in the Para-Rabbinic Fellows program in that it stressed "the voluntary agreement between parties based on mutual

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<sup>84</sup> In 2003 program recruitment was bolstered by an article in "Reform Judasim." See *The Ex-Cop Who Officiated at a Bris & Other Stories of Congregants Who Take Charge*, RJ, Summer 2003, p.71.

understanding and a sense of reciprocal obligation.” The application packet also included answers to “frequently asked questions.” It stressed the ongoing, supervisory role of the sponsoring rabbi and specified that “The goal of the program is for the *SK/SA* to be able to perform discrete functions at the conclusion of their studies such as: Shabbat and holiday service leading, delivering sermons and conducting Torah Study and life-cycle events.” Here too there is evidence that much emphasis was placed on making participants understand that they were not clergy.

In Cincinnati the program was now under the Direction of Rachel Stern,<sup>85</sup> a graduate of HUC-JIR’s MAJE/MAJCS program. Ms. Stern also saw the para-rabbinic program as an opportunity for enriching adult Jewish education, and envisioned a program with sessions ranging from Torah *lishmah* to training in practical skills. She recalls many conference calls with Rabbis Raphael and Bergman regarding the overhaul of program content, but being in Cincinnati where the program was held gave her the ability to ultimately implement the changes she perceived would work best. Ms. Stern remembers the CCAR’s involvement during the time of the *SK/SA* program to be minimal.<sup>86</sup>

When the *SK/SA* program was unveiled prior to its 2002 summer session, a brochure<sup>87</sup> described the program as “an opportunity for synagogue leaders to serve their congregations by:

- Leading worship services;
- Teaching Judaica and Torah Study;
- Assisting with *bikur cholim* and services at a house of mourning;
- Developing a religious school curriculum; and
- Representing the congregation to the broader community

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<sup>85</sup> Rabbi Deutsch had relocated to Los Angeles.

<sup>86</sup> Ms. Stern shared her views during several interviews with the author.

<sup>87</sup> Brochures and web pages advertising sessions from several different years can be found in Appendix A.

The ability to serve in these roles would be accomplished by, among other things:

- Studying basic Jewish texts;
- Reading and comprehending Hebrew;
- Learning the rubrics of Jewish prayer;
- Understanding the roles of Israel in our lives;
- Developing leadership skills; and
- Comprehending the role and structure of the synagogue.

The program was directed at congregants from large congregations seeking to assist ordained or invested clergy, as well as at congregants from smaller congregations without clergy. To be certified as a *SK/SA*, according to the brochure, a participant had to do the following:

- Attend two summer sessions (i.e., Level 1 and Level 2).
- Attend two mid-year, weekend skills-training sessions.
- Pursue further Jewish studies.<sup>88</sup>
- Mentor with a rabbi or cantor.
- Serve an internship with an advising rabbi or cantor.<sup>89</sup>

The brochure promised that “participants will receive a certificate indicating that they have completed the *Sh’liach K’hilah* program. The cost for the “complete certificate program” was \$3000. Level One was an eleven-day session. An eight-day Level Two session was offered that first year at a prorated rate for graduates of the Level One or Two Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program. Program fees included room and board and study materials. Potential applicants expressed displeasure at having to pay in advance for programs that they perhaps might not take. In addition, it turned out that “further Jewish studies’ could be undertaken at other Jewish institutions aside from HUC-JIR, and therefore would have to be paid for separately by participants. The same brochure with

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<sup>88</sup> In other material this requirement appeared as “Completion of two Judaic Studies courses (on-line or in person) sponsored by an accredited college or university,”

<sup>89</sup> This requirement was later dropped.

minor changes was used for 2003 and 2004. In these years the fee for the program was \$1,200 for Level One and \$1,000 for Level Two. Fees for mid-year weekend skills-training sessions would be assessed separately depending on location and length.

The cover of the *SK/SA* brochure clearly stated that the program was sponsored by the UAHC, HUC-JIR and the CCAR, but only the UAHC logo was used. In 2005 the *SK/SA* brochure was updated to accommodate the UAHC's 2003 name change to Union for Reform Judaism. The revised brochure advertised dates for Levels One and Two in 2005 and 2006, as well as a Winter Retreat (formerly referred to as "mid-year weekend skills-training sessions") in Los Angeles. The fee for the Winter Retreat was \$500 and the summer sessions were dropped to \$1,000.

Updating the brochure also provided an opportunity to more realistically describe the program. "Developing a Religious School Curriculum" was changed to "Supporting the religious school" and the brochure specifically listed "Conducting funerals, unveilings and baby naming ceremonies" in the list of skills that would be taught to participants. In addition the revised brochure did not contain references to "reading and comprehending Hebrew" and "developing leadership skills." Perhaps it was found that these skills were beyond the capabilities of some *SK/SA* program participants.

It is noteworthy that certificates of completion were once again included in the *SK/SA* program. Program certificates already had been done away with for Para-Rabbinic Fellows because it was felt they contributed to some participants believing themselves to be empowered to act as clergy. Apparently *SK/SA* program administrators bowed to pressure from participants who felt very strongly that their accomplishments ought to be

recognized with something suitable for framing. A copy of the *SK/SA* certificate of completion is included in Appendix B.

A typical day of *SK/SA* Level One programming resembled that of the early days of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program, but balanced academic study of Judaic subjects with teaching practical skills. Service leading and basics of worship such as liturgy were stressed. Each Level One participant received a two-inch thick binder with information for most lifecycle events.<sup>90</sup> For each lifecycle ceremony discussed, the binder contained:

- An explanation of the lifecycle or ceremony;
- An explanation of the liturgy;
- Suggestions for how to prepare for the ceremony;
- An annotated bibliography with suggested additional readings; and
- Sample ceremonies.

A typical day in Level One of the *SK/SA* program was as follows:<sup>91</sup>

8:15 - ***Shacharit* Services**  
9:00 - Breakfast & **Service Review**  
10:00 - **Texts of Jewish Life**  
(Torah / Bible / Talmud / Halachah / Torah Study / *Midrash* /  
Prayerbook / Liturgy) or **Lifecycle Presentation**  
12:00 - Lunch  
1:00 – **Lifecycle Session**  
3:00 – **Learning Session**  
4:30 – **Chuggim**  
(Cantillation / God / Meditation / Drumming & Spirituality /  
Hebrew)  
6:00 - Dinner  
7:00 – **Learning Session**  
8:30 – ***Maariv* Service**

Lifecycle learning sessions included Birth and Baby Namings, *B'nai Mitzvah*; and

Conducting a Funeral/*Shiva Minyanim*. Learning sessions included: How to Lead

Worship; Choreography of the Torah Service; *Nusach*; Music; How to Lead Torah Study;

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<sup>90</sup> Material on weddings and conversions was not included.

<sup>91</sup> This composite schedule was created from material from various *SK/SA* years provided to the author by program participants.

Working with the Elderly; Illness and the Community; Spiritual Accompaniment; Working with Families at the Time of Death; Outreach; History of Reform Judaism; Dealing with Christian Missionaries; Leadership; Principles of Jewish Education; Holiday Workshops; and Writing a *D'var Torah*. Time slots in the program were included for tours of the American Jewish Archives, the Skirball Museum, Plum Street Temple and a Riverboat Dinner Cruise/*Havdalah* Service. Program participants were assigned to work in pairs to prepare services throughout the program.

Level Two of the eight-day *SK/SA* program reflected the URJ's emphasis on outreach and revitalizing worship. In addition to leading services in pairs or groups of three, participants were given assignments to prepare text studies, eulogies and sermons. These were then presented in front of other participants, instructors and local rabbis who critiqued the efforts. Work time was incorporated into the schedule to allow participants to work on these projects. Sessions on public speaking and the importance of self-evaluation were also added to the program. A typical day during Level Two of the *SK/SA* program was as follows:

- 8:15 – ***Shacharit* Services**
- 9:00 – Breakfast & **Service Review**
- 10:00 – **Text Study**
- 11:15 – **Learning Session**  
(Worship with Joy / Outreach / Festivals Liturgy / High Holiday Liturgies / Synagogue Systems: Implementing Change)
- 12:45 – Lunch
- 1:15 – **Chuggim**  
(Cantillation / Meditation / Drumming & Spirituality / Hebrew / Storytelling / Home Rituals)
- 3:00 – Work time
- 4:30 – **Learning Session**  
(Codes, Commentaries & Responsa / Talking about God / Public Speaking / Creating a Caring Community)
- 6:00 – Dinner

- 7:00 – **Learning Session**  
(Music / Current Issues in Reform Judaism / Judaism and  
Social Action / Adult Education / Resources for Family  
Concerns )  
8:30 – ***Maariv* Service**

The *SK/SA* program still drew on HUC-JIR Cincinnati faculty such as Rabbis Ken Erhlich, David Komerofsky, Mark Washofsky, Sam Joseph, Richard Sarason, Michael Cook and Ruth Alpers, but the program also relied heavily on local clergy. The URJ, which had continued to commit resources to Outreach and had recently instituted worship initiatives, was also a source for presenters.

To some extent there was duplication of Level One elements in Level Two of the *SK/SA* program. To the extent possible instructors who were involved for several years in a row tried to have Level Two material build on what had been presented in Level One, but some repetitiveness was inevitable. The core pieces of the Level Two programs were learning to lead text study, crafting and delivering sermons and eulogies and honing service leading skills. The rest of the Level Two programming seemed dependent on what HUC-JIR faculty was available at the time on campus and with what initiatives the URJ was currently involved.

There is no data from which to tabulate the total number of individuals who attended the *SK/SA* program. They came from congregations from all parts of the country<sup>92</sup>, both large and small, with and without full time rabbis. According to Ms. Stern, 20 to 50 people participated each summer between 2002 to 2005. Attendance was at the lower end in 2002, she says, because just prior to the summer of 2001 there were rumors that the Para Rabbinic Fellows program was coming to an end. The rush of people attending in 2001 lowered attendance in 2002. The result was that in the first year of the

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<sup>92</sup> On occasion there were participants from Canadian congregations.



*SK/SA* program fewer individuals participated. Participant lists show that in 2003 there were 17 participants in Level One. In 2004 29 in Level One and 16 in Level Two and in 2005 23 people attended Level Two.

The *SK/SA* mid-year weekend skills-training sessions were informally referred to as “winter retreats,” and were offered each January in 2003, 2004 and 2005. In January 2003 the first winter retreat of the *SK/SA* program was held on the HUC-JIR campus in Cincinnati for 27 participants. All participants had completed Level One and three had also completed Level Two. Dru Greenwood, Director of Outreach and Synagogue Community lead a 3-day program titled “Pursuing a Vision/Instituting Change: Becoming a Change Agent. Sessions on Transformation and Change, Congregational Size Theory and Building Coalitions to Move Forward were included.

In 2004 Rabbi Richard Address, Director of the UAHC Departments of Jewish Family Concerns led a weekend retreat on Creating a Caring Community. It included sessions on developing and enhancing skills for visiting the sick, visiting a house of mourning, caring for the elderly, teens at risk and other issues.

In 2005 a winter retreat at HUC-JIR’s Los Angeles campus on the subject of Jewish Education was offered under the direction of Sara S. Lee of HUC-JIR’s Rhea Hirsch School of Education. The session included presentations on the resources available to congregations, including curricula and library materials, as well as a session on teaching adult learners.

A number of *SK/SA* participants were also in the Outreach Fellows Program learning to work with interfaith families. For them, the Outreach Fellows Program served as credit for additional course work in the *SK/SA* program.

In order to fulfill the *SK/SA* distance learning requirement, participants were directed to HUC-JIR Cincinnati's Department of Outreach Education on-line classes. In addition *SK/SA* participants could also take on-line classes at Gratz, Hebrew College, JTS, Siegal College of Judaic Studies and Spertus Institute. The eligibility of other classes was evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Unfortunately, very few *SK/SA* program files exist at the Union's offices in New York, so there is no record of how many individuals were certified as *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates. Program administrators believe that it may have been on the order of fifty individuals.

Personnel changes in the later years of the *SK/SA* program would eventually bring about major changes to the program. At the URJ in New York Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, who had previously taught a number of the *SK/SA* sessions in 2002 thru 2004, was assigned to take over the role formerly played by Rabbi Bergman. In 2004 she also became involved in program planning. In the early part of 2006, when Ms. Stern left HUC-JIR to pursue other professional interests, Rabbi Wasserman, Director of URJ's Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living was assigned responsibility for the *SK/SA* program. With Rabbi Wasserman's office in New York and no one assigned to the program at HUC-JIR, once again the para-rabbinic program fell under the auspices of the URJ as its single sponsor.

### **2007 and Beyond: The *Had'rachah* Seminar**

A confluence of events led to a para-rabbinic program hiatus in 2006. These events included personnel changes, perceived low enrollment and HUC-JIR effectively withdrawing from the program because of reduced staffing. In the spring of 2006 a letter

went out under Rabbi Wasserman's signature to those who had expressed interest in attending or had already applied to the 2006 *SK/SA* program. The letter announced that the program would not be offered that summer, but that it would be re-envisioned and re-structured to better serve the needs of participants and their congregations. The letter read, in part:

“...We've taken note of the growing number of members from larger congregations participating, the growing number of small congregations who can't afford to send a congregant to the program, the shrinking number of applicants (possibly due to the cost, the time of year, or the length of the program), and the greater diversity of roles that *Sh'liach K'hilah* participants are being asked to take on by their congregations. Additionally, while HUC-JIR will continue to support the program by having its faculty teach, they can no longer be full partners in running the program.”

All of this means that we need more time to revise the program so that it will respond to these challenges and changes in our Movement. Therefore we will not be running the program during the summer of 2006, but it will re-open in 2007.”<sup>93</sup>

Now that the program staff was based in New York, it made sense to find a venue that was more convenient and cost effective for their on-site participation. Now responsible for the program, in addition to Rabbi Wasserman, were Rabbis Kim Geringer and Victor Appell and Cantor Alane Katzew.

One of the first tasks was to survey participants in the *SK/SA* program to assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting participants' congregational needs. Survey participants were identified through a data-base of participants. Although the data base is no longer available and the number of surveys sent out is indeterminable, program administrators remember that the 33 responses received constituted a high level of response. If the survey was sent to the approximately 50 individuals certified as *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates, the numbers appear to corroborate the administrators'

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<sup>93</sup> Wasserman, Rabbi Sue Ann, unprocessed papers.

recollections. The survey itself and a compilation of responses do remain.<sup>94</sup> SK/SA participants were asked:

1. What was the most useful aspect, experience, or educational component of the program, especially in terms of the work you are now able to do in your congregation?
2. Was there an experience or information or educational component which you wish you had as a result of the program, but did not feel that you received?
3. As a result of the program, are you serving as *Sh'liach K'hilah* in your home congregation, or in another congregation?
4. As a result of the program, in what ways are you able to serve your congregation?
5. One possibility for the *Sh'liach K'hilah* Program is that it will be restructured to primarily serve small congregations. Do you feel this would be a wise move for the program?

By far the most common response to question #1 was “learning to lead worship.” A large variety of answers were given in response to question #2, but the majority of answers fell into three general categories: more practical training in pastoral care and *bikkur cholim*; researching and using texts; and guidelines for sponsoring rabbis. Responses to questions three, four and five were descriptive in nature, and, therefore, could not be quantified. However, they have been incorporated into the material presented in Chapter IV, which discusses post program experiences. It is clear from question #5 that once again, as had happened in 1996, the staff was considering limiting the program to participants from smaller congregations. As hoped, the hiatus was an opportunity to radically reshape the program.

The *Had'rachah* Seminar for Lay Leadership in Religious Life was unveiled in 2007. For the first time the brochure<sup>95</sup> drew attention to the history of previous Union programs for training of lay leaders and, although it emphasized the participation of

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<sup>94</sup> Appell, Rabbi Victor S., unprocessed papers.

<sup>95</sup> Brochures from this and other years are included in Appendix A.

leaders from smaller congregations, the marketing material acknowledged that lay leaders in congregations with clergy would also learn skills enabling them to assist ordained rabbis and invested/certified cantors. For the first time promotional material recognized that para-rabbinic program participants also served the greater Jewish community outside of synagogues through their work in assisted living facilities and adult communities. Promotional material defined *Had'rachah* as “guidance, training, direction; from the same root as *mad'rich/mad'richah* – guide, instructor, counselor – and *derech* –pathway, custom, manner.”

Besides the name change, the program was restructured to eliminate the progressive two-level configuration and the staffing changes required it to be moved from July to May. The *Had'rachah* seminar would still be offered as two different sessions taking place over two summers, but only one session would be offered per year. Participants could enter the program in either year, and each year's session was shortened to one week.

For the first time promotional material also included information about grant money available from the Small Congregations Resource Fund (SCRF), which was available to members of congregations with 250 membership units or less. Although financial aid to participants from small congregations had been offered in previous years, it was never promoted so openly in program materials. In 2007 24 grants were awarded and 12 were awarded in 2008. These grants covered between 50% and 75% of the cost of tuition and transportation. Monies from the SCRF had been available since about 2003 or 2004 to cover the lack of rabbinic discretionary funds in small congregations without rabbis. Discretionary funds were often the source of funding for congregants to attend

Union programs. Unfortunately total amounts of SCRF monies used to fund para-rabbinic program attendance are not available.

As of this writing the application to the *Had'rachah* Seminar still involves a process that requires essays and a telephone interview, but recommendation forms and letters have been eliminated.<sup>96</sup> Program administrators recognized that they were not in a position to manage or negotiate the role of program participants neither with the rabbis who recommended them for the program nor with leaders in the communities in which they served. The *Brit*, which had been part of the *SK/SA* program, gave way to a Letter of Acknowledgment. The Letter spells out the specific skills taught and states that participants are not trained in the areas of conversion and wedding ceremony life cycle officiation. Criteria for admission to the *Had'rachah* Seminar requires applicants:

- Exhibit a positive Jewish identity and involvement with Jewish life
- Have the ability to study primary Jewish texts in translation
- Be capable of reading prayer-book Hebrew
- Posses good interpersonal and leadership skills
- Be an active member of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation

Another significant change to the program in 2008 was the assignment of Union staff as mentors to participants in the program. Participants were encouraged to have regular contact with their mentors for months after the program. This was added in response to previous participants' comments regarding lack of continued involvement on the part of sponsoring rabbis. This was especially true for those from small congregations without full time clergy, whose sponsoring rabbis were regional directors. Only participants from congregations with full time rabbis were asked to have their rabbis sign their applications, but the role of sponsoring rabbi was no longer imposed.

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<sup>96</sup> A *Had'rachah* Seminar application form from 2008 and Letters of Acknowledgment for 2008 and 2009 are included in Appendix C.

Another form of support to *Had'rachah* participants is provided through a list serve specifically for *Had'rachah* participants and maintained by Union staff. In previous programs list serves had been established by participants for individual program years, but were usually maintained by a participant in the group. *Had'rachah* participants also have a Facebook group.

At this point in time the *Had'rachah* Seminar teaches synagogue skills in two distinct curricula, offered in alternate summers. For example in 2008 the synagogue skills taught included:

- Preparing and leading High Holy Day worship
- Conducting baby namings
- Writing and delivering *divrei* Torah
- Visiting the sick and homebound

In 2009 the skills taught were:

- Preparing and leading Shabbat worship
- Conducting a funeral and unveiling
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Leading Torah study

Journaling became a new focus of the *Had'rachah* Seminar. Although it had been tried in the *SK/SA* program to help participants evaluate worship experiences, participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar are encouraged to use it extensively throughout the program. Each participant was provided with journaling notebooks that asked pointed and thought provoking questions for each session. The emphasis was on both personal growth as well as how new techniques and skills could be brought back to participants' congregations. In another program change *Had'rachah* Seminar participants no longer participate as service leaders on a regular basis. Program administrators believe

participants are better served by observing services led by those with expertise in doing so.

There is no ‘typical’ day in the *Had’rachah* Seminar. Conceptually, each day revolves around a theme, such as *Bikkur Cholim* or High Holy Days. Compared to previous programs arrival and departure days were programmed for fewer hours, as was Shabbat. Days spent at HUC-JIR or at URJ offices required travel time and were dependent on others’ schedules. In addition program administrators revamped and fine-tuned the *Had’rachah* Seminar each year in response to participant evaluations and personnel changes at URJ. A day from the 2008 *Had’rachah* Seminar is presented below.<sup>97</sup>

#### ***Had’rachah* Seminar - Thursday, May 15, 2008**

8:00 - 8:45	Breakfast
9:00 - 10:15	<i>Shacharit</i> – Guest <i>Darshan</i> , Rabbi Elliott Kleinman, Director of Programs
10:15 - 10:45	Introduction to the High Holy Days
10:45 - 12:45	A Yom Kippur Afternoon Study Session: Introducing the Talmud and the Major Codes - Rabbi Aaron Panken, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, HUC-NY
1:00 - 1:45	Lunch
2:00 – 4:00	High Holy Days (continues a prior day’s session)
4:15 - 5:45	Choose a Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning High Holy Day Repertoire</li><li>• Text Study of <i>Kol Nidre</i> and <i>Unetaneh Tokef</i></li></ul>
5:45 - 6:30	Free Time
6:30 - 7:30	Dinner
7:45 - 8:15	<i>Ma’ariv</i>
8:15 - 9:30	Sharing Our Success: Creative Ideas from Your Congregations

In 2007 through 2009 the *Had’rachah* Seminar was taught by four individuals from URJ: Rabbis Victor Appell, Kim Geringer, Sue Ann Wasserman and Cantor Alane S. Katzew. A few guest instructors taught in their areas of expertise. For example, Rabbi Nancy Wiener, Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, HUC-JIR spoke on *Bikkur*

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<sup>97</sup> From program files at URJ offices, 633 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, New York, NY.



*Cholim*, Rabbi Jan Katzew, Director, Department of Lifelong Jewish Learning, URJ, led a Shabbat afternoon *Haftorah* study session. Area rabbis or cantors occasionally led services for the group. Towards the end of the *Shabbat*, participants attending for their second year might lead a service or *Havdalah*. For the most part, administrators believed there was more educational value in having ordained/invested clergy setting the example of leading services than having participants do so. An innovative programming highlight of the *Had'rachah* Seminar was a simulated funeral, so that participants could develop an understanding of the lifecycle event from an officiant's perspective. In 2009 guest instructors included Rabbis Aaron Panken, Billy Dreskin, Jan Katzew, Sue Levi-Elwell, Elliott Kleinman and Eric Yoffie.

Due to a reorganization and staff reductions at URJ, responsibility for the 2010 *Had'rachah* Seminar fell to Cantor Alane Katzew and Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell. The basic subject matter and structure of the program remained the same, but the scheduling and location was changed to coincide with two other URJ learning opportunities. The *Had'rachah* Seminar became part of the Union's Summer Learning Institute, which was held in August at the Glen Cove Mansion in Glen Cove, New York. By offering the *Had'rachah* Seminar at the same time and in the same place as the long-running *Kallah* and the Rabbi Alexander Schindler Fellows Program for Interfaith Families Certification the Union was able to take advantage of economies of scale in the administration of the programs, and *Had'rachah* Seminar was able to enlist faculty from the other two programs. In 2010 participants were able to attend sessions led by members of the HUC-JIR faculty. A session on responsa was led by Dr. Mark Washofsky and a session using the Women's Torah Commentary was led by Dr. Andrea Weiss.

However, there were some negative impacts on the program as well. The reduced staff was no longer able to provide formal mentoring to participants and the improved accommodation raised costs significantly, so the program was cut from seven to five days to keep the cost increase minimal.

In 2007 when the program was held at Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY for five days, followed by one day at HUC-JIR and one day at the URJ offices in New York City, the cost was \$800, which included all study materials, lodging and meals. In 2008 and 2009 the cost of the program was maintained at \$800. In 2010 when the *Had'rachah* Seminar was moved to Glen Cove, New York it was shortened to five days, but the participants were asked to pay \$1,000. Although the Small Congregations Fund had provided some participants with funding in previous years, this was no longer the case in 2010. In 2011 the *Had'rachah* Seminar is once again planned as part of the URJ's Summer Learning Institute.<sup>98</sup>

Four years of the *Had'rachah* Seminar have attracted 84 people. Word-of-mouth is the most common way people find out about the program, according to the survey conducted in 2006. URJ mailings and write-ups about the program on the URJ website<sup>99</sup> run second and third, respectively, as vehicles for promoting the program. Sixty percent of participants have completed the second year of the program. There is no certificate or letter issued at completion. Yet, one participant in the *Had'rachah* Seminar who offers his services on-line as a "Jewish chaplain and licensed wedding officiant" lists the *Had'rachah* Program for Lay Leaders in Religious Life as one of his credentials.<sup>100</sup> It

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<sup>98</sup> See Appendix A for a copy of the URJ webpage announcing the 2011 *Had'rachah* Seminar.

<sup>99</sup> A copy of the URJ website page about the *Had'rachah* Seminar in 2010 is included in Appendix A.

<sup>100</sup> <http://weddingsbyrafael.webs.com/> accessed on December 16, 2010.

seems that over the more than twenty years of para-rabbinic programs, while the programs may have changed, the personalities of a few of the participants have not.

## IV

### **PROGRAM PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES AND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RABBIS AND PARA-PROFESSIONALS**

Participants in the para-rabbinic programs represented congregations large and small from all parts of the country and Canada. Most participants interviewed heard about the programs by word of mouth or from their rabbis. Adults of all ages came to the programs with diverse backgrounds, levels of Jewish learning and proficiency in Hebrew. As different as they were, commonalities with respect to motivation, experiences with the program and understanding of the limits of the training they received do exist.

#### **Motivation for Participation**

Almost across the board program participants were individuals ready for adult growth and were people with strong spiritual dimensions. Most were already serving their Jewish community in some capacity. Their leadership took the form of Presidencies and Vice Presidencies on their congregational boards or serving as chairs of ritual committees. Others were already leading services, *shiva minyanim* and Torah study. Some were teachers in the religious school or *b'nai mitzvah* tutors. Whatever they were already doing to serve their community, they came to the program to do more or to do what they were already doing better.

In small congregations without full-time clergy even individuals with relatively little Jewish knowledge are often called on or motivated to take on leadership roles. In reality, their 'small' amount of knowledge is relatively large compared to most Jews living in the community. These knowledgeable individuals feel compelled to lead, and know enough to realize how much they really don't know.

For about half of the participants interviewed participation in the program was suggested to them by their rabbi after recognition of the individual's readiness for spiritual and personal growth. One rabbi recognizes the program's potential for adult education, but believes strongly that when a congregation financially supports an individual's attendance in the program there should be a clearly stated expectation of enriching the community when they return. Therefore, prior to enrolling in a para-rabbinic program, this rabbi discusses what responsibilities the congregation is willing to take on when they return. She has five para-rabbins leading services at nearby nursing homes. In addition, they participate with other congregants in leading *shiva minyanim*.

In quite a number of cases a rabbi suggested the program to a congregant who expressed an interest in rabbinical school. Although it is impossible to gauge the number of HUC-JIR applications which resulted from the para-rabbinic programs, this work identified more than a half-dozen rabbis who attended the program before applying to rabbinical school.

### **Participant Experiences**

Individuals interested in the para-rabbinic programs from congregations without clergy often asked their UAHC/URJ Regional Director to act as their sponsoring rabbi and sign their program applications. Unfortunately, this was often the extent of the relationship. Many who were in this category expressed regret that they did not have an on-going mentoring relationship during their time in and subsequent to the program. Yet, one Regional Director remembers having so many para-rabbins at one point that he felt he did little else.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Expressed during an interview with the author.

Participants from small congregations were still able to enhance their knowledge and advance their skills. Often they serve through a wider range of rabbinic roles than do their counterparts in congregations with full time rabbis. However, for para-rabbinics in small congregation post-program experiences are more a response to what is needed in their community rather than their own decision of what they wish to take on. Most lead services, but whether they conduct funerals or baby namings is determined by events outside their control. In congregations without clergy, perhaps because there is so much for lay leaders to do, there are many cases where para-rabbinic inspired others to further their engagement in congregational life by teaching them to lead services or encouraging them to engage in Jewish study.

Participants from congregations with full-time clergy were able to make more of their own decisions about their post-program experiences. When participants and their rabbis were able to discuss mutual expectations for post-program congregational involvement before attending the program, the better the para-rabbinic experience for all involved. At a congregation with three para-rabbinics, one focuses on chanting torah and teaching b'nai mitzvah students, another serves as a cantorial soloist, and the third enjoys leading Torah study and delivering the occasional *d'var Torah*. When this particular rabbi is out of town, it is not unusual for the para-rabbinics to team up in different combinations to lead services. Leading alternative *Shabbat* morning *minyanim* is another common role for para-rabbinics. When the rabbi is officiating at a *b'nai mitzvah* service, an alternative service allows worshippers to pray in a smaller, intimate group.

At a 600 unit congregation one participant recognized the program as an opportunity for lay leaders to fill-in some of the gaps created when the temple cut back to

one rabbi instead of two “One rabbi can’t be everywhere,” he said.<sup>102</sup> At a medium size congregation when the only rabbi was on scheduled leave several months before his replacement was to arrive, the congregational president was able to bridge the gap because of his para-rabbinic training. Because of his training, services were still held regularly during the interim period.

While a few participants express minor disappointment about certain program sessions, most give the para-rabbinic programs a solid ‘A’ grade, and say that their experiences exceeded their expectations. While meeting the educational and skill-building expectations promised in promotional literature, there were additional, yet tremendously important, benefits. These included the building of community, confidence and appreciation for life-long learning. For some, their time in a para-rabbinic program “was a life changing experience.”<sup>103</sup>

Participants came to the program with different backgrounds, levels of education, personalities, likes and dislikes, but they all shared a love of Torah, prayer and a desire to serve their communities. An unexpected benefit was the new community of which they became a part. In some years, when a number of participants from the same geographic region were going to participate, they got together to meet prior to the start of the program. Once underway the programs’ close quarters, communal meals, long hours and shared experiences created strong bonds among some participants. In the two-year programs communication was frequent between Level 1 and Level 2. Participants from different geographic areas had bonded and looked forward to seeing each other again the following year. Those in the newly formed community supported each other in their para-

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<sup>102</sup> This and all other unreferenced quotes are from interviews conducted by the author.

<sup>103</sup> The phrase was used by several program participants during interviews with the author.

rabbinic work. They shared interesting and innovative service material, were a source of ideas for creative worship and helped each other when congregational politics raised issues about appropriate para-rabbinic roles in synagogue life.”The group feedback and interaction was invaluable,” says one participant.

After Level 2 participants who had been through the program together usually stayed in touch for a few years. Participants might see each other at biennials or regional conferences, but after a few years contact dwindled. This is especially true of the programs held prior to the existence of the internet and ease of e-mail communication. In later years list-serves created by participants and program organizers helped participants stay in touch. For example, the Para-Rabbinic Fellows list-serve stayed active for about five years. More often than not, the community was maintained for a few years through various means, but eventually time and distance took their toll. In select cases, friendships which started in a para-rabbinic program have endured. According to one participant “One of the best parts of the program was the people.”

The para-rabbinic programs are rewarding experiences for the participants and the congregations they serve. Many participants speak equally well of and give similar significance to the knowledge and confidence they gained as a result of attending the para-rabbinic program. Participation in the program almost consistently led to taking on larger roles in their synagogue communities. In some cases, even those whose pre-program role was minimal ended up post-program serving on their congregation’s board, often as the head of the ritual or religious practices committee. For many the programs facilitated tremendous personal growth and enrichment. “It solidified my connection to Reform Judaism. It gave my congregation a better equipped leader.” For still others, their



participation was truly life changing. “Suddenly I got in touch with my spirituality.” It brought “the realization that the rabbinate was what I needed to do with my life.” “I went because I wanted to be a better teacher in religious school, but “got fired up to be a spiritual leader.” Attendance at “the program gave me a greater knowledge of myself...the opportunity to keep evolving and growing over time.”

Success in applying program learning to synagogue endeavors appears directly related to participants’ self-awareness and ability to be circumspect. One administrator who is now a rabbi at a 700 member unit congregation shares that participation in a para-rabbinic program doesn’t always insure worthwhile congregational involvement. “If it is the right person, it could be a wonderful thing. I don’t remember every person [in the program] being the right person.”

Understanding when to turn to a sponsoring rabbi or a Union specialist for help is essential. For small congregations in isolated areas one of the unexpected benefits of the program was making a connection with people from the Union or HUC-JIR. Learning about Union programs and putting a face to a name made it easier to reach out for help when needed. While other congregants may come to see their para-rabbinics as “Jewish experts” or “the go-to-person” if the rabbi isn’t around, most para-rabbinics do not see themselves as rabbis and abide by the limitations imposed by program organizers. “I correct people who call me ‘rabbi’ all the time.” Successful para-rabbinics are especially talented in the area of establishing boundaries. “I understood my role; knew when to tell people to go see the rabbi.”

## Compensation

Most para-rabbinics do not accept compensation for the services they provide to their communities, and when they have no alternative but to accept a gift, it is donated to the congregation. Compensation for para-rabbinics is an area in which there has been some confusion. Some participants and sponsoring rabbis are under the impression that para-rabbinics were not to receive compensation. Others remember that the receipt of any remuneration was to be cleared through the sponsoring rabbi. A memo from the Pacific Southwest Council of the UAHC addressed the issue this way:<sup>104</sup>

“When Para-Rabbinic Fellows perform services for which the congregation is accustomed to pay (such as teaching Hebrew School), it is proper to compensate them as well. Otherwise, the general practice is that they volunteer their services to the congregation, subject to their availability and interests.”

Large congregations pay for or subsidize their congregants’ participation in the para-rabbinic programs. In return most volunteer their services and see the work they do as holy service to the community. In a few cases, participants have sought a reduction or total abatement of dues in exchange for their para-rabbinic work.

There is a high correlation between the number of para-rabbinics who accept remuneration for their work and those who admit to obtaining civil licenses in order to perform Jewish weddings. Often, these individuals think of themselves as clergy. Throughout the more than twenty years of para-rabbinic programs, participants were clearly told they were not being empowered to perform Jewish weddings or conversions. Even so, there are examples of flagrant disregard of these limitations even though acknowledgement to abide by them is a pre-requisite for admission to the program.

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<sup>104</sup> Undated memo in the files of the Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at the New York City offices of the Union for Reform Judaism.

There are of course those para-rabbis who do receive payment for their services to their congregations. One small, 65-member congregation used to have a student rabbi come in once a month. When they could no longer afford the expense, they started paying their para-rabbinic for providing 15 hours per week to the community. This individual expressed no qualms about her willingness to perform a wedding ceremony for anyone who asked, while simultaneously acknowledging that she had agreed not to do so as a condition of acceptance into the program.

In another community a para-rabbinic serves a rural congregation about 40 miles from his home between monthly visits from a student rabbi. The para-rabbinic is paid the same amount for a Friday night service as the rabbinical student. With regard to his level of skill he explains “I do a fabulous funeral and I’m a wonderful chaplain.”

In communities without a rabbinic presence, para-rabbis often take on the job of outreach to the larger community. Called upon when outside groups want a representative of the Jewish community, para-rabbis often speak at schools and churches, and participate in inter-faith gatherings. One para-rabbinic who describes himself as doing a tremendous amount of interfaith work, including Passover Seders at churches says “people on the outside sometimes call him ‘rabbi’ ... Being in a small bible belt town, being in the minority, you need to have an understanding of Judaism to answer questions about it in an eloquent way. The program allowed me to do that.”

### **Some Disappointments**

Among the relatively few criticisms about the programs is lack of on-going support. All participants required sponsoring rabbis, so those from small congregations without full time clergy were sponsored by Union Regional Directors, and often felt they

had no on-going support for their efforts. There was no one off who to bounce ideas, and no one to discuss opportunities for further personal growth. In some cases these individuals found welcome ears in program faculty with whom they stayed in touch. Lack of support was especially evident in participants from the earlier programs. They did not have the benefit of list serves and e-mail to keep in touch with other participants who could be supportive and with whom they could share material and post-program experiences. Some remember attempts to organize sessions at Union Biennials, but dismiss these efforts as “mostly social.” In addition, during the transition from the Rabbinic Aide Program to the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program, some names were dropped off contact lists.

Even for participants from larger congregations, some post-program experiences were not what they anticipated. Those who attended the program and returned to find there wasn't really a role for them to play in their congregation felt especially frustrated. Unfortunately some rabbis sponsored congregants who were not especially well suited for para-rabbinic work. These rabbis considered the program an opportunity for adult education, while others preferred to avoid conversations about potential unsuitability altogether, especially if the person wanting to attend the program was an influential congregant.

Some sponsoring rabbis also express disappointment with follow-up on the part of program organizers. “No organizer has ever called to ask what the specific needs of the congregation are so that they can be addressed.” Nor were there any efforts to assess the effectiveness of the programs.

Sometimes when congregations find themselves between rabbis, it is the para-rabbinics who step in to lead services and *shiva minyanim* and conduct funerals. Yet, when the new rabbis arrive, they are reluctant to rely on the para-rabbinics. The reasons may have be related to trying to establish themselves as the new spiritual leaders, discomfort relying on people whom they do not know or even personality clashes, but the result is the same. In each of these cases the para-rabbinics are frustrated because they could not put to use the skills they worked so hard to acquire. In some of these cases, the para-rabbinics do find alternative avenues for service. Retirement homes and assisted living facilities and isolated congregations in rural areas without knowledgeable leaders were often the beneficiaries. Although some under-used para-rabbinics alerted their UAHC/URJ regional directors to their availability, it infrequently resulted in any opportunities.

One participant from a large southern congregation suffered a different kind of disappointment. Although she was not receiving compensation for her work at the synagogue she described herself as going “from congregant/worshipper to worker. [The synagogue] became a place to work rather than pray. You find out about the inner workings of the congregation; more than you’d want to know. Once you become educated to a higher level than most of the congregants around you, you find there’s nothing more around you for learning.”

### **The Congregational Perspective**

Many para-rabbinics serve congregations that do not have the resources to afford full-time clergy. Often even a student rabbi once-a-month is beyond their means. In these situations para-rabbinics are essential to having any semblance of Jewish ritual

life. Even when a student rabbi serves a community, a para-rabbinic often leads services the other two or three *Shabbatot* per month. In addition, having someone who lives in and knows the members of the community provides a very different, some would say much more emotionally supportive, experience in the event of bereavement.

Through their own enthusiasm for learning, para-rabbinics can excite others in the congregation and invigorate worship communities. For example, some para-rabbinics have used the program experience to teach other congregants how to lead services. Often times a high level of Jewish learning in isolated Jewish communities is rare. When the desire emerges to bring aspects of Judaism into their lives, people draw from the experiences of their youth. Through participation in para-rabbinic programs these isolated communities have the chance to experience Reform Judaism and Reform worship as it is today.

One challenge in congregations with both full time clergy and para-rabbinics is fostering congregational acceptance of congregants as spiritual leaders, even if they are already congregational leaders in a different context. In some congregations completion of the program was recognized from the *bimah*. Sometimes program organizers sent certificates of completion to the sponsoring rabbi. The rabbi then ceremonially presented the para-rabbinic with the certificate at a *Shabbat* service. It provided an opportunity to explain the training which had been received and speak to the responsibilities that the participant was going to take on in the congregation. At several congregations a title such as 'Rabbinic Aide,' '*Sh'liach K'hilah*,' or 'Synagogue Associate' is used in service programs, web pages and other announcements. At one congregation, which had two individuals go through the program at the same time, there was a special *oneg* held in

their honor. Another method to promote program participants' new status is through the synagogue newsletter. One rabbi summed up congregational acceptance by saying "If I put my stamp on it, its accepted."

One congregation with several para-rabbinics organizes a special service during High Holy Days, increasing both the pararabbinics' stature and visibility in the congregation. One year it was a meditation service with special readings and music for which the para-rabbinics also created a special *siddur*. Another year the service focused on the poetry and music of the Psalms. In such cases para-rabbinics fill a niche that the rabbi might not have the interest or time to address. At one congregation the para-rabbinic gave congregants the knowledge and confidence to access drumming and chanting as an avenue to enhancing spirituality.

When para-rabbinics serve a congregation without full-time clergy they are often on their own when it comes to establishing their credibility. How they serve the community, how they conduct themselves and the authenticity they bring to worship and other tasks are the vehicles for gaining the congregation's trust and acceptance. When para-rabbinics serve in congregations with full-time clergy there is tremendous variety in both para-rabbinic responsibilities and rabbinic mentoring. In some congregations a para-rabbinic doing a funeral is not unusual if the rabbi is out of town. In others, the belief that "funerals need clergy" predominates. If the rabbi is out of town, a rabbi from a nearby congregation, rather than the para-rabbinic, will be asked to do the funeral service rather than the para-rabbinic. The same inconsistency is evident in the oversight provided clergy. Some para-rabbinics meet with their rabbis on a regular basis to debrief events in which they have been involved and discuss what role they might take on next. In other

congregations the rabbi might once in a while informally ask “how’s it going.” What is clear is that in congregations with full-time clergy there is a distinct line between rabbinic and para-rabbinic responsibilities, and many rabbis believe that for congregants in certain situations “there is always the sense of wanting ‘the rabbi.’”

### **Who is a Rabbi?**

Although Reform Judaism does not always make its decisions in accordance with the Jewish legal process, the movement is rooted in its recognition that the *halakhah* must be responsibly confronted even when it cannot be consciously accepted. While there is an emphasis on personal autonomy, the communal tent still has boundaries. These boundaries, clearly drawn and maintained through knowledge of Jewish traditions and laws, are determined by shared understandings and a common vision of Jewish meaning and aspiration for continued existence. Among these boundaries is the ability to decide who is a “rabbi” and the qualifications which must be met in order to entitle an individual to have that title bestowed. Although Chapter II looked at rabbinic authority and the professionalization of the rabbinate, there are other elements of the Reform Rabbinate that further distinguish its members.

As a movement “we emphatically do not believe that any and every person who is called ‘rabbi’ or who serves some congregation in that capacity necessarily deserves the title. To us, rather, a “rabbi” is someone who is qualified for that distinction. It is therefore the widespread *minhag* among our communities ... to require that our rabbis receive “customary ordination” before we engage their services.”<sup>105</sup> The responsum is grounded in the long-standing Jewish tradition for communities to demand that their

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<sup>105</sup> See ‘Who is a Rabbi?’ in *Reform Responsa for the Twenty-First Century*, vol. 1, pp. 319-329, which states that no one should preside over weddings, divorces, or *chalitzah* rituals unless he has received “the customary ordination.”



rabbis meet certain qualifications and provide some sort of certification that they do meet them. To ensure that those who wish to serve as rabbis in the Reform Movement have obtained the necessary education, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) will accept as a member only those who graduate from a pre-approved list of schools and seminaries, which includes Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. There are other avenues for CCAR membership, but any applicant must prove that his or her rabbinical education meets the standards of excellence similar to those of the recognized schools. By applying these high standards, the movement assures its congregations that its rabbis have gone through a rigorous program. At HUC-JIR the five-year program is a combination of modern academic scholarship with critical study of traditional Jewish texts. As a result, it produces Jewish professionals who are able to transmit and apply to contemporary life the sustaining values and responsibilities of Jewish tradition. Simultaneous to academic pursuits, the five-year program is heavily geared to providing practical experience in service leading, preaching, teaching, the skills of pastoral care and other aspects of the rabbinate through student pulpits and internships. No program for lay leaders, no matter how extensive or academically oriented, can come close to providing the preparation for the rabbinate that does a rabbinical school education.

As are all rabbis, a Reform rabbi is an interpreter of an evolving tradition, and *halakhah* is an expression of that tradition. The early reformers explained and justified their changes by means of the *halakhah*. Today Reform rabbis are committed to searching out *halakhic* precedents and employing *halakhic* dialectic, even though Reform Judaism is characterized by a willingness to depart from traditional practice when it seems to conflict with modern consciousness. The Reform Movement has always been

deeply involved with *halakhah* and responsa, which together comprise the body of written decisions and rulings given by Jewish authorities regarding questions of Jewish law. The Reform Responsa Committee was created in 1906, issued the first responsum in 1911 and continues to this day. Although the responsa is viewed as guidance and not governance, the ability to appreciate and understand its formulation and its subsequent application can only be learned through a significant investment of time and discourse. It would be highly unusual to find this wisdom in a lay leader, even a well educated one.

Today with established standards of education and a professional association the Reform rabbinate has gone beyond the professionalization established in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Another significant aspect of today's Reform Rabbinate which clearly distinguishes its members from the lay leaders who participate in para-rabbinic programs is the CCAR Code of Ethics for Rabbis. Members of the CCAR are obligated to "abide by the highest moral values of our Jewish tradition" and "to behave at a level worthy of emulation."<sup>106</sup> Among the areas dealt with in the code are personal responsibility, confidentiality, ethics guidelines concerning sexual boundaries and professional fees. The Code also describes the powers and procedures for adjudicating ethical violations including reprimands, censure, suspension and expulsion. With movement-wide standards for its rabbis, the Reform Movement's expectation of and commitment to an extremely high standard of behavior on the part of its members is unquestionable.

### **The Priestly Dimension of the Rabbinate**

Rabbis today are not necessarily descendants of Aaron or the priesthood of ancient times. Nor is Judaism a religion that advocates rabbis as intermediaries between

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<sup>106</sup> Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Code of Ethics for Rabbis*  
<http://ccarnet.org/documentsandpositions/ethics/> accessed on August 26, 2010.

its laity and God. This is to say that the existence of rabbis does not exempt a Jew from doing what each must do for himself. Yet, there is a dimension of the rabbinate that acknowledges the rabbis' role as special agents of the covenant between God and Israel.

Some people might argue that the only difference between a rabbi and a lay person is the level of Jewish knowledge evidenced by the rabbi's expertise in the tradition. But some rabbis, such as Samuel E. Karff, say that "words of prayer or blessing, spoken by [rabbis] at particular moments, have a resonance which the layperson's words lack."<sup>107</sup> Through blessings rabbis connect people to God by virtue of their vocational commitment. Therefore, according to Karff, a rabbi's capacity to bless is dependent not only on reciting the right words, but also on the priestly dimension of the rabbinate.

Talmudic writings detail instances where rabbis have the capacity to mediate God's healing power. We read in *Berakhot* 5b:

"R. Hiyya b. Abba fell ill and R. Johanan went in to visit him. He said to him: Are your sufferings welcome to you? He replied: Neither they nor their reward. He said to him: Give me your hand. He gave him his hand and he raised him. R. Johanan once fell ill and R. Hanina went in to visit him. He said to him: Are your sufferings welcome to you? He replied: Neither they nor their reward. He said to him: Give me your hand. He gave him his hand and he raised him. Why could not R. Johanan raise himself? They replied: The prisoner cannot free himself from jail."

When the rabbis are asked if they willingly accept their suffering, the implication is if they do, they will receive their reward in the world to come. We note that R. Hiyya and R. Johanan are exceedingly humble, because they state that they do not even await a reward in the world to come. When R. Johanan takes R. Hiyya's hand, it is through his touch that R. Hiyya is healed. The question asked is, if R. Johanan was able to heal

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<sup>107</sup> Karff, Samuel E., *The Rabbi as Religious Figure*, in Glasser, Joseph B., ed. *Tanu Rabbanan: Our Rabbis Taught*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1990, p. 86.

Hiyya, why did he need R. Hanina to heal him? That is, why couldn't he heal himself? In answer, a parallel is drawn between someone who is ill and someone who is in jail. Just as a prisoner can not free himself, someone who is ill can not heal himself. This text substantiates the view of Rabbi Karff that there is a priestly dimension to the rabbinate.

With regard to when a rabbi today is asked to pray for someone who is ill by either the person himself or by a loved one, Karff asks "does the rabbi say 'my prayers are no more effective than yours'? Or does he pray?"<sup>108</sup> His conclusion is that "a very significant if subtle aspect of [a rabbi's] rabbinic authority is contingent upon [a rabbi's own] readiness to accept the role of rabbinic priest and the sensitivity and skill with which [she] enacts it." Although few today would consider that a rabbi acts as a vessel of God's healing energy, the rabbi's presence eases the transition from *chol* to *kodesh* and the rabbi's prayers help others pray by affirming human dignity in light of suffering.

Certain *mitzvot*, such as *bikkur cholim* and leading a *shiva minyan*, along with the burden of preparation and the anxiety of carrying out the ritual task, may be entrusted to a para-rabbinic. Because the para-rabbinic has received a certain amount of training, the community has some assurance that the *mitzvah* will be adequately performed. The para-rabbinic most likely has the knowledge of how to perform the ritual, but it is unlikely that the para-rabbinic will have the awareness, much less the readiness, to accept the role of rabbinic priest. One can not help but question if a para-rabbinic believes himself ready to accept the role, does he really understand what the role is?

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<sup>108</sup> Karff, Samuel E., *The Subtleties of Our Rabbinic Authority*, in Stevens, Elliot L., ed. *Rabbinic Authority*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982, p. 60.

## V

### CONCLUSION

The rituals and obligations of Judaism were never intended to be the sole prerogative of rabbis.<sup>109</sup> However, while an educated laity is an important goal, especially for individuals who serve as congregational leaders, the rabbi still plays a unique role. There may be some individuals who know more Jewish history or speak Hebrew more fluently, but the rabbi will still be the most generally Jewishly-knowledgable professional in the congregation. Skilled para-rabbinics may be called upon to assist the rabbi, or even serve in the rabbi's stead, but there will always be individuals who believe and occasions when only by a 'real' rabbi will do.

The need for ritually knowledgeable and Jewishly educated lay leaders arises, first and foremost, because of the importance of individuals meeting their ritual responsibilities as adult Jews. In addition, lay leaders serve as partners with rabbis in leading congregations. In smaller congregations lay leaders are the driving force which keeps these communities in existence. These dedicated individuals, committed to furthering Jewish existence, devote untold hours to their communities, often using vacation and family time to attend seminars and conferences that further their Jewish knowledge and practical skills. However, as important as an educated laity is, this work has established that there are, indeed, differences between ordained rabbis and para-rabbinics. Although ordination today is not the *s'mikhah* of ancient days in *Eretz Israel*, it still provides attestation to a requisite body of knowledge in matters of Jewish law, an indication of scholarly ability and a declaration that the individual is of a moral and ethical character making him or her suitable to serve as a community's spiritual leader.

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<sup>109</sup> See discussion in Chapter II on 'Lay Leader Authority.'

Sharing roles of authority and power in a congregation can lead to complex and sometimes difficult relationships. On one hand, the rabbi–congregant relationship is based on mutual respect and genuine regard. On the other hand, the relationship is sometimes characterized by jealousy, competition and a struggle for power. More often than not, rabbi and congregational leaders navigate through relationships that have a combination of positive and negative constraints. While *Kavod Harav* is still evident in the Reform Movement, rabbis need to understand that while it might be graciously offered at the beginning of a relationship, it continues to be offered only if it continues to be earned.

In order to assess the impact of the para-rabbinic programs on the Reform Movement it is important to evaluate them through the lens of each of the different stakeholders involved. These stakeholders are the individual program participants, the congregations to which they belong, the organizations involved in administering the programs (the URJ, CCAR and HUC-JIR) and the Reform Movement as a whole.

Individual participants interviewed for this study overwhelmingly view their participation in para-rabbinic programs as personally rewarding, and beneficial to their congregations. Many participants described the experience as ‘life changing.’ Learning, personal growth and elevated spiritual consciousness were often cited as direct benefits of attending the programs. In many instances the training participants received also allows them to enrich the larger Jewish community in which they live. In larger congregations where para-rabbinics assist rabbis, they help prevent clergy burnout. Unlike some rabbis of previous generations, rabbis today recognize the need to balance health and family

time with work responsibilities. Skilled para-rabbis allow rabbis to delegate responsibilities and deal with the need to be in more than one place at the same time.

In smaller congregations without a full time rabbinic presence, para-rabbis have been able to lead services and officiate at life cycle events, which, without them, would not have taken place in a Jewish context. In many remote rural areas, there would not be an organized Reform Jewish presence without these dedicated para-rabbinic lay leaders.

As the organization of the Reform Movement's congregations, the URJ represents the Reform laity. In the group of para-rabbinic stakeholders, the Reform laity gained almost as much as the participants in the para-rabbinic programs. Although *Torah lishmah*, 'learning Torah for its own sake,' is an important part of our tradition, the para-rabbinic programs surpassed any other adult education program because of their emphasis on learning for the sake of doing. The roles that Reform laity who participated in these programs was empowered to take on changed congregational life. Alternative Saturday morning services, greater availability of leaders for *shiva minyanim* and nursing home services, meditation and healing services were all often introduced or made possible through the efforts of lay leaders. In addition, Jewishly knowledgeable lay leaders provide coverage when the rabbi is out-of-town.

While some may argue there is a risk some congregants may come to view their para-rabbis as rabbis, the benefits para-rabbis provide their communities outweigh such concerns. Unfortunately, not all lay leaders have the skills and self-awareness necessary to serve as symbolic exemplars. Nor should they be expected to. While they give untold hours to their congregations, most earn their livelihood through other means,

and, unlike rabbis, have not made a vocational commitment to serving as spiritual leaders. That said, there are some para-rabbinics who present themselves as rabbis. Just as halakhic authorities had to fight against unscrupulous individuals who became rabbis in order to benefit from financial rewards, there are those today who seek para-rabbinic training in order to offer their services for financial gain. According to program administrators interviewed, examples of individuals who over-stepped the limits of authority granted by the para-rabbinic programs exist in almost every version of these programs. While the acts of these individuals are the subject of anecdotes and are sometimes held up as evidence of the dangers inherent in these programs, the number of individuals behaving in this manner is relatively small in comparison to total program attendees. Unfortunately the stories are often repeated, so the perception of the problem is larger than the actual problem itself. There is a common belief that the para-rabbinic program name changes were made in attempts to thwart para-rabbinics who might consider presenting themselves as rabbis. However, one Union official mentioned during an interview that changing program names is part of the URJ culture.

The CCAR entered discussions about the para-rabbinic programs around the issue of para-rabbinics presenting themselves as rabbis, as well as a concern that training laity through these programs would diminish the demand for congregational rabbis. The research for this study did not identify a single congregation in which the existence of a para-rabbinic impacted the hiring of rabbinic staff. One para-rabbinic interviewed did explain that when her congregation could no longer afford a student rabbi, they hired their para-rabbinic to provide “rabbinic services” for approximately fifteen hours per



week.<sup>110</sup> Previously the para-rabbinic had been serving the congregation on a volunteer basis. During the interviews conducted for this study there appeared to be some correlation between those para-rabbinics who accepted payment for their services and those who were less concerned about over-stepping appropriate boundaries.

HUC-JIR has been involved informally with para-rabbinic training for the full span of years in which the programs have been in existence. Faculty and lecturers from the College-Institute were often called upon by program administrators to teach sessions in their areas of expertise. With the inception of the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program in 1997, HUC-JIR took on a formal role as one of the program sponsors, along with the UAHC and the CCAR. One benefit of the more formal role was that it increased the College-Institute's visibility within the Movement. It is impossible to quantify the benefits which resulted, but congregational leaders may have become more invested in the College-Institute's overall and financial well being. Another potential benefit may have been that after having experienced faculty lectures, congregational leaders may have been enticed to draw on HUC-JIR faculty for weekend scholar-in-residence programs.

Although a lengthy applicant screening process had been instituted the year before with the 1996 Synagogue Skills and Torah Study Seminar, it did not remain in use in years immediately following. If it had, some of the participants who eventually overstepped the limits of the para-rabbinic role may have been weeded out. However, given the effort that the screening process required and the relatively few problems which came to light, maintaining the lengthy screening process may have appeared to be unwarranted. No documentation was available regarding the number of applicants who were turned down for the para-rabbinic programs. Because the lengthier screening

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<sup>110</sup> This was shared with the author during a telephone interview.

process was re-instituted with the *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Program, we might deduce that some problems did arise in the intervening years, but there is no way to know for sure.

In retrospect, putting the para-rabbinic program under the same institutional umbrella as the organization which produces Reform rabbis may have given the program and its participants greater stature than what may have been originally intended.

Similarly, providing participants with copies of the CCAR Rabbi's manual, which was done in the first few years of the program, may have had the same unintentional result.

Through the URJ, Reform laity, including the program participants, was the stakeholder with the most financial investment in these programs. Although the funding challenges of today were not present in the early days of the para-rabbinic programs, most of the program administrators interviewed indicated that registration fees covered direct program expenses such as room and board and staff/faculty travel expenses. Interviews with participants indicated that while some participants used their own funds to attend the programs, congregations often provided assistance or paid the full costs of travel and registration for their members to attend.<sup>111</sup> In some years the Small Congregations Resource Fund, which existed within the Union, helped fund attendance by members of congregations with few resources.

Indirect expenses such as administrators' time and salary were shouldered by the URJ. During interviews administrators indicated that in more recent years diminished financial resources definitely impacted the program. One of the greatest changes between the *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Program and the *Had'rachah* seminar was that fewer HUC-JIR faculty and URJ staff participated as program presenters. Even the

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<sup>111</sup> According to information obtained in interviews with participants.

length of the program was adjusted for economic reasons. As the cost of room and board escalated a desire to keep registration fees level shortened the duration of the program. The administrators of the *Had'rachah* Seminar have looked for additional ways to incur cost savings, such as having fewer invited guest speakers and making the Seminar part of the URJ's Summer Learning Institute.<sup>112</sup> The length of the program no longer allows participants to lead services and then receive critiques afterward. Although participants have been satisfied with their experiences, the program does not have the depth of its predecessor, the *Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Program.

In a few respects the para-rabbinic programs came full circle from 1989 to 2010. In 1989 the program was initiated, organized and implemented as a Union effort. After periods with official involvement by HUC-JIR and the CCAR, it is now, once again, totally a URJ program.<sup>113</sup> In 1989 a Certificate of Completion was issued to program participants. In the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program participants were issued Letters of Completion instead. By the time of the *Sh'liach Kehillah*/ Synagogue Associates Program a certificate was once again issued upon completion. In 2010 completion of the *Had'rachah* Seminar was rewarded with a \$36 gift certificate usable for publications of the URJ Press. Although each time the para-rabbinic program changed hands significant effort went into reconfiguring its structure, the basics skills taught remained the same.

Each of the different stakeholders in the para-rabbinic programs may have specific interests, but together these different stakeholders comprise the whole of Reform Judaism. From this holistic perspective, the Reform Movement has been and remains well served by the para-rabbinic programs.

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<sup>112</sup> See <http://urj.org/worship/worship/hadrachah/>

<sup>113</sup> HUC-JIR's involvement is once again on an informal basis through the participation of faculty teaching program sessions.

A unique perspective on how the Reform rabbinate saw itself in 1980 is presented in the book ‘Rabbinic Authority.’ It is a compilation of papers presented in 1980 before the ninety-first annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In their writings, the rabbis presenting at the conference saw a clear distinction between themselves and their laity. In the words of Samuel E. Karff, rabbis at the time were “mediator[s] of God’s presence in the lives of [their] people.”<sup>114</sup> Unfortunately there is no comparable text written by laity, but it is likely that there would be a gap between how rabbis saw themselves and how they were viewed by laity at the time. Over time the para-rabbinic program built a bridge across that gap. Societal changes and empowerment of the Reform laity narrowed the gap between clergy and congregational leaders. As para-rabbinics took on larger and more prominent roles in their congregations, the distinctions between rabbi and laity became less pronounced.

Recognition that speaking about God from Reform pulpits had not been prevalent in years past preceded the Reform Movement beginning to experience a spiritual reawakening through the 1980s and 1990s. In 1990 Karff wrote “God-talk does not come easily to our people’s lips...For years there was very little God-talk in our pulpits.”<sup>115</sup> As the 1990’s progressed interest in spirituality became increasingly important among aging baby boomers in America, and Jews were no exception. Laity experienced a growing need for spiritual guidance and its search took the form of yearning for education. The para-rabbinic programs addressed that need. In some congregations, rather than the rabbi,

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<sup>114</sup> Karff, Samuel E., *The Subtleties of Our Rabbinic Authority*, in Stevens, Elliot L., ed. *Rabbinic Authority*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982, p. 62.

<sup>115</sup> Karff, Samuel E., *The Rabbi as Religious Figure*, in Glasser, Joseph B., ed. *Tanu Rabbanan: Our Rabbis Taught*. New York, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1990.

it may have been lay leaders whose spiritual journeys made it easier to bring God-talk into daily synagogue life.

Another gap bridged during the years of the para-rabbinic programs is a technological one. When the programs started in 1989 the internet was in its infancy. When the first para-rabbinic group met at Kutz Camp in 1989 their shared love of Judaism and Jewish learning created a community. There was comfort in being with others who wanted to take on leadership roles around Jewish learning and ritual. This community could only come together by being physically in the same place at the same time. These individuals did not have the benefits of e-mail and list-serves. There was no on-line learning or webinars at the time. The fifteen books they received for their Jewish home libraries were a tremendous gift and benefit of the program. For those who lived in remote rural areas, or even small cities, access to Jewish books was extremely limited. Its important to remember that Amazon.com wasn't even launched until 1995. In the early 1990s the para-rabbinic programs provided a forum that could not be duplicated. Even with today's more technologically advanced methods of communication, people still have the need to gather and create community around Jewish learning. Celebrating Shabbat during para-rabbinic programs was always, and continues to be a highlight of the experience for many participants.

This work began with the hypothesis that there is an on-going need in the Reform Jewish community for an educated lay leadership. The goal of this thesis was to document the history of the various programs and to determine if there are valid reasons for the Reform Movement to continue devoting resources to such efforts. As Jews our ultimate goal is the perpetuation of Judaism, which ultimately is accomplished through

dissemination of Jewish knowledge. The para-rabbinic programs accomplish this by providing Reform laity with the knowledge and skill to lead worship and execute Jewish ritual independent of the availability of a professional rabbi. The para-rabbinic programs positively changed the Reform Movement by empowering people to serve their communities, increasing Jewish literacy and making Judaism more accessible in remote areas.

Just as Reform Judaism changes to stay relevant in a changing world, the Movement's lay leaders need to change with it to remain relevant and valuable to their congregations. The experiences of para-rabbinic program participants show an overall positive, post-program impact on both the large and small congregations they serve. The hypothesis that a cadre of educated lay leaders can enhance and enrich congregational life is clearly supported and the research shows that para-rabbinic programs continue to be valuable tools for the Reform Movement.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the role each of my professors has played in my rabbinic education and the support and kindness they have offered during my years at HUC-JIR. I am particularly indebted to my two thesis advisors, Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph and Rabbi Mark Washofsky, for their direction and patience throughout the preparation of this work. In the initial phases of this effort Dr. Jonathan Cohen contributed significantly to the discussions of Talmudic texts relevant to this effort, and I am very grateful for his time and insight.

This study would not have been possible were it not for the many, many individuals who agreed to be interviewed and their willingness to be forthright about their experiences with the various para-rabbinic programs. I am indebted to all those who trusted and honored me by sharing their very personal stories, and to those who went above and beyond by mailing and faxing their notes and papers from their time in the para-rabbinic programs.

There are no words to express my gratitude for the love and support I have received from my husband, Arnie. His encouragement and willingness to travel the journey together made possible all the steps which have taken me to the rabbinate.

## APPENDIX A

### Advertising – Notices, Brochures, Web Pages

Spring, 1993 Reform Judaism Magazine  
Spring, 1995 Reform Judaism Magazine  
Spring, 1996 Reform Judaism Magazine  
Summer, 1996 Reform Judaism Magazine (2)  
Spring, 1997 Reform Judaism Magazine  
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1997 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program Brochure  
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2001 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program Brochure  
Spring, 2002 Reform Judaism Magazine  
2002 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Brochure  
Spring, 2003 Reform Judaism Magazine  
Spring, 2004 Reform Judaism Magazine  
2004 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Brochure  
2005 / 2006 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Brochure  
2006 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Web Page  
Spring, 2007 Reform Judaism Magazine  
2007 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Brochure  
2008 / 2009 *Sh'liah K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate Brochure  
Spring, 2009 Reform Judaism Magazine  
2010 *Had'rachah* Seminar Webpage (2)  
2011 *Had'rachah* Seminar Webpage (2)



## UAHC Calendar

### MARCH 1993

North American College Convention. March 11-14. Cincinnati, OH. Contact: Paul Reichenbach, (914) 986-1174.

Pennsylvania Regional Biennial. March 19-21. Pittsburgh, PA. Contact: Rabbi Richard F. Address, (215) 563-8183.

NYFRS Day of Music for the Synagogue. March 21. Temple Israel, New Rochelle, NY. Contact: Rabbi Allen S. Kaplan, (212) 249-0100.

Workshop on Reaching the Unaffiliated. March 28. Temple Beth Zion, Buffalo, NY. Contact: Rabbi David S. Hachen, (216) 831-6722.

### APRIL 1993

Northeast Lakes Council Sub-Regional Spirituality Conference. April 16-18. Grand Rapids, MI. Contact: Rabbi David S. Hachen, (216) 831-6722.

Pacific Northwest Regional Biennial. April 23-25. Bellevue, WA. Contact: Scott Greenberg, (206) 236-5287.

RAC Consultation on Conscience. April 25-27. Washington, D.C. Contact: Temma Schaller, (202) 387-2800.

Northeast Lakes Council Regional Board Meeting. April 30-May 2. Rochester, NY. Contact: Morry Weinstein, (716) 586-1670.

### MAY 1993

Atlanta Reform Synagogue Council Outreach Day. May 2. Atlanta, GA. Contact: Rabbi Rachel Hertzman, (305) 592-4792.

NYFRS/JASA Conference on Caring for the Aged and Preparing for Our Own Aging. May 2. Jewish Association for Services for the Aged, NYC. Contact: Rabbi Allen S. Kaplan, (212) 249-0100.

Northeast Lakes Council Adult Study Retreat. May 14-16. Punderson State Park (near Cleveland, OH). Contact: Rabbi David S. Hachen, (216) 831-6722.

UAHC Board Meeting. May 21-23. Nashville, TN. Contact: Terry Bobrow, (212) 249-0100.

### JUNE 1993

Training Program for Songleaders & Religious School Music Teachers. June 8-11. UAHC Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, Oconomowoc, WI. Contact: Gerard Kaye, (312) 782-1477.

UAHC Fund for Reform Judaism Dinner of Honor. June 10. Temple Emanu-El, Oak Park, MI. Contact: Rabbi David S. Hachen, (216) 831-6722.

Training Session for Selected Lay Persons and Rabbis for UAHC Rabbinic Transition Program. June 11-13. Camp Eisner, Great Barrington, MA. Contact: Joseph Bernstein, (212) 249-0100.

### JULY 1993

Summer Kallot. July 7-11. Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. July 21-25. University of California, Santa Cruz, CA. Contact: Rabbi Sanford Seltzer, (617) 277-1655.

North American Jewish Choral Festival. July 11-15. Concord Resort Hotel, Lake Kiamasha, NY. Contact: Robin Hirsch, (201) 599-0680.

Rabbi Daniel L. David Memorial Study Weekend, NYFRS. July 16-18. Eisner Camp, Great Barrington, MA. Contact: Rabbi Allen S. Kaplan, (212) 249-0100.

## Rabbinic Aides: Empowering the Laity

"Nine rabbis," holds a Jewish proverb, can't make a minyan, but ten cobblers, yes." The UAHC has been taking this proverb seriously by developing the Rabbinic Aide Program—a two-week intensive program of study and practical training that equips congregants to assist rabbis or to stand in their stead in nearly every situation but a wedding or conversion. According to program coordinator Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, from 1989 to 1991, 70 men and women underwent the training at the UAHC Kutz Camp-Institute; two more sessions are scheduled for this summer (July 19-Aug. 2; Aug. 9-23), which should bring the number of rabbinic aides to over 100.

The rabbinic aides apply their Jewish knowledge in very diverse realms. Lori Cohen, a schoolteacher, is serving as leader of a new congregation that she helped found in New Market, Ont., north of Toronto. The congregation has a core of 40 families who gather twice monthly for Oneg Shabbat and for all the holidays. Cohen, a Jew-by-Choice who underwent the training in 1992, serves as a prayer leader and Hebrew school instructor. "There were only nine in my class," she recalls, "yet we had a different teacher each day for two weeks." In particular, the training equipped her to conduct a Jewish funeral, a need which she expects may arise out of the mitzvah work she does in nursing homes in her area.

The training inspired Martin Pollens, a psychotherapist from North Tarrytown, NY, to bring the insights of Judaism and the experience of prayer into his therapy work. In his "spare time" Pollens helps revitalize Hillels on two Westchester college campuses. He'd like to see the rabbinic aide program expanded. "If the Reform Movement is to continue to grow," he says, "it needs to empower the laity. This program is the most rigorous and successful that the Union has to offer."

For more information please circle **47** in the request box on p.40.



# UAHC & YOU

IDEAS, PROGRAMS & SERVICES FROM THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

## Inside

- **ENLIVEN YOUR SEDER TABLE** ..... 65  
with three children's books from the UAHC Press.
- **YOU CAN BECOME A RABBINIC AIDE** ..... 65  
This summer, learn how to assist your rabbi.
- **INVOLVE YOUR TEENS IN JUDAISM THROUGH THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE** ..... 66  
How to experience Israel and score school credit too.
- **FOR THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT SPOUSAL ABUSE** ..... 66  
Here's a booklet that can make a difference.
- **BELIN OUTREACH AWARDS** ..... 67  
Ten congregations with outstanding Outreach programs will receive a \$1,000 prize.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS, CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBERS ON THE REQUEST BOX LOCATED ON PAGE 69.



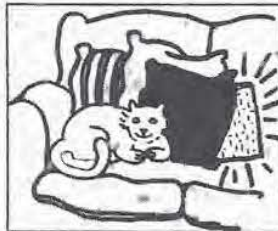
WRITTEN BY NINA SALKIN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURIE DOUGLAS

## FOR YOU

### You Can Have A Seder With Sizzle!

Do the children squirm at your seder table? Do the grown-ups whisper, "When do we eat?" Sounds like it's time to bring some creativity and *kavannah* to the family celebration. Here are some books from the UAHC that can help transform a so-so seder into an event full of joy, meaning, and memory.

For younger children (ages 5-8), the UAHC Press offers *But This Night Is Different: A Seder Experience* by master teachers Audrey Friedman Marcus and Raymond A. Zwerin. This delightfully illustrated book demonstrates "this night is different"



by showing how a familiar activity is done differently for Passover.

*Pesach: A Holiday Funtext* by Judy Bin-Nun with Nancy Cooper and Ruth Sternfeld teaches about Passover through imaginative games and puzzles. *Fun With Jewish Holiday Rhymes* covers all the Jewish holidays, including Passover, through

movement activities such as finger games and playful rhymes.

These books can be ordered in time for your Passover seder. Call the UAHC Press at (212) 249-0100 or circle 159 for more information.

### You Can Become A Rabbinic Aide

For the seventh summer in a row, UAHC Ketz Camp Institute in Warwick, NY will host the UAHC RABBINIC AIDE PROGRAM. This innovative program trains men and women to assist their rabbis or function as a religious leader in congregations with either part-time clergy or none at all. Participants in the UAHC RABBINIC AIDE PROGRAM learn how to lead worship, develop programs, and officiate at those life cycle events that do not require an ordained rabbi, such as baby namings and memorial services.

The two-week Jewish studies training program, which will take place July 17-30, is intensive and invigorating, requiring 120 classroom hours. Taught by some of the most creative rabbis, educators, and scholars in the Reform movement, the program "creates a cadre of literate Jews who can assume positions of leadership in their home congregations," says program director Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor. Adds past participant Simon Rosenblatt, a member of a 34-member congregation in Sierra Vista, Arizona: "The experience was empowering, providing me with new tools to serve my Jewish community." For further information circle 160.



## Develop Synagogue and Torah Skills

Nearly one-fourth of UAHC congregations function without full-time rabbinical leadership. In many small congregations leaders must lead services, give *divrei torah*, make hospital visits, even conduct funerals.

Lay leaders from small congregations can enhance their practical synagogue skills this summer at the UAHC SEMINAR IN SYNAGOGUE SKILLS AND TORAH STUDY (formerly the Rabbinic Aide Program), August 18-25 at UAHC Olin Sang-Ruby Institute, Oconomowoc, WI. Accommodations at the air-conditioned conference center include all meals, swimming, and use of the library.

For application information call 212-650-4183 or circle 212.

## Institute for Synagogue Musicians

Musicians from Reform congregations without cantors are invited to participate in a four-day study program focusing on the prayerbook, its language, and music. The Institute will be held from June 30-July 3 on the New York campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR).

A joint effort of the HUC-JIR Schools of Education and Sacred Music, the program is designed to enable organists and music directors to broaden their musical skills and acquire Judaic knowledge through the study of Hebrew and liturgy.

For information call HUC-JIR at 212-674-5300, ext. 279.

## Communicate!—An Idea Database

Finally! All those terrific ideas and programs you hear about at biennials have been "catalogued" in a database every temple can use. **Communicate!**, an exciting new computer software designed expressly for UAHC con-

gregations in 1996.

Using the **Communicate!** SEARCH feature, you can instantly find programs that have worked in congregations like yours. Or BROWSE through summaries of ideas and find contacts you can talk to by phone.

The **Communicate!** database is rich in ideas and growing. In order to fulfill its mission, however, we need your best ideas and most successful programs in synagogue management, programming, music, worship, operations, social action, interfaith activities, outreach, membership, youth, and more.

For information and program submission forms call 212-650-4183 or circle 213.



gregations with IBM compatible PC's, is coming to every Reform

## Bring the Biennial Home

Couldn't go to the UAHC biennial? Don't feel left out. All workshop sessions were recorded on biennial audio cassettes, and many on video. And the magnificent musical salute to Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, featuring Peter Yarrow and Roberta Peters, is available on videotape. Experience the biennial for the first time, or enjoy it all over again, right at home.

Share the best of the biennial with temple committees and build your own Reform Jewish library. For a complete list of audio and video tapes, call Convention Cassettes Unlimited at 800-776-5454 or circle 214.





## MOMENTS & MILESTONES

BY BETTIJANE EISENPREIS

### Welcome New Congregations

We welcome the following new congregations to the UAHC family: Congregation B'nai Israel, Spartanburg, SC; Temple Bet Yam, St. Augustine, FL; Temple Beth El, Casper, WY; Temple Chaverim, Plainville, NY; and The Reform Temple of Boynton Beach, Boynton Beach, FL.

### New Southeast Council Office

On October 18, 1995, the newly-opened second office of the UAHC Southeast Council was dedicated and the UAHC Camp Coleman office rededicated, at Temple Emanu-El in Dunwoody, GA, outside of Atlanta. A gathering of staff and UAHC Biennial Planning Committee members witnessed the affixing of *mezuzot* on the office doorposts and participated in the service, led by Rabbi Frank Sundheim, UAHC Southeast Council director, along with Rabbi Stanley Davids and Cantor Scott Colbert of Temple Emanu-El. Assistant Southeast Council Director Barbara Paper explained that the kiddush cup used during the ceremony was a family heirloom handed down from her great-grandfather, imparting special significance to the Council's new beginning. You can contact the new office at 1580 Spalding Drive, Atlanta, GA 30350, (770) 668-0645, fax (770) 671-0241.

### Synagogue Skills for Small Congregations

Members of small UAHC congregations are invited to attend a week-long course on Synagogue Skills and Torah Study at the UAHC Olin-Sang-Ruby Institute Camp, Oconomowoc, WI, August 18-25, 1996. The course is designed to help congregants acquire or enhance skills in leading services, preparing a *d'var Torah*, organizing religious schools, visiting the sick, and assisting in various life-cycle events. Priority will be given to members of congregations without full-time rabbinic leadership. For more information con-



In less than a year, fifteen members of Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot in Irvine, CA have completed the first of six stained-glass windows for their sanctuary, a corner of which is shown here. The 5'x 5' window, entitled "Shabbat," was unveiled at the congregation during a special dedication ceremony on March 29. Conceived by congregant sponsors Lynda and Jerry Nosanov, the stained-glass project is being actualized through the hands-on assistance of temple volunteers, all non-professional artists who have cut, foiled, and assembled approximately two thousand pieces of stained glass under the tutelage of Lynda, a graphic designer who works extensively in stained glass. The timing of their labor of love is especially significant to her: a week before the dedication ceremony Lynda completed her conversion to Judaism.

tact the UAHC Small Congregations Department, (212) 650-4050.

### Camping for Children with Autistic Behaviors

The UAHC Kutz Camp-Institute in Warwick, NY is offering a unique, free-of-charge summer camping opportunity from July 23 to August 1 for Jewish children aged 8 to 14 with autistic behaviors. The camp's professional staff and mentors from the NFTY Leadership Academy will ensure that the children have a fun, safe, and exciting time. For more information please call Glynn Conyer Ross, director, at (914) 987-6300.

### Honoring Mfume and Edelman

On January 31, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RACJ) held its twelfth annual tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rep. Kweisi Mfume, incoming president and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Peter Edelman, assistant secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, received awards for their long-time efforts in pursuit of social justice and racial equality. More than three hundred black and Jewish leaders attended the event, jointly sponsored by the Israeli government. Inspired by the Metropolitan D.C. Police Choir, the participants lifted their voices together in songs of peace and hope. Congressman Mfume's award cited his work in advancing civil rights legislation and vocational and educational opportunities for minorities. Edelman was honored for his efforts to safeguard children and other vulnerable Americans.

### A Path Back to Judaism

To help 30- and 40-somethings find their way back to intensive Jewish involvement, Central Synagogue of Nassau County, Rockville Centre, NY, launched *Kindred Spirits*, a "synagogue within a synagogue" program designed to



## FOR YOUR CONGREGATION

### Rabbi Yoffie's Vision

Incoming UAHC President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie's stirring Installation Address, delivered on June 8 at Temple Shaarey Tefila in New York City, amplified many of the themes he explored in his 1996 Biennial Address.

Rabbi Yoffie is committed to building a movement of Reform Jews for whom Torah is at the center of their lives—a movement which is willing to talk of obligations, to call for observance that is regular and consistent, and to assert that our actions need not always begin with our own impulses.

To order a copy of Rabbi Yoffie's Installation Address, call 212-650-4183 or circle 217.

### Start The New Year With New Music

Your synagogue's audio library will be enhanced with these great Jewish music recordings on CD or cassette from Transcontinental Music Publications.

Get your congregation into the musical mood of the High Holidays with a 5-volume **High Holy Day CD Set**. This remarkable collection, produced by Transcontinental Music in cooperation with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion School of Sacred Music, features all the music of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. You can also order **Highlights**—a single CD or cassette version containing excerpts from the 5-disk set.

And for family education: **Shiron L'Yeladim** and **Shiron L'Noar** are filled with all the great music your kids learn at religious school and summer camp. Families will love to borrow these tapes and CDs for use at home or in the car. Your cantor or song leader will want to order songbooks with guitar and piano chords. All are available from Transcontinental Music.

Coming next summer: Transcontinental's third recording just for children, **Shiron L'Gan**, on CD and cassette.

For ordering information, call 212-650-4183 or circle 218.

### Innovative Outreach From Omaha

Here's an idea from Omaha that can re-energize your Outreach efforts.

Temple Israel in Omaha, NE publishes its own quarterly Outreach newsletter, **Bridges**, aimed at interfaith families and others considering conversion to Judaism. **Bridges** is unique because it doesn't "ghettoize" the intermarried—it is mailed along with the regular temple bulletin so all synagogue members can read it.

**Bridges** is colorful and well edited, with compelling personal stories. Rabbi Aryeh Azriel believes its effect on the general temple membership is "significant—in many ways more important than its effect on the Outreach population." The UAHC Outreach Department is providing sample copies free of charge. Call 212-650-4183 or circle 219.

### Develop Synagogue Skills This Summer

Is your congregation among the approximately 25% of UAHC synagogues functioning without the services of a full-time rabbi? Do you depend on your laypeople to lead everything from baby-namings to *shiva minyans*?

To help your laypeople develop practical synagogue skills and greater familiarity with Torah, the UAHC Small Congregations Department is offering a week-long course in **Synagogue Skills and Torah Study** from August 18-25 at the Olin-Sang-



Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The air-conditioned OSRUI Conference Center (easily accessible from both the Chicago and Milwaukee airports) provides a beautiful setting for concentrated study and intimate group learning.

Participants will gain confidence and competence in leading Shabbat worship, a *bris milah*, a bar or bat mitzvah ceremony, and a funeral or *shiva minyan*; singing Torah trope and worship melodies; preparing a *d'var Torah*; and organizing a religious school.

For more information and application materials, call 212-650-4183 or circle 220.



## FOR YOUR CONGREGATION

### Register Early For The UAHC And WRJ Biennials

**M**ark your calendars—the 64th UAHC General Assembly and 41st WRJ Assembly will be held October 29–November 2 in Dallas, Texas. You will not want to miss these five days of intense study, worship, learning, and sharing as 4,500 Reform Jews from all over the world shape the future of our movement. You'll be able to participate in plenary

sessions, choose from 150+ practical workshops, pray with thousands of Reform Jews at worship services, enjoy great entertainment, and attend the largest exhibit of Judaica ever assembled. In addition, the UAHC is planning a pre-Biennial opportunity for adult study.

The Biennial is an ideal place for synagogue leaders to gather and generate new ideas about congregational programming, fundraising, outreach, and more—while making new friends

and invaluable contacts, and perhaps most importantly, connecting with the larger Reform Jewish community. Attending biennials “is like plugging myself into a spiritual battery recharger every two years,” says Rabbi Elias Lieberman of Falmouth Jewish Congregation in Falmouth, Massachusetts. “It’s a reminder that we’re part of something larger.”

For more information please contact your temple president or sisterhood president.

### Reach Out To Young Adults

Are you seeking new ways to attract young adults to your congregation? Then order a free copy of *Reaching Generation Aleph: Seven Success Factors in Programming for Jewish Young Adults*, a concise report based on successful UAHC synagogue programs prepared by the UAHC-CCAR

Joint Commission on Synagogue Affiliation. No matter whether your target audience is singles, young marrieds, parents of young children, lesbians and gays, or adult children of members, *Reaching Generation Aleph* will provide useful advice on programming, marketing, the need for congregational support, and other elements necessary in creating dynamic group events. For more information, call (212) 650-4183 or circle 248.

### Para-Rabbinic Training Program Begins

**A**s a lay leader, you can enrich the life of your congregation and your own spiritual growth by enrolling in the new Para-Rabbinic Training Program, sponsored by the Department of Adult Jewish Growth in cooperation with Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) and the UAHC Small Congregations Department. Coming this July 11–20 on the HUC-JIR Cincinnati campus, the program will teach you how to lead services, conduct funerals, organize a religious school, and more. All synagogues can benefit from Para-Rabbinic Training, especially congregations without a rabbi, those with a part-time rabbi that require someone to fill in for extra duties, and a large temple needing a lay assistant. For more information, call (212) 650-4183 or circle 249.

### Need A Torah Loan?

When a temple has fewer than 250 member households, it is sometimes difficult to provide basic resources—even a Torah scroll. That’s where the Small Congregations Department can help. Here’s an unsolicited “fan letter” from Steven M. Howard, religious affairs director of Temple Shir Shalom, a 140-family congregation in Duluth (near Atlanta), Georgia: “Last year, our Torah began to show its age. Well worn, its ink was rapidly fading, and it was no longer kosher. Temple Shir Shalom had just affiliated with the UAHC, and the Torah Scroll Loan Program came to the rescue. We received a beautiful Sefer Torah with carved ivory handles, just before sunset of Simchat Torah! A little over a year later, after raising the funds to buy a new one, we are now ready to send this special scroll to another congregation in need. Thank you, Small Congregations Department.” So, if you need a Torah or have a Torah to loan, call (212) 650-4183 or circle 250.



## FOR YOUR CONGREGATION

### Make A Date For Dallas

If you want to help shape the Reform movement while deepening your knowledge of Jewish traditions, learn about becoming a delegate to the UAHC 64th Biennial Convention in Dallas, TX, October 29–November 2. You can choose from more than 140 practical workshops, vote on important issues, and experience the power of worshipping with 4,500 committed Jews. The 41st Assembly of the Women of Reform Judaism and the 36th Convention of the National Federation of



Temple Brotherhoods are running concurrently, focusing on their future roles in the Reform movement. And everyone will have the chance to participate in the October 28-29 pre-convention study program led by the UAHC Department of Adult Jewish Growth. The official convention begins at 1:00 pm on the 29th, so be sure to arrive in Dallas by noon. For registration information, contact your temple, sisterhood, or brotherhood president. And to receive a free copy of the preliminary Biennial program, call (212) 650-4183 or circle 258.

### Give The Gift Of Life

Every day in the U.S., at least nine people die because they don't receive a life-saving transplant. Similarly, in Canada, more than 2,600 people need an organ transplant; about ten percent die every year waiting. But there's something you can do. Reform Jews are being urged to sign organ donor cards as part of **Matan Chaim: The Gift of Life**, a campaign that addresses the critical need for organ and tissue donation. Co-sponsored by the UAHC's

Committees on Older Adults and Bioethics and the Women of Reform Judaism, and conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and organ procurement organizations across the U.S. and Canada, this effort is the first by a major religious organization on this issue. You can obtain free copies of the **Matan Chaim** brochure for your congregation by calling (212) 650-4183, visiting the **Matan Chaim** website at <http://www.shamash.org/reform/uahc/donor.html> or circling 259.

### Learn In Order To Teach

You still can register for the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program, July 11-20 at the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, sponsored by the UAHC departments of Adult Jewish Growth and Small Congregations; Adult Jewish Learning and Living at HUC-JIR; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Learn skills that will make you an asset to your congregation, including leading Shabbat, holiday, and festival services; developing new synagogue programming; writing a *d'var Torah*, sermon, or eulogy; assisting in life-cycle events; counseling those in need; setting up a religious school; and more. You'll have the opportunity to study with HUC-JIR faculty members, congregational rabbis, and UAHC program staff, and your training will help you deepen your own Jewish study and spirituality. "I was able to return to my congregation enriched as a lay leader, enlightened as a temple board member, and more effective as a teacher," says Beth Schwartz, former president of Ner Shalom in Woodbridge, VA, who took part in the program last year. For more information, call (212) 650-4183, visit the website at <http://www.shamash.org/reform/uahc/growth/para.html> or circle 261.

### Temple Finances Made Easier

Imagine this scenario: You're a new temple board member or trustee attending your first meeting and the treasurer hands you a financial statement. It's your responsibility to read it, but you've never encountered one before. Don't panic! You don't have to be an accountant to understand temple finances. The Department of Synagogue Management can provide you with **Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Budgets But Were Afraid To Ask**, a brief guide that will help you make informed financial decisions, monitor synagogue business, and plan for the future. It also provides other information to help with the bottom line—passing Judaism along from one generation to the next. To receive a free copy, call (212) 650-4183 or circle 260.

## **A Unique Opportunity To Learn:**

- How to Set-Up a Synagogue School
- How to Lead Worship Services
- How to Assist in Life-Cycle Events
- How to Make Hospital Visits
- How to Counsel Those in Need
- How to Write a D'var Torah



UAHC,  
HUC-JIR  
and the CCAR  
present

# **1997**

# **Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program**

Adult Jewish Living and Learning  
HUC - JIR  
One West 4th Street  
New York, NY 10012-1186  
Attn: Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program

Return this card,  
your Rabbi's/Regional Director's letter of recommendation  
and your registration deposit of \$100 to:

Adult Jewish Living and Learning  
HUC-JIR  
One West 4th Street  
New York, NY 10012-1186  
Attn: Para-Rabbinic Fellows



# 1997 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program

ללמוד וללמד / *lilmod u'lelamed*

***To Learn in Order To Teach***

**Friday July 11, 1997 through Sunday July 20, 1997**

**held on the historic campus of**

**HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio**

**fee: \$950.00**

**includes room, board and all study materials**

We invite you to study with faculty members of HUC-JIR, leading congregational rabbis and top program staff of the UAHC, on the historic site where Reform Jewish learning has taken place for over 100 years. Learn skills to make you an asset to your congregation, including: Torah study; leading Shabbat, holiday and festival services; building synagogue programming; writing sermons, eulogies, and talks for public Jewish communal occasions, and more.

This learning opportunity is sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations Department of Adult Jewish Growth and Small Congregations Department, Adult Jewish Learning and Living at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

A detailed schedule and list of course offerings will be mailed following receipt of registration.

If you have any questions contact:

**Adult Jewish Living and Learning at HUC-JIR**

*Phone (212) 824-2228, FAX (212) 533-0129,*

*E-mail: lewis@huc.edu*

**or UAHC Department of Adult Jewish Growth**

*Phone (212) 650-4087, FAX (212) 650-4229,*

*E-mail: ajgrowth@uahc.org*

Each applicant must be affiliated with a UAHC member congregation. This application must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from your congregation's Rabbi, or UAHC Regional Director.

Please register me for this exciting program. I have attached my Rabbi/Regional Director's letter of recommendation, and my \$100 deposit, payable to HUC-JIR.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

( )

Home Phone

( )

Work Phone

( )

FAX

e-mail

Congregation

Sponsoring Rabbi's Name (please print)



# UAHC & YOU

## Receive Spiritual Nourishment Day by Day

In his new book, **Day by Day**, Rabbi Chaim Stern, renowned author of the prayerbooks *Gates of Prayer* and *Gates of Repentance*, offers an opportunity to receive a daily dose of spiritual and intellectual nourishment. Every chapter includes an excerpt from the week's Torah portion, followed by Rabbi Stern's explanation of its main theme ("Conflict and Reconciliation," "Health," "Marriage," "The Divine Presence" among them). In addition, Rabbi Stern has woven together enlighten-

ing passages from Jewish tradition and the voices, past and present, of literary, religious, and cultural figures from around the world, such as Albert Einstein, Helen Keller, Dag Hammarskjöld, Augustine, Emily Dickinson, Plato, and Abraham Lincoln. Author Howard Fast likens **Day by Day** to "an amazing spring.... You drink from it, now, a month from now, perhaps for as long as you live." To order, fax your query to the CCAR at (212) 692-0819 or access the website: [www.ccarnet.org](http://www.ccarnet.org)

## A Double Mitzvah

Celebrate a wedding and perform the mitzvah of *tzedakah* at the same time by using the **Ketubah Card** published by Women of Reform Judaism. A full-color reproduction of a marriage contract created by Israeli papercut artist Archie Granot appears on the cover; the inside is blank so that you may personalize engagement and wed-

ding announcements, thank-you cards, and other notes. All proceeds from sales of **Ketubah Cards** benefit the Y.E.S. Fund, which supports programs for youth, rabbinic education scholarships, and Women of Reform Judaism special projects. For more information, call (212) 650-4060 or visit the WRJ website: <http://rj.org/wrj/>

## Change Your Life This Summer

You're the only one with the power to give yourself this gift: Spend just a few days this summer immersed in adult Jewish study and return home with a deeper understanding of Judaism and a religious experience that may change your life. One option is the popular UAHC-sponsored **Kallah** offered at four locations: Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, July 7-11; University of California, Santa Cruz, July 21-25; Beloit College, Beloit, WI, August 4-8; or Ontario, Canada, August 25-29. If you wish to learn

more about leading Torah study, conducting services, and creating synagogue programming, consider enrolling in the **Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program** (Level One, July 9-18 and Level Two, July 23-30) at the HUC-JIR campus in Cincinnati, OH. For more information about the **Kallah** and **Para-Rabbinic** programs, call the Department of Adult Jewish Growth, (212) 650-4087, or visit its website at <http://uahc.org/growth>. Are you a songleader at a camp or congregation? Study with Debbie Friedman,

## Learn Torah Anywhere

Study Torah on the patio, on the freeway, or in the woods by listening to **Engaging Torah: Contemporary Insights on Tape**, a new boxed set of 27 audiocassettes featuring the commentaries of leading Reform rabbis and community leaders. On each side of the tape, you'll hear an in-depth lesson by a different teacher about the weekly Torah portion. To order the tape series, contact the UAHC Press toll-free at (888) 489-UAHC or visit the website <http://www.uahcpress.com>



Cantor Jeff Klepper, Don Maseng, and Jewish music innovators at the **Hava Nashira** workshop, June 2-6, at Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, WI; for information, call (847) 509-0990, ext. 25. Choir members, cantors, and all other music lovers—add to your skills and repertoire at the 10th annual **North American Jewish Choral Festival**, August 1-5, Ellenville, NY; call the Commission on Synagogue Music, (212) 650-4226, or visit <http://uahc.org/music/choral>

If you have any questions, contact  
Adult Jewish Learning and Living  
at HUC-JIR

*Phone:* 513-221-1875, ext. 353

*Fax:* 513-221-1842

*E-mail:* sdeutsch@huc.edu



or

UAHC Department of  
Adult Jewish Growth

*Phone:* 212-650-4087

*Fax:* 212-650-4229

*E-mail:* ajgrowth@uahc.org



**UAHC**



UAHC  
HUC-JIR  
and the CCAR  
present

# 2000 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs

## Unique Opportunities to Learn

- How to Lead Worship Services
- How to Assist in Life-Cycle Events
- How to Make Hospital Visits
- How to Write a *D'var Torah*
- How to Prioritize for a Synagogue School

Return this form, your rabbi's or regional director's letter of recommendation,  
and your registration deposit of \$100 to  
Adult Jewish Learning and Living  
HUC-JIR  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220  
Attn: Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs



# 2000 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs

ללמוד וללמד *Lilmod u-L'lamed*

**TO LEARN IN ORDER TO TEACH**

**LEVEL 1: New Students**

**Friday, July 7 through Sunday, July 16, 2000**

**LEVEL 2: Returning Students**

**Wednesday, July 19 through Wednesday, July 26, 2000**

**Held on the campus of**

**HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio**

**LEVEL 1: \$900.00\***

**LEVEL 2: \$750.00\***

**Includes dormitory room, board, and all study materials**

We invite you to study with faculty members of HUC-JIR, leading congregational rabbis, and senior program staff of the UAHC on the historic site where Reform Jewish learning has taken place for over 100 years. Acquire skills that will make you an asset to your congregation, including leading Torah study; conducting Shabbat, holiday, and festival services; expanding synagogue programming; writing sermons, eulogies, and talks for public Jewish communal occasions; and more.

This learning opportunity is sponsored by

the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Department of Adult Jewish Growth; Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Department of Adult Jewish Learning and Living; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

A detailed schedule and list of course offerings will be mailed to you following our receipt of your registration form.

**\* Additional fee for hotel housing option**

Each applicant must be affiliated with a UAHC member congregation that is in good standing. This registration form must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from your congregation's rabbi or, in the absence of a congregational rabbi, your UAHC regional director.

I have attached my rabbi's or regional director's letter of recommendation, had this application signed, and enclosed my \$100 deposit, payable to HUC-JIR.

Please register me: Level 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Level 2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone

(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Rabbi's Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Rabbi's Signature

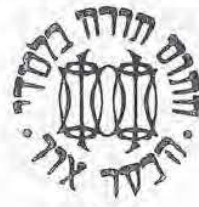
\_\_\_\_\_  
UAHC Regional Director's Signature  
(if your congregation has no full-time ordained rabbi)

If you have any questions, contact  
Adult Jewish Learning and Living  
At HUC-JIR

Phone: 513-221-1875, ext. 353

Fax: 513-221-0316

E-mail: [mcruse@cn.huc.edu](mailto:mcruse@cn.huc.edu)



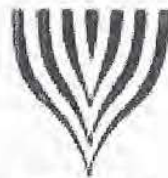
Or

UAHC Department of  
Adult Jewish Growth

Phone: 212-650-4087

Fax: 212-650-4229

E-mail: [ajgrowth@uahc.org](mailto:ajgrowth@uahc.org)



**UAHC**



**UAHC**



**UAHC  
HUC-JIR  
And the CCAR  
Present**

## **2001 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs**

### **Unique Opportunities to Learn**

- How to Lead Worship Services
- How to Assist in Life-Cycle Events
- How to Make Hospital Visits
- How to Write a *D'Var Torah*
- How to Prioritize for a Synagogue School

Return this form, your rabbi's or regional director's letter of recommendation, and  
your registration deposit of \$100 to:

Adult Jewish Learning and Living  
HUC-JIR  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220  
Attn: Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs



# 2001 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Programs

לִלְמוֹד וּלְלַמֵּד *Lilmod ul'lamed*  
**TO LEARN IN ORDER TO TEACH**

## **LEVEL 1: New Students**

**Friday, July 6 through Friday, July 13 2001**

## **LEVEL 2: Returning Students**

**Friday, July 20 through Friday, July 27 2001**

**Held on the campus of  
HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio**

**LEVEL 1: \$1000.00\***

**LEVEL 2: \$800.00\***

**Includes dormitory room, board, and all study materials**

We invite you to study with faculty members of HUC-JIR, leading congregational rabbis, and senior program staff of the UAHC on the historic site where Reform Jewish learning has taken place for over 100 years. Acquire skills that will make you an asset to your congregation, including leading Torah study; conducting Shabbat, holiday, and festival services; expanding synagogue programming; writing sermons, eulogies, and talks for public Jewish communal occasions; and more.

This learning opportunity is sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Department of Adult Jewish Growth; Hebrew Union College-

Jewish Institute of Religion, Department of Adult Jewish Learning and Living; and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

A detailed schedule and list of course offerings will be mailed to you following our receipt of your registration form.

\*Additional fee for hotel housing option.

Please contact Marcia Cruse at HUC for a complete refund policy.

Each applicant must be 21 and affiliated with a UAHC member congregation that is in good standing. This registration form must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from your congregation's rabbi or, in the absence of a congregational rabbi, your UAHC regional director.

I have attached my rabbi's or regional director's letter of recommendation, had this application signed, and enclosed my \$150 deposit, payable to HUC-JIR.

Please register me: Level 1\_\_ Level 2\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
UAHC Congregation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Rabbi's Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Rabbi's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
UAHC Regional Director's Signature  
(if your congregation has no full time ordained rabbi)



# UAHC YOU

## Who Is Your Synagogue's Spiritual Resource? You!

If your congregation is in need of spiritual leadership, you can help by enrolling in **Sh'ilach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate**, a new program co-sponsored by the UAHC, CCAR, and HUC-JIR which will enable lay leaders to assist rabbis or cantors, or, in congregations without clergy, to serve as worship leaders. The successor to the UAHC's Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program, **Sh'ilach K'hilah** provides spiritually enriching opportunities to increase your Jewish knowledge, literacy, and practical skills. After studying Jewish texts and learning about the role and structure of the synagogue, participants will be able to lead worship services, teach Torah, assist in conducting services of mourning, and help develop a religious school curriculum. The two-year program includes two ten-day summer sessions, two weekend retreats, online courses, and supervision by an ordained clergy member. This summer, Level 1, for new students, will be held July 11–21 at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati; Level 2 will be held July 19–26 at the same location. For information, please contact the Department of Adult Jewish Growth at (212) 650-4087, [ajgrowth@uahc.org](mailto:ajgrowth@uahc.org), <http://uahc.org/growth>



## Extending A Warm Welcome To Potential Jews-By-Choice

Is your synagogue prepared to welcome the stranger? The **Outreach Fellows Program**, now in its fifth year, prepares lay people to counsel prospective Jews-by-choice on issues such as Jewish authenticity, acculturation into synagogue life, and the potential concerns of non-Jewish family members. The five-day course, conducted by some of the Reform Movement's leading rabbis and Outreach professionals, will be held at HUC-JIR's Cincinnati campus from August 7–11. "The **Outreach Fellows Program** has made me better prepared [to assist others] than I would have thought possible," one past participant wrote. "I found out what it means to choose Judaism and how I can help," wrote another. For more information, contact the UAHC Department of Outreach at (212) 650-4230, [outreach@uahc.org](mailto:outreach@uahc.org), <http://uahc.org/outreach>

## Encourage Young People To Become Camp Counselors

Synagogue professionals can inspire the young people in their congregation to become UAHC camp counselors by giving them "**The Camps**," the Youth Division's new CD-ROM about the UAHC camping experience. "**The Camps**" contains a wealth of material—from interactive, virtual

tours of all twelve Union camps to a movie featuring interviews with former counselors, photographs depicting the camps' scenic beauty, and a video documenting past sing-alongs, outdoor activities, and more. There are also links to each camp's website, a "Frequently Asked Questions"

## Creating And Sustaining A Caring Congregation

Over the past decade, hundreds of Reform congregations have implemented Caring Community programs, turning their synagogues into supportive places for all members, especially those facing a crisis, such as illness, divorce, or the death of a loved one. Now, **Becoming a Kehilat Chesed: Creating and Sustaining a Caring Congregation**, a comprehensive new manual from the UAHC Department of Jewish Family Concerns, offers a guiding hand to congregations who wish to implement such programming but don't know where to begin. **Becoming a Kehilat Chesed** contains an easy-to-follow eight-step guide on how to create a Caring Community program; a variety of texts that highlight the importance of welcoming everyone into the congregation; and thirteen pages of successful programs, ideas, and actions implemented by synagogues throughout North America that can serve as models for your congregation. For more information, contact the Department of Jewish Family Concerns, (212) 650-4294, e-mail [deptjewfamcon@uahc.org](mailto:deptjewfamcon@uahc.org), web <http://uahc.org/jfc>



## ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- Sponsorship by your congregation
- A resumé, including an educational and professional summary and indication of synagogue involvement
- Recommendation by the sponsoring rabbi
- Two references
- A signed *k'rit*/covenant, which describes the functions of the *sh'liach k'hilah*
- A personal interview

Admission to the program is open to all members of a UAHC congregation in good standing.

## CERTIFICATION

Participants will receive a certificate indicating that they have completed the *Sh'liach K'hilah* program.

## FEES

Complete certificate program      \$3,000  
Prorated for students with advanced standing

### Please Contact

#### UAHC DEPARTMENT OF ADULT JEWISH GROWTH

Phone: 212.650.4087

Fax: 212.650.4229

E-mail: [ajgrowth@uahc.org](mailto:ajgrowth@uahc.org)

or

#### ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AND LIVING AT HUC-JIR

Phone: 513.221.1875, ext. 353

Fax: 513.221.0316

E-mail: [mcruse@huc.edu](mailto:mcruse@huc.edu)



Become a

## SH'LIACH K'HILAH SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE

Sponsored by the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR



633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6778

Phone: 212.650.4000 E-mail: [uahc@uahc.org](mailto:uahc@uahc.org) Web Address: <http://uahc.org>



**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SYNAGOGUE LEADERS TO  
SERVE THEIR CONGREGATIONS BY**

- Leading worship services
- Teaching Judaica and Torah study
- Assisting with *bikur cholim* and services at a house of mourning
- Developing a religious school curriculum
- Representing the congregation to the broader community

**SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDE**

- Studying basic Jewish texts
- Reading and comprehending Hebrew
- Learning the rubrics of Jewish prayer
- Understanding the role of Israel in our lives
- Developing leadership skills
- Comprehending the role and structure of the synagogue

**LEVEL 1: NEW STUDENTS**

Thursday, July 11, through  
Sunday, July 21, 2002

**LEVEL 2: STUDENTS WITH ADVANCED  
STANDING**

(Graduates of Level I or II  
of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program)

Thursday, July 18, through  
Sunday, July 28, 2002

Held on the Campus of HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio



The UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR are excited to offer a specialized lay-training program called *Sh'liach K'hilah*, Synagogue Associate. This program is designed for synagogue leaders interested in assisting their own congregations. Participants who successfully complete the *Sh'liach K'hilah* program will be able to serve their congregation either by assisting an ordained/invested clergy with the sacred work of the synagogue or, in those congregations without clergy, by serving as a synagogue leader.

The *Sh'liach K'hilah* program offers an opportunity for participants to add to their Jewish knowledge, literacy, and practical skills. For those who wish to increase their engagement in congregational life, this program provides personal and spiritual enrichment.

**IN ORDER TO BE CERTIFIED AS A *SH'LIACH  
K'HILAH*, AN INDIVIDUAL MUST COMPLETE THE  
FOLLOWING PROGRAM:**

- Attend two summer sessions
- Attend two mid-year, weekend skills-training sessions
- Pursue further Jewish studies (on-line options will be available)
- Mentor with a rabbi or cantor
- Serve an internship with an advising rabbi or cantor





# UAHC & YOU

## Learning To Lead

The UAHC is offering two programs this summer to help volunteers gain skills to assist their congregations in worship, education, and other arenas of synagogue life. The **Sh'ilach K'hilah / Synagogue Associate program** (formerly known as the Para-Rabbinic program), scheduled for July 10–20 (Level I) and July 20–27 (Level II) at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, educates Reform Jews on how to lead worship services, teach Torah, assist in conducting services of mourning, help develop a religious school curriculum, and more. Graduates will be qualified to assist both professional and lay-led congregations. For more information contact Rabbi Stacy Bergman at (212) 650-4087, [SBergman@uahc.org](mailto:SBergman@uahc.org), Marcia Cruse at HUC-JIR, (513) 221-1875, [mcruse@huc.edu](mailto:mcruse@huc.edu), or see <http://uahc.org/growth/shilach/>. The **Outreach Fellows Program**, scheduled for August 6–10 at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati, prepares volunteers to counsel prospective Jews-by-choice on a variety of issues, including Jewish authenticity, acculturation into synagogue life, and the potential concerns of non-Jewish family members. After training with professors, rabbis, and Jewish professionals, participants will be ready to help welcome new Jews into their congregations. For more information please contact the UAHC Department of Outreach at (212) 650-4230, [outreach@uahc.org](mailto:outreach@uahc.org), <http://uahc.org/outreach/fellows.shtml>.

## Missions Of Solidarity

"We need to send a message of solidarity to our brothers and sisters in Israel. They need to hear that our embrace of Israel is heartfelt and eternal because we are lovers of Zion," declared UAHC President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie at the UAHC's 2001 Boston Biennial. Now, you too can stand up for Israel by joining one of the Reform Movement's eight **Missions to Israel** running through May 2004. You'll meet political, religious, and academic leaders; delve into the issues surrounding the current security crisis; forge connections with the people of Israel; visit Reform institutions throughout the Jewish state; experience *kibbutz* hospitality; and pay a special visit to the "Green Line," Israel's pre-1967 border. Each nine-day mission, directed by a Movement leader, includes round-trip airfare on El Al and five nights at Jerusalem's Inbal Hotel. For more information, contact David Suskauer at (212) 650-4280, [dsuskauer@uahc.org](mailto:dsuskauer@uahc.org), or visit [www.uahc.org/Israelmission](http://www.uahc.org/Israelmission). To obtain an application, call (888) 811-2812 or e-mail [applytogo@arzaworld.com](mailto:applytogo@arzaworld.com).

## Web-Based Study & Action

NAME	PURPOSE	WEBSITE
<i>Torat Hayim</i>	An online Torah commentary updated weekly with a <i>d'var Torah</i> , gleanings from outside sources, and questions for study centered around the week's Torah portion—all from a Reform perspective. The <i>Torat Hayim</i> online archive contains commentaries from the past five years.	<a href="http://uahc.org/torah/index.shtml">http://uahc.org/torah/index.shtml</a>
Family Shabbat Table Talk	An examination of the weekly Torah portion containing questions for families with children aged 6–9 and 10 and older.	<a href="http://uahc.org/shabbat">http://uahc.org/shabbat</a>
Making It Count	A guide to help pre-b'nai mitzvah and their families integrate Reform values into the upcoming ceremony and festivities.	<a href="http://uahc.org/living/mcount.pdf">http://uahc.org/living/mcount.pdf</a>
Significant Jewish Books	Features more than 40 exceptional works of fiction and non-fiction with Jewish themes, ranging from <i>Everything Is Illuminated</i> to <i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay</i> , each with a study and discussion guide.	<a href="http://uahc.org/books">http://uahc.org/books</a>
Seeking Peace, Pursuing Justice	The home page of the Reform Movement's campaign to promote peace, justice, and security in Israel contains information about the current situation, essays by Israeli and American Jewish leaders, and recommended actions North American Jews can take to help Israel in her time of crisis.	<a href="http://www.seekpeace.org">www.seekpeace.org</a>
Religious Action Center Website	The site to stay informed on what's happening in Washington and the Reform Movement's position on the issues, with speeches, resolutions, and resources for congregational social action committees.	<a href="http://www.rac.org">www.rac.org</a>



## New Lessons From Ancient Sources

If you've ever wondered about the evolution of Passover traditions or pondered the significance of modern rituals, the new UAHC Press volume **Passage to Pesach** will be enlightening. Author Francine Schwartz uses biblical and rabbinic texts to trace the history and development of this complex holiday, from its origins among shepherds and farmers to its appearance at the Christian Last Supper to the inclusion of contemporary rituals such as Miriam's cup. Also new is Rabbi Leonard S. Kravitz and Kerry M. Olitzky's **Mishlei: A Modern Commentary on Proverbs**, which contains the entire Hebrew text of Proverbs, a modern commentary, gleanings from both ancient and contemporary sources, and topical mini-essays. For more information contact the UAHC Press at (888) 489-8242, [press@uahc.org](mailto:press@uahc.org), [www.uahcpress.com](http://www.uahcpress.com).



# The UNION & YOU

## Teens: Seeking A Summer Adventure?

This summer, the North American Federation of Temple Youth will send hundreds of high school students on **NFTY L'Dor V'Dor**, a five-week trip to Israel (four weeks) and Eastern Europe (six days) during which young Reform Jews will explore the wonders of the Jewish state as they nurture their own Jewish identities. In Krakow, Warsaw, and Prague participants will visit historical synagogues and make a pilgrimage to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps. Once in Israel, they will live on a secure



kibbutz outside of Jerusalem; explore the caves of the Maccabean revolt; visit the sacred Western Wall; camp under the starry skies of the Negev Desert; spend time with members of Yahel, Israel's first Reform kibbutz; and befriend Israeli teenagers. For an application (due back by May 1) and more information about **NFTY L'Dor V'Dor** please visit [www.nfty.org/travel/2004.html](http://www.nfty.org/travel/2004.html), call (212) 452-6517, or e-mail [Gdobkin@urj.org](mailto:Gdobkin@urj.org).

## Become A Better Leader

This spring and summer, why not spend time acquiring Jewish knowledge that can benefit both you and your congregation? The sixth annual **Scheidt Seminar**, the training institute for congregational presidents and presidents-elect, is an opportunity for synagogue leaders to fine-tune their skills, learn from HUC-JIR professionals and Union staff, meet Union President Rabbi Eric Yoffie and Board chairman Bob Heller, and network with their

peers. The seminar is scheduled for May 20–23 in Atlanta, Georgia; for more information visit [www.urj.org/synman/scheidt](http://www.urj.org/synman/scheidt) or contact the Department of Synagogue Management at (212) 650-4040, [synagoguemgmt@urj.org](mailto:synagoguemgmt@urj.org). If you're a member of a synagogue without a rabbi—or if you wish to assist your congregation's clergy with the sacred work of the synagogue—consider enrolling in the **Sh'llach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate** program

(formerly the Para-Rabbinic Fellows program). The two-level training, slated for July 8–18 and July 18–25 at HUC-JIR's Cincinnati campus, enables lay leaders to lead worship services, teach Torah, develop religious school curricula, and assist with lifecycle events. For more information visit [www.urj.org/worship/shliach](http://www.urj.org/worship/shliach) or contact the Department of Worship, Music, and Religious Living at (212) 650-4193, [Worship@urj.org](mailto:Worship@urj.org).

## Help Support Interfaith Families

It's been twenty-five years since the Union initiated its revolutionary Outreach program, calling for congregations to welcome interfaith families into the tapestry of American Judaism and reversing a 500-year-old tradition of discouraging converts. A quarter century later, Outreach has evolved into a cornerstone of Reform life, with a brand-new summer program that can help you and your congregation welcome interfaith families into your community.

**The Outreach Fellows Program for Interfaith Family Certification**, scheduled for July 28–August 1 at the HUC-JIR Cincinnati campus, is designed to prepare lay leaders to support and educate interfaith couples while encouraging them to make Jewish choices for themselves and their children. A companion to the successful Outreach Fellows Program for Conversion Certification, the new program addresses the specific issues faced by couples in interfaith relationships. Participants will hear from interfaith couples, their children, and their extended families, as well as congregational rabbis, HUC-JIR faculty members, and the Union's program staff, as they learn about interfaith family dynamics and the mitzvah of *keruv* (drawing near those who are far). For more information contact the Union's Department of Outreach and Synagogue Community at (212) 650-4230, e-mail [Outreach@urj.org](mailto:Outreach@urj.org), or visit [www.urj.org/outreach/fellows.shtml](http://www.urj.org/outreach/fellows.shtml).

## Save On Long-Term Medical Insurance

Do you and your family have a strategy in place in case one of you is in need of long-term medical care? If not, you may wish to consider taking action now to ensure you have the coverage when you need it. Since 2000, when the Union introduced its **Long-Term Care Insurance** program—which provides special savings to members of Union synagogues and congregational employees as well as their parents and in-laws—hundreds of synagogue members have signed up. For more information phone Ross Perloe at (800) 252-9952, e-mail [Rperloe@comcast.net](mailto:Rperloe@comcast.net), or visit [www.uahcltc.com](http://www.uahcltc.com).



## ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- Sponsorship by your congregation
- A resumé, including an educational and professional summary and indication of synagogue involvement
- Recommendation by the sponsoring rabbi
- Two references
- A signed *b'rit*/covenant, which describes the functions of the *sh'liach k'hilah*
- A phone interview

Admission to the program is open to all members of a UAHC congregation in good standing.

## CERTIFICATION

Participants will receive a certificate indicating that they have completed the *Sh'liach K'hilah* program.

## FEES

Level 1 .....	\$1,200
Level 2 .....	\$1,000

Retreats: Fee varies depending upon location and length.

### Please Contact

#### UAHC DEPARTMENT OF WORSHIP, MUSIC, AND RELIGIOUS LIVING

Phone: 212.650.4193

Fax: 212.650.4229

E-mail: [worship@uahc.org](mailto:worship@uahc.org)

OR

#### ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AND LIVING AT HUC-JIR

Phone: 513.221.1875, ext. 353

Fax: 513.221.0316

E-mail: [mcruse@huc.edu](mailto:mcruse@huc.edu)



633 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017-6778  
PHONE: 212.650.4000 E-MAIL: [UAHC@UAHC.ORG](mailto:UAHC@UAHC.ORG) WWW.UAHC.ORG

Become a

## SH'LIACH K'HILAH SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE

Sponsored by the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR





**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SYNAGOGUE LEADERS TO  
SERVE THEIR CONGREGATIONS BY**

- Leading worship services
- Teaching Judaica and Torah study
- Assisting with *bikur cholim* and services at a house of mourning
- Developing a religious school curriculum
- Representing the congregation to the broader community

**SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDE**

- Studying basic Jewish texts
- Reading and comprehending Hebrew
- Learning the rubrics of Jewish prayer
- Understanding the role of Israel in our lives
- Developing leadership skills
- Comprehending the role and structure of the synagogue

**LEVEL 1: NEW STUDENTS**

Thursday, July 8, through  
Sunday, July 18, 2004

**LEVEL 2:**

**STUDENTS WITH ADVANCED STANDING**

(Graduates of Level I of Sh'liach K'hilah and / or  
of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program)

Sunday, July 18, through  
Sunday, July 25, 2004

Held on the Campus of HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio



The UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR are excited to offer a specialized lay-training program called *Sh'liach K'hilah*, Synagogue Associate. This program is designed for synagogue leaders interested in assisting their own congregations. Participants who successfully complete the *Sh'liach K'hilah* program will be able to serve their congregation either by assisting an ordained/invested clergy with the sacred work of the synagogue or, in those congregations without clergy, by serving as a synagogue leader.

The *Sh'liach K'hilah* program offers an opportunity for participants to add to their Jewish knowledge, literacy, and practical skills. For those who wish to increase their engagement in congregational life, this program provides personal and spiritual enrichment.

**IN ORDER TO BE CERTIFIED AS A *SH'LIACH K'HILAH*, AN INDIVIDUAL MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM:**

- Attend two summer sessions
- Attend two mid-year, weekend skills-training sessions
- Pursue further Jewish studies (on-line options will be available)
- Mentor with a rabbi or cantor



## FEES

Summer Sessions	\$1,000
Winter Retreats	\$500

## DATES

### 2005

Level I	July 10-17, 2005 HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH
Level II	July 17-24, 2005 HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH
Winter Retreat	February 11-13, 2005 HUC-JIR, Los Angeles, CA

### 2006

Level I	July 9-16, 2006 HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH
Level II	July 16-23, 2006 HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH

THANK  
YOU.

Your membership in a Union congregation has made the Reform Movement the largest and most vibrant branch of Judaism.

# The *Sh'liach* *K'hilahl* Synagogue Associate Program



UNION FOR  
REFORM JUDAISM  
וְיָחִיד וְעוֹד  
SERVING REFORM CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6778  
P: 212.650.4193 E: 212.650.4229  
worship@urj.org www.urj.org/worship

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## THE SH'LIACH K'HILAH/SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

jointly sponsored by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Union for Reform Judaism, is designed to teach lay leaders a variety of synagogue skills, including

- Leading worship services
- Teaching Torah
- Visiting the sick and homebound
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Supporting the religious school
- Conducting funerals, unveilings and baby naming ceremonies



Program participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars during the summer sessions and winter retreats. They are also encouraged to continually engage in Jewish study beyond that which is offered by the program.

The *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program is intended specifically for synagogue leaders who are interested in serving their own congregation. Program participants work under the direction of an ordained/invested clergy or, in a congregation without clergy, they will serve the needs identified by that synagogue.

### APPLICATION

Admission to the program is open to all members of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation in good standing. The applicant *must* be sponsored by his or her congregation. In order for a candidate to be considered for admission, we must receive a completed application, which includes the following:

- The application form
- A recommendation form from the sponsoring rabbi
- A recommendation form from the synagogue president or another Executive Committee member
- The signed *brit*—agreement of terms

The forms are available on the Web at [www.urj.org/worship/shliach](http://www.urj.org/worship/shliach) or from the Union for Reform Judaism Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212.650.4193 or [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org).

Applicants are responsible for submitting all completed forms to

Union for Reform Judaism  
Department of Worship, Music and  
Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-6778

Upon our receipt of the completed forms, the admissions decision will be made by a committee that includes representatives from the sponsoring organizations. A decision letter will then be sent.

## Sh'liach K'hilah: Synagogue Associate

Become a

**SH'LIACH K'HILAH  
SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE**

Sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism, HUC-JIR and the CCAR

Level I July 9-16, 2006

Level II July 16-23, 2006

HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, OH

The SK/SA program has been postponed until Summer 2007. Details have not been set yet. If you would like to receive information about the 2007 program, please let the Union's Worship Department know at [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org) or 212.650.4193, and you'll be provided with information as soon as it's available. The documents on this page for the 2006 program can provide you with an idea of what the program entails in general. Thank you.

An Opportunity for Synagogue Leaders  
to Serve Their Congregations by:

- Leading worship services
- Teaching
- Visiting the sick and homebound
- Supporting the religious school
- Conducting funerals, unveilings and baby naming ceremonies

Some Highlights of the Program  
Include:

- Studying basic Jewish texts
- Learning the rubrics of Jewish prayer
- Understanding the role of Israel in our lives
- Developing leadership skills
- Comprehending the role and structure of the synagogue

Frequently Asked Questions about the  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* /Synagogue Associate ProgramThe *Sh'liach K'hilah* /Synagogue Associate Program Brochure\*

Admissions Procedures

Application Form

Recommendation Form for Sponsoring Rabbi

Recommendation Form for  
Synagogue President or Other Executive Committee Member*B'rit* —Covenant

\*NOTE: The brochure is a PDF. Accessing it requires Acrobat Reader. To download Acrobat Reader for free, please click on the icon below. Also, when accessing the brochure, please allow a couple of extra minutes because of photos. All other documents are Word documents.



For more information, please contact:

UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM  
DEPARTMENT OF WORSHIP, MUSIC AND RELIGIOUS LIVING

Telephone: 212.650.4193  
Fax: 212.650.4229  
E-mail: [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org)

or

**ADULT JEWISH LEARNING AND LIVING AT HUC-JIR**

Telephone: 513.221.1875, ext. 353

Fax: 513.221.0316

E-mail: [mcruse@huc.edu](mailto:mcruse@huc.edu)





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## STRENGTHENING YOUR CONGREGATION

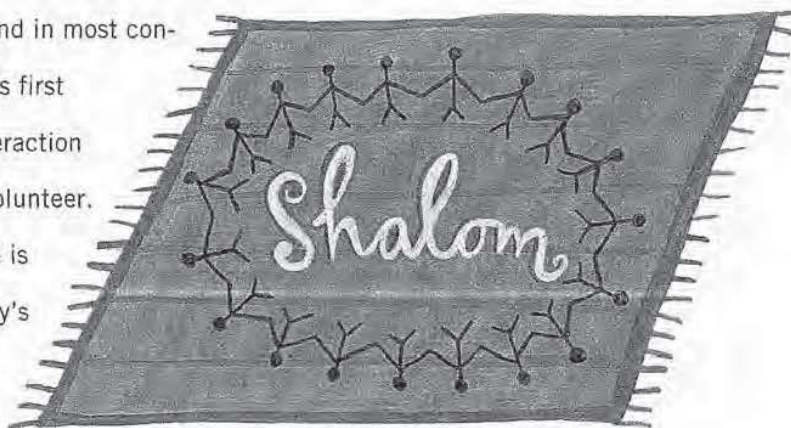
### The Mitzvah Of Outreach

It's considered a *mitzvah* to provide the opportunity for those who choose to convert to Judaism. This year, why not give your congregation some extra assistance in performing this *mitzvah*? The **Outreach Fellows Program for Conversion Certification**, July 25–29 in Cincinnati, will give interested laypeople the skills and

resources to create a comfortable environment for people in the process of conversion. Congregational leaders are also invited to take part in the certification process. For a brochure and application visit [www.urj.org/outreach/fellows.shtml](http://www.urj.org/outreach/fellows.shtml), call 212-650-4230, or e-mail [outreach@urj.org](mailto:outreach@urj.org).

### A Welcoming Voice

A first impression can last forever. And in most congregations, a potential congregant's first impression comes from a telephone interaction with a member of the office staff or a volunteer. A warm and welcoming synagogue voice is thus vitally important to your community's outreach and membership efforts, potentially making the difference



between a caller's decision to pass on the temple or to attend services for the first time. To train your staff and/or volunteers in becoming friendly and helpful representatives of your community, the Department of Outreach and Membership and the National Association of Temple Administrators have developed **Beyond Shalom: Your Synagogue's Office Guide to Connecting with Warmth and Welcome**, which teaches both new and classic communications techniques and presents a variety of training scenarios. To order your copy exclusively from the Department of Outreach and Membership please call 212-650-4230 or e-mail [outreach@urj.org](mailto:outreach@urj.org).

### Lay Leaders: Strengthen Your Synagogue Skills

Since the late 1990s, the Union has created a variety of programs which train lay leaders to support spiritual life in their congregations and communities. As the needs of Reform communities change and grow, so does the program. This coming May 9–15 in Warwick, New York, a new weeklong

training, **The Had'rachah Seminar for Lay Leaders in Religious Life**, will help lay leaders prepare to lead worship services and Torah study; conduct baby namings, funerals, and unveilings; and write and deliver *d'verei Torah*. Space is limited, so sign up today at [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah).



After we receive the completed forms, we will contact applicants to schedule a **telephone interview**—the last step of the application process. Following the telephone interview, confirmation of participation will be sent by e-mail.

The forms are available on the Web at [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah) or from the Union for Reform Judaism Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212.650.4193 or [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org).

We must receive the forms by **March 1, 2007**. Completed forms should be submitted to

Union for Reform Judaism  
Department of Worship,  
Music and Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

## COST

The tuition for the program is \$800 (in U.S. dollars) and includes all materials as well as lodging, meal and transportation fees for the week. Transportation to Kutz Camp at the beginning of the week and from HUC-JIR at the end of the week is not included.

Participants may apply for a grant from the Small Congregations Resource Fund, which is available to members of congregations with 250 membership units or less. More information and a Small Congregations Resource Fund Grant Application are available from the Union for Reform Judaism Ida and Howard Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management at [www.urj.org/small/fund](http://www.urj.org/small/fund).



The *Had'rachah* Seminar is supported by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

# The *Had'rachah* Seminar

## For Lay Leadership in Religious Life

A Program of the  
Union for Reform Judaism  
May 9–15, 2007

URJ Kutz Camp, Warwick, NY



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## HISTORY

Beginning in 1989, the Union for Reform Judaism created the first program that offers uniform training to lay leaders, primarily those in small congregations, to help them support the spiritual life of their communities. Over the years, the Reform Movement's efforts to train lay leaders in the practices and rituals of religious life have expanded to meet the changing needs of all our Union for Reform Judaism congregations. At this time, we are pleased to announce The *Had'rachah*\* Seminar for Lay Leaders in Religious Life.

## COURSE OF STUDY

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is designed to teach lay leaders a variety of skills to help them support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities. Participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that doesn't have clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting an ordained rabbi or invested/certified cantor.

\**Had'rachah*—guidance, training, direction; from the same root as *mad'rich/mad'richah*—guide, instructor, counselor—and *derech*—pathway, custom, manner

Two distinct curricula will be offered in alternate summers. The synagogue skills that will be taught include

- Preparing and leading worship services
- Conducting baby namings, funerals and unveilings
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound
- Leading Torah study

Among the topics covered will be Worship for Shabbat and the High Holy Days; Life-Cycle Liturgy (baby namings, *b'nei mitzvah* and funerals); Torah; Midrash and Commentaries; Talmud; Israel; *Tikkun Olam*; and Education. Seminar participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars.

## LOCATION

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is held for one week each summer. Most of the seminar will take place at the URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York, thus providing participants with a relaxed setting in which to immerse themselves in study. The two final days of the program will be held in New York City at the national office of the Union for Reform Judaism and at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. During these last two days, participants will have the opportunity to study with the faculty of HUC–JIR as well as sample Jewish life in the Big Apple!

## MENTORING

Each participant will be assigned a Union staff mentor with whom he or she will have regular

contact in the months following the summer seminar. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to subscribe to a listserv created especially for the *Had'rachah* program. Through this listserv, they will be able to maintain connections with and seek support from their fellow lay leaders.

## APPLICATION

Admission to the program is open to all members in good standing of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation.

Each applicant to the *Had'rachah* Seminar should meet the following criteria:

- Exhibit a positive Jewish identity and involvement with Jewish life
- Have the ability to study primary Jewish texts in translation
- Be capable of reading prayer-book Hebrew
- Possess good interpersonal and leadership skills
- Be an active member of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation

In order for a candidate to be considered for admission to this program, we must receive the following:

- A completed Application Form
- A Letter of Acknowledgment signed by the congregation's president and the congregation's rabbi/cantor, if there is one







Following the telephone interview, confirmation of participation will be sent by e-mail.

The forms are available on the web at [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah) or from the Union for Reform Judaism Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212.650.4193 or [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org).

We must receive the forms for May 13-20, 2008 by **February 29, 2008** and for May 12-19, 2009 by **February 27, 2009**. Completed forms should be submitted to

Union for Reform Judaism  
Department of Worship,  
Music and Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-6778

## COST

The tuition for the program is \$800 (in U.S. dollars) and includes all materials as well as lodging and meals for the week. Transportation costs to and from Kutz Camp are not included.

Participants may apply for a grant from the Small Congregations Resource Fund, which is available to members of congregations with 250 membership units or less. More information and a Small Congregations Resource Fund Grant Application are available from the Union for Reform Judaism Ida and Howard Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management at [www.urj.org/small/fund](http://www.urj.org/small/fund).



*Photographs by Gil Sweet*

# The *Had'rachah* Seminar

For Lay  
Leadership  
in  
Religious  
Life

A Program  
of the  
Union for  
Reform Judaism  
May 13-20, 2008  
May 12-19, 2009  
URJ Kutz Camp,  
Warwick, NY

הורני יהוה דרכך ונחני בארח מישור  
(from Psalm 27:11)  
Adonai, teach me your ways and lead me on a righteous path



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## HISTORY

Beginning in 1989, the Union for Reform Judaism created the first program that offered uniform training to lay leaders, primarily those in small congregations, to help them support the spiritual life of their communities. Over the years, the Reform Movement's efforts to train lay leaders in the practices and rituals of religious life have expanded to meet the changing needs of all our Union for Reform Judaism congregations. At this time, we are pleased to announce The *Had'rachah*\* Seminar for Lay Leaders in Religious Life.

## COURSE OF STUDY

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is designed to teach lay leaders a variety of skills to help them support communal worship, life-cycle ceremonies and educational opportunities. Participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that doesn't have clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting their congregational clergy.

\**Had'rachah*—guidance, training, direction; from the same root as *mad'rich/mad'richah*—guide, instructor, counselor—and *derech*—pathway, custom, manner

Two distinct curricula will be offered in alternate summers. The synagogue skills that will be taught include:

### May 13–20, 2008

- Preparing and leading High Holy Day worship
- Conducting baby namings
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound

### May 12–19, 2009

- Preparing and leading Shabbat worship
- Conducting a funeral and unveiling
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Leading Torah study

Participants may begin their studies in either year. Additional study topics covered may include Torah and Commentaries; Midrash; Talmud; Israel; *Tikkun Olam*; Holiday Observances and Education. Seminar participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars.

## LOCATION

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is held for one week each summer. The seminar will take place at the URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York, thus providing participants with a relaxed setting in which to immerse in study. In May 2009 there will be a day trip into New York City to the national office of the Union for Reform Judaism.

## MENTORING

Each participant will be assigned a Union staff mentor with whom he or she will have regular contact in the months following the summer seminar. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to subscribe to a listserv created for

program participants. Through this listserv, they will be able to maintain connections with and seek support from their fellow lay leaders.

## APPLICATION

Admission to the program is open to all members in good standing of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation.

Each applicant to the *Had'rachah* Seminar should meet the following criteria:

- Exhibit a positive Jewish identity and involvement with Jewish life
- Have the ability to study primary Jewish texts in English
- Be capable of reading prayer-book Hebrew
- Possess good interpersonal and leadership skills
- Be an active member of a Union for Reform Judaism congregation

In order for a candidate to be considered for admission to this program, we must receive the following:

- A completed Application Form
- A Letter of Acknowledgment signed by the congregation's president and the congregation's rabbi/cantor, if there is one

After we receive the completed forms, we will contact applicants to schedule a **telephone interview**—the last step of the application process.





agogue's "Green Team" purchases eco-friendly cleaning supplies as well as paper towels and toilet paper made from recycled waste. Tuesday is "no energy" night, during which no functions or meetings are held. And a new organic flower garden on synagogue grounds will supply flowers for synagogue functions. All the while, explain "Green Team" co-chairs Frances Ginsberg (photo #3) and Lisa Sandler (photo #4), "We endeavor to teach our community not just *what* we can do as stewards of the earth, but *why* we need to do it, both as Jews and as citizens of the world."

In Kensington, Maryland, Temple Emanuel published a "Green Shalom Action Guide" featuring ecologically responsible actions to make members' homes more environmentally friendly, supports reforestation projects that reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and benefit ecosystems, and composts waste from the temple's on-site gardens.

In Austin, Texas, Congregation Beth Israel maintains a paper-recycling dumpster in the parking lot which is also used by the larger community.

In Erie, Pennsylvania, Temple Anshe Hese is set to become a carbon neutral facility in 2009—and, when the initiative is complete, it will be the first carbon neutral synagogue in the United States. According to Eric Pallant (photo #5), the congregation's treasurer and a professor of environmental science at Allegheny College, to offset Anshe Hese's carbon footprint (36.5 tons in 2007, to be offset at \$85.50 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, a total cost to the congregation of approximately \$6,200), the temple installed compact fluorescent light bulbs, retrofit portions of its energy system, and acquired solar panels for a dormitory roof from the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in Israel (with which the temple has an ongoing relationship). The panels, which are set to be installed

*continued on page 70*

## HAPPENINGS For Adults & Youth

### → For Youth

**June 22–August 5:** Travel with fellow teens on the NFTY in Israel 4-week outdoor Israel adventure program or the 5-week Europe and Israel L'Dor V'Dor experience. [www.NFTYIsrael.org](http://www.NFTYIsrael.org)

**June 24–July 19:** Train to become a Reform leader of tomorrow at the NFTY Leadership Academy, Kutz Camp, Warwick, NY. [www.kutz.urjcamps.org](http://www.kutz.urjcamps.org)

**June–August 2009:** Engage in a 3- to 6-week NFTY Mitzvah Corps program in San Francisco, New York, New Jersey, or New Orleans. [www.mitzvahcorps.org](http://www.mitzvahcorps.org)

### → For Adults

**April 19–21:** Learn political engagement hands-on at the RAC's Consultation on Conscience in Washington, DC. [www.rac.org/consultation](http://www.rac.org/consultation)

**April 23–26:** New and incoming temple presidents—strengthen

your skills at the Scheidt Seminar in Atlanta. <http://www.urj.org/synmgmt/scheidt/>

**May 13–16:** Be trained to serve congregations without clergy or assist your clergy at the *Had'rachah* Seminar for Lay Leadership in Religious Life, URJ Kutz Camp, Warwick, NY. [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah)

**May 14–24:** Study, tour, and celebrate the State of Israel with other dedicated adult learners at the 2009 Israel Kallah. <http://urj.org/educate/adultstudy/>

**May 27–31:** Learn how to lead others in singing new Reform songs at the *Hava Nashira* Song Leading and Music Workshop, OSRUI, Oconomowoc, WI. <http://osrui.urjcamps.org/yearround/programs/havanashira/>

*continued on page 71*



CANTOR ELLEN DRESKIN TEACHES AT THE CHORALE FESTIVAL, 2004.

## NOTEWORTHY

**Guide to *The Torah*—A Women's Commentary:** Visit <http://www.womenofreformjudaism.org/the-Torah-a-womens-commentary> to download the Women of Reform Judaism guide designed to facilitate exploration of selected Torah portions through the lens of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. Guidelines for successful Torah study programs are also posted.



**Training Jewish Scholars:** Starting in 2009–2010, the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion's pre-doctoral M.A. program in Jewish Studies will train select students to become scholars of classical Jewish texts, history, culture, and tradition as part of HUC-JIR's mission to develop future intellectual leadership for the international Jewish community. For more information on the program, available at HUC-JIR's Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and New York campuses, click on [www.huc.edu/academics/programs.pdf](http://www.huc.edu/academics/programs.pdf), email [sgreengus@huc.edu](mailto:sgreengus@huc.edu), or call 513-221-1875 ext. 3230.

**Israel Advocacy—The Teen Toolkit:** The North American Federation of Temple Youth completed a comprehensive online toolkit for teen Israel advocacy (<http://www.nfty.org/israelcentral/dak/>), a 9-year effort engaging more than 70 NFTYites and alums in researching and creating the programs.

**Technology—Learn All About It:** Is your temple website all you'd like it to be? Are policies in place to protect members' privacy? The new Union for Reform Judaism website [www.urj.org/tech](http://www.urj.org/tech) can help Reform synagogues use technology effectively in communications.

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- A Fanciful  
Tale

• Training &  
Workshops

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## Training & Workshops



**The Had'rachah Seminar for Lay Leadership in Religious Life**  
formerly *Sh'lach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate Program  
(Part of the Summer Learning Institute)

August 4 - 8, 2010 at the Glen Cove Mansion, 200 Dosoris Lane, Glen Cove, NY 11542

In 1989 the Union for Reform Judaism created the first program that offers uniform training to lay leaders, primarily those in small congregations, to help them support the spiritual life of their congregations. Over the years, the Reform Movement's efforts to train lay leaders in the practices and rituals of religious life have expanded to meet the changing needs of all our congregations.

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is designed to teach lay leaders a variety of skills to help them support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities. Participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that has no clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting their congregational clergy.

For more information, please contact Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell at [slelwell@urj.org](mailto:slelwell@urj.org) or Cantor Alane Katzew at [akatzew@urj.org](mailto:akatzew@urj.org).

Two distinct curricula will be offered in alternate summers. The curriculum for 2010 will include:

- Preparing for and facilitating High Holy Day worship
- Conducting baby naming ceremonies
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound

Participants may begin their studies in either year. Additional study topics covered may include Torah and Commentaries; Midrash; Talmud; Israel; Tikkun Olam; Holiday Observances and Education. Seminar participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars.



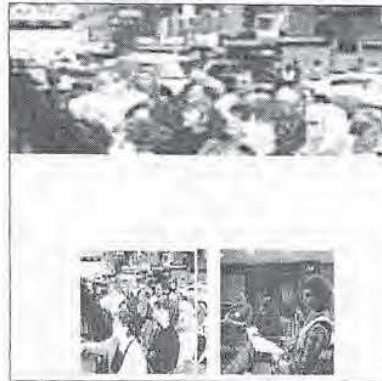
## Training & Workshops

### The *Had'rachah* Seminar for Lay Leadership in Religious Life

(formerly *Sh'lach: K'hilah/Synagogue Associate Program*)

August 4 - 8, 2010

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Two distinct curricula will be offered in alternate summers. The synagogue skills that will be taught are:

- Preparing and leading Shabbat and holiday worship services
- Conducting baby namings, funerals and unveilings
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound
- Leading Torah study
- Preparing and leading High Holy Day worship services
- Conducting baby namings and services with *b'nei mitzvah*
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound

Participants may begin their studies in either year. Additional study topics covered may include Torah and Commentaries, Midrash, Talmud, Israel, *Tikkun Olam*, Holiday Observances and Education. Seminar participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars.

Please check back for our brochure.



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Committees

## Training & Workshops



### The HAD'RACHAH SEMINAR

The *Had'rachah* Seminar for Lay Leadership in Religious Life  
formerly *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate Program  
Part of the Summer Learning Institute

In 1989 the Union for Reform Judaism created the first program that offers uniform training to lay leaders, primarily those in small congregations, to help them support the spiritual life of their congregations. Over the years, the Reform Movement's efforts to train lay leaders in the practices and rituals of religious life have expanded to meet the changing needs of all our congregations.

The *Had'rachah* Seminar is designed to teach lay leaders a variety of skills to help them support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities. Participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that has no clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting their congregational clergy.

For more information, please contact Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell at [slewell@urj.org](mailto:slewell@urj.org) or Cantor Alane Katzew at [akatzew@urj.org](mailto:akatzew@urj.org).

Two distinct curricula will be offered in alternate summers. The curriculum for 2010 included:

- Preparing for and facilitating High Holy Day worship
- Conducting baby naming ceremonies
- Writing and delivering *divrei* Torah
- Visiting the sick and homebound

Participants may begin their studies in either year. Additional study topics covered may include Torah and Commentaries; Midrash; Talmud; Israel; Tikkun Olam; Holiday Observances and Education. Seminar participants will increase their Jewish literacy through study with some of the Reform Movement's most distinguished scholars.



## CONNECT

- Find Your Congregational Rep
- Ask a Specialist
- Networking Group
- Ask a Rabbi
- What do you think?

## Blog & Discuss

The Torah in Haiku:  
Mishpatim

Remembrance and  
Beyond: International  
Holocaust  
Remembrance Day

D'var Torah, Parshat  
Mishpatim, 5771

Ten From Up Top

A Good Week for  
Israel

Purim: Creative ideas  
for a Community  
Celebration

Connect with  
Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie

- Get RSS Feeds
- Get Email Newsletters
- Join a Listserv
- Find us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter
- Network on LinkedIn

Support  
REFORM  
JUDAISM



Multimedia: Photos | Videos | Podcasts | Webinars

SHARE

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Roles	Congregations	Learning	Youth	Jewish Life	Social Action	Israel	Holidays	About Us
Interested in Reform Judaism	Administration Board & Governance	Torah Educators Parents	Camps Israel NFTY	Interfaith Conversion Family Issues	Social Action & The URJ RAC	Resources Travel	Calendar Shabbat High Holy Days	Reform Movement

[ABOUT US](#)[CONGREGATIONS](#)[HOLIDAYS](#)[JEWISH LIFE](#)[LEARNING](#)[SOCIAL AC'](#)[Home](#) / [Learning](#) / [Conferences & Workshops](#) / [Summer Learning Institute](#) /[Torah Study](#)[Educators](#)[Parents](#)[Adult Study](#)[Judaism](#)[Classes](#)[Conferences & Workshops](#)

- [Biennial](#)
- [Webinars - Learn Online](#)

## Summer Learning Institute



**July 5 - 10, 2011**

Princeton Marriott Hotel & Conference Center  
100 College Road East, Princeton, NJ 08540

**The Summer Learning Institute brings together adult Jewish learners to experience study, spiritual renewal and personal growth.** Each of these programs offers a unique & focused learning opportunity for individuals to deepen their knowledge and learn techniques of three areas of congregational life: engaging in serious Jewish study, welcoming prospective members into your community, and facilitating and supporting worship and life cycle rituals.

The Summer Learning Institute, by serving individuals, enriches Jewish life and strengthens congregations and communities. Couples and friends are encouraged to attend the Institute while participating in different programs. We'll be together at many meals and for Shabbat, a rich mind and heart expanding study experience!

### Kallah

"Reform Judaism -  
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"

- An intense immersion in Jewish texts and ideas with outstanding teachers



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Certificates and Letter of Completion**

Rabbinic Aide Program Certificate  
Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associate

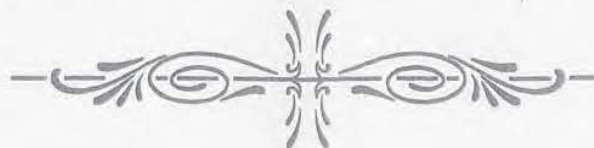




UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS



## RABBINIC AIDE PROGRAM



*We hereby present this certificate to*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*who has completed a program of Jewish study,  
training, and experience for service in our  
Reform Jewish Communities.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
President, UAHC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of the Board, UAHC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Rabbinic Aide Program

# *Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program*

LEVEL ONE: JULY 6-13, 2001

ON THE CINCINNATI CAMPUS OF HUC-JIR

3101 CLIFTON AVENUE, CINCINNATI, OHIO 45220-2488 ☎ 513/221-1875

August, 2001

Mr.

Dear

Congratulations on successfully completing Level One of the 2000 Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program, co-sponsored by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

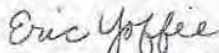
As a representative of Temple \_\_\_\_\_, you are ready to begin service as a Para-Rabbinic Fellow under the supervision of an ordained rabbi from the College-Institute or from another seminary recognized by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

We look forward to your continued participation and further training in our future programs.

Mazel Tov,



Rabbi David Ellenson  
President  
HUC-JIR



Rabbi Eric Yoffie  
President  
UAHC



Rabbi Paul J. Menitoff  
Executive Vice-President  
CCAR

A JOINT PROGRAM OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION, THE  
UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS & THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS



היברו יוניון קולג'   
 Jewish Institute of Religion,

THE UNION FOR   
 REFORM JUDAISM

AND THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE   
 OF AMERICAN RABBIS

hereby declare that

has satisfied the requirements of the

sh'liach k'hilah   
 SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE

STUDY PROGRAM AND   
 WITH THE ONGOING SUPPORT   
 OF A SPONSORING CLERGY PERSON   
 MAY ASSIST HIS/HER CONGREGATION   
 IN ITS SACRED WORK.

תשס"ד - 5764



## APPENDIX C

### **Applications, Learning Contract and *Brit*/Covenant of Mutual Understanding**

Application UAHC Rabbinic Aide Program 1995  
Application Synagogue Skills and Torah Study Seminar 1996  
Para-Rabbinic Fellows Learning Contract  
Para-Rabbinic Fellows *Brit*  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Admissions Procedures  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Application Form  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Reference Form (2)  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates *Brit*/Covenant of Mutual Understanding  
*Sh'liach K'hilah* / Synagogue Associates Frequently Asked Questions  
*Had'rachah* Seminar Application Form (2)  
*Had'rachah* Seminar Letter of Acknowledgement (2)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

APPLICATION

UAHC RABBINIC AIDE PROGRAM, 1995

UAHC Kutz Camp-Institute

JULY 17 to JULY 30, 1995

Warwick, New York  
(use separate sheet for each applicant)

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

(First) (Last)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Day Time Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

(Please Print)

President: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

(Please Print)

My deposit of \$250.00, made out to "UAHC" is enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

Please send this application and your \$250.00 deposit, made out to "UAHC", to:

UAHC Rabbinic Aide Program  
c/o Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor  
838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021

PLEASE BE SURE THIS MATERIAL REACHES US BY MARCH 14TH, 1994.  
THE PROGRAM IS LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS PER SESSION ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

UAHC SMALL CONGREGATIONS DEPARTMENT  
838 FIFTH AVE, NY, NY 10021-7064  
212 650-4080

## APPLICATION FORM

### SYNAGOGUE SKILLS AND TORAH STUDY SEMINAR *(formerly the Rabbinic Aide Program)*

**AUGUST 18 – 25, 1996 UAHC OLIN SANG RUBY, OCONOMOWOC, WI**

Please answer the following questions, using additional pages as necessary.

*Name:*

*Phone (day):*

*Phone (evening):*

*Mailing address:*

1) Are you currently a member in good standing of a UAHC small congregation? (250 member units or less)

*Name of congregation:*

*Address:*

2) Does your congregation have a rabbi? Please be specific, i.e. student rabbi, High Holidays only, full-time, part-time, etc.

3) What is your level of proficiency in Hebrew? Please be as specific as you can, i.e., read phonetically, and/or understand minimal basic vocabulary, etc.

4) What is your previous experience in Jewish Studies? What (if any) courses have you taken in Jewish studies?

5) What has led you to want to take this course? With what do you hope to come away?

---

6) Please provide a written reference from either your congregational rabbi, the president of your congregation, or your UAHF regional director. The reference should evaluate your general mental health, your current skill level, and your aptitude for undertaking a rigorous program of study. **The reference should be addressed to Rabbi Allen Kaplan, 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021-7064.**

7) Please sign below to indicate that you understand the following:

The Seminar on Synagogue Skills and Torah Study is intended to enhance the participant's Jewish Learning. No certificate is offered. It is not a license or qualification of any kind. The participant understands that this course does not substitute for rabbinic training, and accordingly the course does not qualify the participant to perform a Reform Jewish wedding or to supervise a conversion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*signature of applicant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*signature of applicant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*date*



## PARA-RABBINIC FELLOWS LEARNING CONTRACT

(Proposed Model -- to be developed by the Para-Rabbinic Fellow and sponsoring Rabbi and signed by the fellow, the sponsoring Rabbi and the president of the Para-Rabbinic Fellow's congregation)

1. The Para-Rabbinic Fellow has identified the following learning goals:
2. The sponsoring Rabbi and the Para-Rabbinic Fellow agree to this description of the Para-Rabbinic role within the congregation.
3. The sponsoring Rabbi and the Para-Rabbinic Fellow agree to this description and schedule of supervision: (form of supervision to be determined by both individuals)
4. (Optional) The sponsoring Rabbi agrees to guide the continuing education of the Para-Rabbinic Fellow in the following ways:
5. What other skills do you hope to learn in addition to what is being offered? (i.e. shofar blowing, Hebrew language skills, etc.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Temple President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fellow

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Rabbi

(Please print and sign above)

To be returned to:

Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
3101 Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45220-2488

## PARA-RABBINIC FELLOWS *BRIT*

### Introduction

The Para-Rabbinic Fellows Program is a joint program of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Begun in the 1980's with its former names of Rabbinic Aide Program and Synagogue Skills Seminar, its purpose is to train synagogue volunteers as skilled support persons for synagogues and other types of Jewish religious communities in need of persons with trained synagogue skills.

The Para Rabbinic Fellow Candidate must hold membership in a UAHC congregation in good standing and is required to sign this code of commitment prior to admission to the program.

### Para-Rabbinic Relationships

Before entering the program the Para-Rabbinic candidate shall create a goals and objectives (Learning Contract). The contract is to be developed with a sponsoring rabbi and synagogue president. The contract is to be signed by the candidate, the sponsoring rabbi and the synagogue president. If the congregation does not have a rabbi the Learning Contract shall be created with the UAHC Regional Director. Upon completion, the Learning Contract shall be signed by the candidate, the UAHC Regional Director and the synagogue president.

Each Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall work under the supervision of the sponsoring rabbi. If the congregation has a part-time rabbi or student rabbi, the Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall obtain supervision from a nearby rabbi or the UAHC Regional Director.

Should the Para-Rabbinic Fellow leave his or her sponsoring congregation, the Fellow shall obtain supervision from a new rabbi.

Para-Rabbinic Fellows shall consult with their supervising rabbi or student rabbi before performing life cycle events, worship services, or pastoral visits.

If it is agreed between the sponsoring rabbi and the Para-Rabbinic Fellow that the Para-Rabbinic Fellow will provide service in a community where there are residing Jewish clergy, the Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall inform those clergy as a matter of *derech erez* (courtesy).

Should the Para-Rabbinic Fellow serve a hospital, nursing home or smaller Jewish community, it shall be done under the supervision of the sponsoring rabbi.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow is encouraged to meet on a regular basis with the sponsoring rabbi for additional training and strategies for self growth.

### Ethical Commitments

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall act in accordance with the principles and teachings of Judaism and Torah at all times.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow is not an ordained clergy person and shall not refer to themselves as rabbis.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall not officiate at weddings and conversions as they are not ordained clergy persons.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall not accept remuneration for their services. They may accept reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses. They may accept honoraria only in instances pre-approved by their sponsoring rabbi.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow is not obligated to undertake responsibilities with which the Para-Rabbinic Fellow is not comfortable. In such cases, the Para-Rabbinic Fellow shall refer those matters to the sponsoring rabbi.

The Para-Rabbinic Fellow failing to adhere to this *Brit* shall not be considered a recognized Para-Rabbinic Fellow by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Signed:

---

Para-Rabbinic Fellow

---

Sponsoring Rabbi

---

Sponsoring Synagogue President

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate*** **Admissions Procedures**

1. An application will be sent to any UAHC congregant. His or her own synagogue, however, must sponsor the applicant.
2. No processing fee is required for the submission of an application. For further consideration, the application must be complete and consist of the following:
  - A resumé, including an educational and professional summary and indication of synagogue involvement
  - A brief essay, as indicated on the application form
  - A recommendation from the sponsoring rabbi or, if there is no sponsoring rabbi, from the UAHC regional director
  - A minimum of two references, one personal and one professional
  - Two recent photographs
  - A signed waiver of the applicant's right to see the completed recommendation form and references
3. When an applicant's file is complete, a personal interview will be scheduled. (It may take place with the UAHC regional director or another known Jewish professional in the area and with member(s) of the Interview Committee via phone conference.) This interview must include a Jewish professional other than the sponsoring rabbi.
4. The recommendations of the Interview Committee will become part of the applicant's file.
5. The final decision will be made by the Admissions Committee, which will include representatives from the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR.

## ***Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate*** **2002 Application Form**

Please fill out this application form carefully and completely and return it by March 1, 2002, to UAHC, Adult Jewish Growth Department, 633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017. Note: Only completed applications will be considered.

### **Applicant Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_  
I prefer to be contacted at \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Either \_\_\_\_\_  
UAHC Congregation \_\_\_\_\_  
City and State \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Congregational (Sponsoring) Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of UAHC Regional Director \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information**

1. I anticipate working in a synagogue in which (check one)  
☐ I will assist an ordained rabbi or an invested cantor  
☐ There will be neither an ordained rabbi nor an invested cantor  
☐ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please briefly (fewer than 100 words) describe below, or on a separate sheet what you perceive to be the needs of the congregation that you will be serving.

**Profile Information**

1. Attach a current resumé.
2. Attach two current photographs (no larger than 3-by-5 inches).
3. Submit a brief essay (2 to 4 pages, double-spaced) addressing the following:
  - An introduction about yourself (include your personal and professional history)
  - A description of any prior, related practical training or experience that will help you with your work in a synagogue (detail the successes and difficulties you encountered in that situation)
  - A description of your strengths and weaknesses
  - What you hope to learn in this program
  - How you hope to serve the congregation
4. Please detail any special circumstances or needs that you feel should be taken into consideration along with your application.

I hereby apply for admission to the Reform Movement's *Sh'liach K'hilah*/ Synagogue Associate program and waive my right to see the completed recommendation form and references.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Sh'liach Kehilah/Synagogue Associate  
Admissions Procedures  
For Those Who Have Completed Level 1 and/or Level 2  
of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program**

1. Anyone who has completed level 1 and/or level 2 of the Para Rabbinic Fellows program (or its predecessors), is currently serving a UAHC congregation, and has signed the enclosed *b'rīt* will be sent an application upon request.
2. The application is to be submitted without a processing fee. For further consideration, the application must be complete and consist of the following:
  - A resumé, including an educational and professional summary and indication of synagogue involvement
  - A recommendation from the sponsoring rabbi or, if there is no sponsoring rabbi, from the UAHC regional director
  - A minimum of two references, one personal and one professional
  - Two recent photographs
  - A signed waiver of the applicant's right to see the completed recommendation form and references
3. When an applicant's file is complete, a personal interview will be scheduled. (It may take place with the UAHC regional director or another known Jewish professional in the area and with member(s) of the Interview Committee via phone conference.) This interview must include a Jewish professional other than the sponsoring rabbi.
4. The recommendations of the Interview Committee will become part of the applicant's file.
5. The final decision will be made by the Admissions Committee, which will include representatives from the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR.

**Sh'liach Kehilah/Synagogue Associate  
2002 Application Form  
For Those Who Have Completed Level 1 and/or Level 2  
of the Para Rabbinic Fellows Program**

Please fill out this application form carefully and completely and return it by March 1, 2002, to UAHC, Adult Jewish Growth Department, 633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017. Note: Only completed applications will be considered.

**Applicant Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted at \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Either

UAHC Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Congregational (Sponsoring) Rabbi \_\_\_\_\_

Name of UAHC Regional Director \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information**

1. I anticipate working in a synagogue in which (check one)  
☐ I will assist an ordained rabbi or an invested cantor  
☐ There will be neither an ordained rabbi nor an invested cantor  
☐ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please briefly (fewer than 100 words) describe below, or on a separate sheet what tasks and responsibilities you have undertaken as a Para Rabbinic Fellow and what you hope to accomplish in the future.

**Profile Information**

1. Attach a current resumé.
2. Attach two current photographs (no larger than 3-by-5 inches).
3. Please detail any special circumstances or needs that you that feel should be taken into consideration with your application.

I hereby apply for admission to the Reform Movement's *Sh'liach Kehilah*/ Synagogue Associate program and waive my right to see the completed recommendation form and references.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

***Sh'liach Kehilah/Synagogue Associate***  
**Reference Form**

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Waiver: I hereby waive my right to have access to or see this reference form.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Personal Reference      \_\_\_\_\_ Professional Reference

**To the Individual Providing the Reference**

Please answer the following questions about the above applicant for the *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program. This form will be kept confidential.

1. How well do you know the applicant? In what contexts have you observed him or her?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Please provide any pertinent information regarding the applicant's personality, character, and integrity, particularly his or her strengths and weaknesses and awareness of self.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Please include any other information about the candidate that might help the Admissions Committee. If necessary, use the following list for guidance:  
Academic/intellectual potential, teaching ability, participation in group situations, leadership in group situations, oral communication skills, written communication skills, creativity, sensitivity to the needs of others, ability to work within an organizational framework, and ability to handle stressful situations.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ I recommend this applicant for the *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate program.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not recommend this applicant for the *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please call me to discuss this applicant.

My phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Please return this form by March 1, 2002, to UAHC, Adult Jewish Growth Department, 633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017.



Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Sponsoring Synagogue

City and State of Sponsoring Synagogue \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please provide any pertinent information regarding the applicant's personality, character, and integrity, particularly his or her strengths and weaknesses and awareness of self.



4. In what ways does the applicant's desire to participate in the program seem to be in keeping with his or her personality, character, and commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people? What would you say is the applicant's motivation for this level of training?

5. How do you feel the applicant could best serve the community after the completion of the program?

6. \_\_\_\_\_ I recommend this applicant for the *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate program.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not recommend this applicant for the *Sh'liach K'hilah*/Synagogue Associate program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please call me to discuss this applicant.

My phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Please return this form by March 1, 2002, to UAHC, Adult Jewish Growth Department, 633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017.

# SH'LIACH K'HILAH/SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

## B'rit/Covenant of Mutual Understanding

### Introduction

The *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program is a joint undertaking of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The program is a natural outgrowth of the HUC-JIR/UAHC Para Rabbinic Fellows program and other joint initiatives that support personal Jewish growth and knowledge.

The *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program is designed for temple leaders interested in partnering with their congregations in a meaningful way. Participants who successfully complete the *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program will serve as a valuable resource to the Reform Movement as well as to their congregation either by working with an ordained rabbi or invested cantor or, in those congregations without clergy, by assuming a variety of leadership roles.

This *b'rit* is intended to define the role of the *sh'liach k'hilah/synagogue associate (SK/SA)* vis-à-vis our congregations and our Movement as a whole and the role of the sponsoring organizations vis-à-vis the *sh'liach k'hilah*. The parties to this *b'rit* include the *SK/SA*, the president of the sponsoring congregation, the clergy sponsoring the *SK/SA*, and the director of the *Sh'liach K'hilah* program (representing the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR). Before a prospective *SK/SA* is admitted to the program, all of the above parties must indicate their understanding of and agreement to the content of the *b'rit* by signing below.

\*\*\*\*\*

### B'rit/Covenant

A *b'rit* is a covenant. *B'rit* is also the construct by which the Jewish people have historically defined and described our relationship to God. Torah is the expression of this ongoing, evolving partnership between God and the Jewish people.

A *b'rit* can take many different forms. All *b'ritot*, however, have as their foundation a voluntary agreement between parties based on mutual understanding and a sense of reciprocal obligation.

### Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate B'rit

#### Obligations of the Sh'liach K'hilah

Participants in the *SK/SA* program must be members in good standing of a UAHC congregation in good standing.

Participants in the *SK/SA* program must be sponsored and endorsed by their congregation.

Each *SK/SA* is expected to work under the supervision of his or her sponsor. If the congregation has no full-time clergy, part-time rabbi/cantor, or student rabbi/cantor, the *SK/SA* is expected to receive ongoing supervision from a nearby rabbi or the UAHC regional director. If the sponsoring clergy moves out of the community or ceases to supervise the *SK/SA*, the *SK/SA* must inform the director of the program so that a new sponsor can be appointed.

Should the *SK/SA* cease to be a member of his or her sponsoring congregation, he or she must inform all the parties who signed below. The *SK/SA*'s continued participation in the program will then be reviewed.



A *SK/SA* who serves a congregation with no ordained clergy but is asked to provide service in a broader community in which there reside other synagogue professionals is expected, as a matter of *derech eretz* (courtesy), to inform those individuals of his or her presence and intended role in the community (for example, at a life-cycle event).

All participants who become certified *SK/SA*, whether or not they serve a congregation that has ordained clergy or Jewish professionals on staff, are expected to abide by the following policies and ethics:

- The *SK/SA* commits to act in accordance with the principles and teachings of Judaism and Torah at all times.
- The *SK/SA* is not an ordained clergyperson and shall not refer to herself or himself as a rabbi.
- The *SK/SA* shall not officiate at conversion ceremonies but may co-officiate or serve on a *beit din* with an ordained clergyperson.
- The *SK/SA* commits to not officiate at Jewish wedding ceremonies *even if he or she is legally permitted to do so by local statute*.
- The *SK/SA* must confer with his or her sponsoring rabbi or regional director to obtain guidance and approval before accepting honoraria or other remuneration for services performed.
- The *SK/SA* is not obligated to undertake responsibilities with which he or she is not comfortable. If that is the case, the *SK/SA* shall refer the situation to the sponsoring rabbi.

Adherence to this *b'rit* is required to become a *SK/SA* of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

### **Obligations of the Supporting Organizations**

Congregations sponsoring *sh'lichei k'hilah*/synagogue associates will seek meaningful ways to integrate them into synagogue life.

The sponsors of the *SK/SA* program (the UAHC, HUC-JIR, and the CCAR) will provide Judaic training and leadership skills to participants in the program.

Sponsoring rabbis will agree to make themselves available to the *SK/SA* for regular, ongoing supervision, as agreed upon by both parties.

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
*SK/SA*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Sponsoring Congregation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Clergy

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sponsoring Synagogue President

\_\_\_\_\_  
UAHC/HUC-JIR/CCAR Staff Person

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## ***Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate Program*** **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What does the \$3,000 total program cost cover?**

The program fee includes 2 consecutive summer institutes, the tuition for a total of 2 mid-year seminars (one per year) and distance-learning opportunities (2 per year).

**What does it mean that costs are to be pro-rated?**

The fees are as follows:

\$2000 for participants admitted to the *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program who have completed the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Level 1 Program.

\$1000 for participants admitted to the *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program who have completed the Para-Rabbinic Fellows Level 2.

For participants admitted to the *Sh'liach K'hilah/Synagogue Associate* program who have completed graduate level courses in Judaica, fees will be pro-rated on a case by case basis.

**What is the role of the sponsoring rabbi?**

The sponsoring rabbi will support the *SK/SA* through the application process, verifying that the congregation has an appropriate role for the *SK/SA* and that the applicant is suited to serve the congregation.

After the application phase, the sponsoring rabbi will also provide supervision, and regular (i.e., monthly) opportunities for ongoing advice and feedback. The sponsoring rabbi is expected to observe his or her *SK/SA* while service leading and performing other functions.

**What functions will a *SK/SA* be trained to perform?**

The goal of the program is for *SK/SA* to be able to perform discrete functions at the conclusion of their studies such as: Shabbat and holiday service leading, delivering sermons, conducting Torah study, sermons, and life-cycle events.

***Can a *SK/SA* work in a congregation other than the one in which he or she is a member?***

If the UAHC Regional Director in cooperation with the *SK/SA* Program Director determines that a particular synagogue could benefit from the skills and services of a local *SK/SA*, and, the participant wishes to serve this community then a *SK/SA* may be asked to assist that synagogue.

**What does it mean to be a member in good standing in of a UAHC congregation in good standing?**

To be a member in good standing of a congregation, the applicant must be current on all obligations of membership, such as payment of dues and fees. For the congregation to be in good standing, the congregation must be up-to-date on its payment of its MUM (Maintenance of Union Membership) dues.

**What is a complete application?**

A complete application includes the following:

- a fully filled out application form
- a resume, including summary of education, professional involvement, and synagogue involvement
- two recent photographs
- a recommendation form completed by the sponsoring rabbi, or in the case of no sponsoring rabbi, from the UAHC regional director
- two reference forms, one completed by a personal reference and one by a professional reference
- a *brit* signed by the applicant, the president of the sponsoring congregation, and the sponsoring rabbi.



**2008 APPLICATION FORM FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR STUDENTS**

Please complete and return  
this application by  
February 29, 2008, to



Union for Reform Judaism  
Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor • New York, NY 10017  
Telephone: 212.650.4193 • Fax: 212.650.4229 • [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org)

Please note that incomplete applications will not be considered.

**I. APPLICANT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted at: \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Either

Union for Reform Judaism congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation city and state/province: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer here or on a separate sheet:

A. Are you currently enrolled in a Jewish studies program? If so, where are you studying and are you auditing or registered for credit?

B. Are you currently engaged in Jewish studies with a rabbi/mentor or in an informal educational program? If yes, please describe.

C. Have you previously participated in any organized programs of Jewish study? If so, please provide details.

## II. COMMUNITY/CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION

1. After participating in this program, I anticipate working in my community in the following capacities:  
(Please check all that apply.)

- ☐ I will work under the supervision of an ordained rabbi or an invested/certified cantor in a congregation.
  - ☐ I will work as a lay leader in a congregation which does not have an ordained rabbi or invested/certified cantor.
  - ☐ I will serve in another community capacity such as a day school, nursing home/assisted living facility, JCC, or other Jewish communal organization.  
(Please describe briefly.)
- 
- 

2. Please explain briefly (on a separate sheet) what you believe to be the greatest needs in your congregation/community and how you anticipate meeting those needs after participating in this program.

## III. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Please answer the following on a separate sheet:

1. Tell us about yourself including your religious background and your personal Jewish journey. How did you get to where you are today in your Jewish life?
2. How have you been active in your congregation? In what capacities? As a paid professional or volunteer? Please detail some of the successes and challenges you have faced.
3. What skills do you hope to develop and what information do you hope to obtain in this training?

## IV. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR NEEDS

Please detail any special circumstances or needs you feel should be taken into consideration with your application.

## V. SIGNATURE

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note:** Only submit this form when you have completed all the questions and when it is accompanied by a signed Letter of Acknowledgment which requires the signature of your synagogue president and the rabbi of your congregation, if there is one. The Letter of Acknowledgment is included in the application packet, or you can find it at [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah).

**2008 APPLICATION FORM FOR 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR STUDENTS**

Please complete and return this application by **February 29, 2008**, to:

Union for Reform Judaism  
Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living  
633 Third Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor • New York, NY 10017

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Union for Reform Judaism congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation city and state/province: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please** \_\_\_\_\_ My congregation affiliation is the same as it was during my first year of the *Had'rachah* Seminar.  
**check** \_\_\_\_\_ My congregation affiliation has changed, and I have enclosed a new Letter of Acknowledgment.  
**one:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Participants must be members of Union for Reform Judaism congregations.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check or money order payable to Union for Reform Judaism for the \$800 yearly tuition.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Yearly tuition for the *Had'rachah* Seminar is **\$800** and covers all materials, as well as lodging and meals for the week. Transportation costs to and from Kutz Camp are not included. Please make payable to Union for Reform Judaism in U.S. funds and remit to the attention of the Worship Department.

Participants may apply for a grant from the Small Congregations Resource Fund, which is available to members of congregations with 250 membership units or less. More information and a Small Congregations Resource Fund Grant Application are available from the Union for Reform Judaism Ida and Howard Wilkoff Department of Synagogue Management at [www.urj.org/small](http://www.urj.org/small).

**NOTE:** Please do not make travel arrangements until you have received word that the minimum number of registrants has been met and that the 2008 program will proceed.

Visit the *Had'rachah* website at [www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah](http://www.urj.org/worship/hadrachah).



**THE HAD'RACHAH SEMINAR**  
**For Lay Leadership in Religious Life**  
**A Program of the Union for Reform Judaism**

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LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT 2008

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of applicant) has applied for admission to The *Had'rachah* Seminar, a program of the URJ designed to teach lay leaders a variety of skills to help them support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities. Participants in the *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that has no clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting an ordained rabbi or invested/certified cantor.

The specific synagogue skills that will be taught include

- Preparing and leading High Holy Day worship services
- Conducting baby namings and services with *b'nei mitzvah*
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound

Two areas of life cycle officiation in which program participants specifically are not trained are conversion to Judaism and wedding ceremonies. In this way we clearly distinguish those functions that are the sole domain of seminary trained clergy.

The role that a program participant may have in your congregation as a result of her/his studies in The *Had'rachah* Seminar is at the discretion of your community's lay and professional leadership. The URJ staff does not manage or negotiate this role.

If you have any questions, please contact Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, director of the URJ Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212.650.4193 or [swasserman@urj.org](mailto:swasserman@urj.org).

As a leader in the applicant's congregation, please indicate your knowledge of her/his application to The *Had'rachah* Seminar and attest to her/his membership in good standing by signing below.

Thank you.

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Rabbi's/Cantor's (if applicable) signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi's/Cantor's title and printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Rabbi's/Cantor's email address \_\_\_\_\_

President's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

President's printed name \_\_\_\_\_ President's email address \_\_\_\_\_

**THE HAD'RACHAH SEMINAR**  
**For Lay Leadership in Religious Life**  
**A Program of the Union for Reform Judaism**

**LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT 2009**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of applicant) has applied for admission to The *Had'rachah* Seminar, which is designed to teach congregants a variety of skills so that they can support communal worship, life-cycle events and educational opportunities. Participants in The *Had'rachah* Seminar may use these skills in various ways—by serving a congregation that has no clergy; by working in an assisted living facility or adult community; or by assisting an ordained rabbi or invested/certified cantor.

The specific synagogue skills that will be taught include

- Preparing and leading Shabbat and holiday worship services
- Conducting baby namings, funerals and unveilings
- Leading services in a house of mourning
- Writing and delivering *divrei Torah*
- Visiting the sick and homebound
- Leading Torah study

Two areas of life cycle officiation in which program participants specifically are not trained are conversion to Judaism and wedding ceremonies. In this way we clearly distinguish those functions that are the sole domain of seminary trained clergy.

The role that a program participant may have in your congregation as a result of her/his studies in The *Had'rachah* Seminar is at the discretion of your community's lay and professional leadership. The URJ staff does not manage or negotiate this role.

If you have any questions, please contact Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman, director of the URJ Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living at 212.650.4193 or [swasserman@urj.org](mailto:swasserman@urj.org).

Please indicate your knowledge of her/his application to The *Had'rachah* Seminar and attest to her/his membership in good standing by signing below.

Thank you.

Rabbi's/Cantor's (if applicable) signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi's/Cantor's title and printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Rabbi's/Cantor's email address \_\_\_\_\_

President's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

President's printed name \_\_\_\_\_

President's email address \_\_\_\_\_



## Administrator Interview Questions

Name:

Date:

Source of contact:

1. What were the dates of your involvement with program?
2. What was the name(s) of program at the time?
3. What was the organizational affiliation of the program (i.e., UAHC, HUC-JIR, CCAR, URJ etc.)?
4. What were your role/responsibilities?
5. Why this particular program at that particular time? (i.e., what factors contributed to the need for the program?)
6. What were the goals of the program?
7. Were the goals of the program met?
8. Who at the sponsoring organization(s) was involved in making the decision to fund/support the program?
9. Who were the other key individuals involved in administering/organizing/teaching and their responsibilities? (ask for contact info)
10. Who (person and organization) ran the program before you?
11. Who ran the program after you?
12. Existence and location of program files – personal or organizational (see # 3)  
Whom might I contact to obtain access?
13. Key educational areas covered in the program?
14. Were participants provided with any books or reference materials? Please provide details.
15. Who were the teachers? Were they compensated for their efforts?
16. Where did program take place, over what period of time?
17. How were participants recruited?
18. Was a sponsoring rabbi or recommendation required? Telephone interview?
19. Was anyone ever turned down?
20. Was a certain minimum level of Hebrew proficiency required?
21. What was the geographic make-up of participants?
22. What was the size of participants' congregations?
23. Were participants from congregations with or without full time rabbis?
24. Was there a fee for participation?
25. Did the fee cover the costs of the programs?
26. What was the source of other funding?
27. What was the annual budget for the program?
28. What percentage of program cost was funded by the Union?
29. Were other funding sources used?
30. Who signed off on the budget/funding at each funding source?
31. Was there ever any controversy over funding?
32. How much of your time was devoted to the program?
33. Were participants asked to sign any sort of 'code of ethics' or similar document?

34. Were participants specifically told what things they could not do in the para-rabbinic role?
35. Was the subject of offering blessings covered?
36. Specifically, was the priestly blessing discussed?
37. Was any type of certificate or diploma issued on completion of the program?
38. Was there any post-program assessment or determination of results? How was success/failure measured or defined?
39. Total number of participants during your involvement?
40. During your tenure, how many participants went on to rabbinical school?
41. Were there any 'star' pupils (names and contact info)
42. Were there any 'star' rabbis (names and contact info)
43. Was there a limit to how many individuals from one congregation could attend?
44. Do you remember any congregation/rabbi sending more participants than any other?
45. Do you recall any individuals at the Union/HUC/CCAR who did not think the program was a good idea or who had negative experiences with the program?
46. Are you familiar with the *Had'rachah* Seminar, the current version of the program? (If 'yes' continue, if 'no' move to question # 49)
47. What do you see as the major differences?
48. Are there any changes you would like to see in the program?
49. How do you envision this program serving Reform Judaism into the future?

## Participant Interview Questions

Name:

Date:

Source of contact:

1. What were your dates of participation in the program?
2. What was the name(s) of program at the time?
3. What was the organizational affiliation of the program (i.e., UAHF, HUC-JIR, CCAR, URJ etc.)
4. What was the application process?
5. Did you need a sponsoring rabbi and/or recommendation from anyone?
6. Was there a telephone interview?
7. Was a minimum level of Hebrew proficiency required? (If so, what and how confirmed?)
8. At the time you attended the program, what was your level of proficiency with prayerbook Hebrew?
9. What was the cost of program? (To you? To your congregation?)
10. Was attending the program your own idea or did the rabbi suggest it? What was his/her reason for doing so?
11. How Jewishly-knowledge you were before going into the program (i.e., Hebrew skills, formal Jewish studies, etc.)?
12. What were your goals going into the program?
13. Were these goals met?
14. Where did training take place; over what period of time?
15. How many people were in the program with you? (breakdown with respect to age, male/females, geographic, size of congregation?)
16. What were the key educational areas covered?
17. Were you provided with any books or material for future reference? If so, please list or describe.
18. Do you still have any materials from the program? Do you still use them?
19. Please name the key individuals leading the program and their responsibilities.
20. What is your overall evaluation of the program (A+ to F) and why?
21. Did you remain in contact with anybody from the program? Through what means and why?
22. Was there a certificate or other formal recognition of your completion of the program (either from the program or from/at your temple)?
23. What were your congregational responsibilities before/after participation in program?
24. Is there a process in place through which your rabbi provides on-going supervision and feedback?
25. Were you ever faced with a situation as a para-rabbinic which you felt inadequately trained to deal with?
26. During the program, were you advised that there were some rabbinical responsibilities you should not take on? If so, what were they?

27. Is the temple you are at now, the same one as when you went through the program?
28. What is the name, city and size of the temple of which you were a member during your program participation, and now, if different?
29. Is your rabbi now the same one as when you went through the program?
30. What is the name of rabbi? (And his/her temple and city now, if different than when you were in the program.)
31. How has the change in rabbi or temple affected your serving in a para-rabbinic role?
32. What was the value of the program for you personally? For your congregation?
33. Do you think the congregation viewed you differently after your participation in the program? How so?
34. Do congregants call you by your first name or by a title? If so, what is it?
35. Of the things you know that rabbis do, is there anything you're not willing or feel that you are not prepared to do?
36. Have you ever invoked the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24-26 in a ceremony or service you conducted? ("May God bless you and protect you' May God deal kindly and graciously with you; May God bestow favor upon you and grant you peace.")
37. Outside your home congregation, are there other ways you are/were able to put the skills you learned to use?
38. Do you receive compensation for any of the para-rabbinic work you do for or outside your home congregation?
39. Do you remain in contact with anybody from the program? Through what means?
40. Are there any other participants you would recommend I speak with? (If so, please provide their contact information.)
41. Have you continued to pursue Jewish learning? If so, what and how?

(If participant went on to rabbinical school)

42. What school did you attend?
43. As a rabbi, have you worked with a para-rabbinic aide? Please describe their role in the congregation and provide their contact information.



## Sponsoring Rabbi Interview Questions

Name of Rabbi:

Date:

Name of Congregation:

1. How many people have you sponsored for para-rabbinic programs? (If at a previous congregation, size of the congregation)
2. Did you suggest the program or did the individual approach you?
3. Was there a particular need you were trying to address?
4. What were your goals for the participant and for the participant's subsequent role in the congregation?
5. Were these goals met?
6. How did the participant's congregational responsibilities change after participation in program?
7. What is your role in on-going work with the participant?
8. Is there any formal assessment or feedback mechanism for participant's congregational work?
9. Is the participant compensated for their duties with the congregation?
10. Has having this individual available impacted the congregation's hiring of professional staff in any way?
11. Did the congregation's view or treatment of this individual change in anyway after their participation in the program?
12. How was congregational acceptance of this individual in a leadership role accomplished?
13. Has there been any resistance to the role this individual plays in the congregation?
14. Besides not officiating at weddings or conversions, how else is the para-rabbinic's role limited?
15. Have any para-rabbinics ever 'overstepped' or made you otherwise uncomfortable regarding their role in the congregation? *(The discussion of this question will not identify any individual or congregation by name.)*
16. After they complete the program do you find that para-rabbinics continue with Jewish learning? Do you have a role in that process?
17. Were you ever approached for sponsorship in the program by someone whom you did not think should participate or by someone whom you did not want to subsequently serve the congregation? *(The names of the individual and congregation will be kept confidential.)*
  - a. What were the circumstances/reasons?
  - b. How was it handled? Did they attend the program?
  - c. Did any subsequent issues emerge?
18. Have there been any follow-up or assessment efforts on the part of program organizers or administrators?
19. In the event the Rabbi being interviewed has had multiple experiences with participants in different versions of the program:

Is there a difference in the quality of the training?

20. Should there be a limit to the number of para-rabbinics trained per congregation?
21. What were (are) your criteria for recommending someone participate in the program?
22. Are you familiar with the current version (*Had'rachah*) of the program? (If 'yes' continue, if 'no' move to question # 25)
23. What do you see as the major differences?
24. Are there any changes you would like to see in the program?
25. How do you envision this program serving Reform Judaism into the future?