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WE DO WEDDINGS NOT WINDOWS:
THE ROLE OF THE RABBI vs. The RABBI OF THE PAST

by

Shari L. Heinrich

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

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Referee, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis became a devotion of love for me. As I immersed myself deeper into my research I discovered facts about rabbis that I found tremendously interesting. One of the reasons that my research inspired me, was because I was inspired. Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman was more than just advisor to this thesis. He served as my cheerleader, supporter, challenger, and teacher. During the time that I spent working with him, he demonstrated a model of a rabbi that I hope to emulate in my own career. I am indebted to him for making time in his over-packed schedule to help me create my vision of a rabbi.

I am also grateful to the many Professors at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion who guided me in the different aspects of my research. I found a way to integrate my fascination with earlier rabbis with my love of Jewish texts and history. Though every professor with whom I have studied over the past five years has taught me an invaluable lesson, Rabbi Gary Zola, Dr. Karla Goldman, Dr. Jonathan Cohen, and Rabbi Sam Joseph each went above and beyond to strengthen my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for remaining supportive throughout this process. I know that listening to my obscure rabbinic facts, progress reports, or complaints about stress and computer difficulties was not always easy for them, but never once did they withdraw their support.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandmother z"l, who was the first to believe that I could become a rabbi. Without her love and encouragement I would never be fulfilling my dream of becoming a rabbi.

DIGEST

As the prospect of my own rabbinic ordination drew closer, I sought to better understand the life to which I pledge myself. I wanted to have a firm grasp on such subjects as the historic origins of the title "rabbi," ordination, rabbinic authority, and more. More specifically, I wanted to know, when I am ordained in June, whether I would be performing the same rabbinic functions as the rabbis who preceded me by hundreds of years, even fifty years? I wanted to study the role of the rabbi to prepare me to become a rabbi.

This thesis is structured in such a way to provide the answers to some of those questions, not only for myself, but for anyone connected to rabbis; congregants, students, and rabbis alike. Chapter One is an introduction, providing a historical basis for the title and functions of early rabbis. Chapter Two examines the role of the rabbi in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, from the influence of the first salaried rabbi until the German Reform influence. Chapter Three focuses on the first four American Reform rabbis trained at the Hebrew Union College, to bridge between the rabbi in Europe and the rabbi in America. Chapter Four examines the debate on whether or not women should be ordained as rabbis, and the functions that women rabbis perform. Chapter Five deals with the contributions that women rabbis have brought into the rabbinate, in order to gain a balanced perspective on the current state of the rabbinate.

Chapter Six offers my conclusions on the role of the rabbi today, as well as speculation on the future of the rabbinic role.

Chapter One
Introduction

In a description of the expectations of modern rabbis Samuel Dresner writes, "Their sermons should be fire, their prayers tears, and their actions the sure strokes of a mighty hammer, smashing the false, the cheap, the tawdry, and building nail by nail, board by board, the temple of the Lord."[1]

Delivering sermons, leading prayer, and serving as a communal leader are just a few of the functions of the modern rabbi. In a sermon preached to his congregation, Rabbi Norman Hirsch of Seattle, Washington, identified fourteen functions that he is asked to perform. They include: "Visiting the sick; counseling the troubled; conducting services; preaching; supervising the religious school; teaching children, both confirmation class and bar mitzvah students; adult education; officiating at weddings, funerals, etc.; interfaith speaking in the community; temple administration; building a temple or worrying about new facilities; temple programming, including the bulletin; teaching converts."[2] Along with fundraising, running staff meetings, work with youth groups, writing recommendations, and other life cycle events, the above functions serve as a reminder that rabbis today are performing many varied tasks and are expected to be skilled in numerous subjects.

The diversity of modern rabbinical functions leads to the following question: Have rabbis always been expected to perform such an extensive list of functions? The purpose of this rabbinical thesis will be to identify three specific time periods in which the functions of the rabbi are clearly defined, and evaluate if indeed today's rabbi is expected to perform the same, or a similar range of duties, as his/her rabbinic ancestors.

A brief history of the rabbinate is necessary to adequately analyze the time and place in which they worked.

The Title Rabbi

If one were to look in Biblical sources for figures bearing the title "rabbi" the search would prove futile. Biblically, the word *rav* means "great" or "numerous." The word *rav*, connoting master, is not found anywhere in the Bible and appears only later in mishnaic Hebrew when it designates a sage. Though Biblically the title may be absent, the ordination of a leader makes an appearance in Numbers 27:23 when Moses placed his hands on Joshua and commissioned him as his successor to lead the people. Ordination is also used in connection to sacrificial animals. The Hebrew root (S*amech, Mem, Chaf*) appears in Leviticus 1:4 when the Israelites were commanded to lay their hands upon the head of animals brought from the herd. This act of *smicha* made the burnt offering acceptable on one's

behalf, in expiation for him. Also in Exodus 29:10, Aaron was commanded to offer parts of his ram of ordination as an elevation offering before God.

The frequent description of laying of hands in the Bible elicited the following question a few centuries later in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 13b), R. Aha asked R. Ashi: Is ordination effected by the literal laying on of hands? The answer is no, it is given by the conferring of a degree, or public recognition that one has completed a level of study, whereby they are designated by the title of rabbi and granted the authority to judge monetary cases.

Both the custom of the laying of hands in the Bible, as well as the title rabbi used in Talmud, have come to be part of a ritual conferring authority on a disciple.

Contemporary scholarship has attempted to prove that the title rabbi made its appearance earlier than the mishnaic period. Hershel Shanks, in an article in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, contends that the title rabbi was used in the gospels and was most likely also used during Jesus' ministry. He maintains that the word *rav* was present in most of the 60-70 Semitic dialects that were spoken in the near east beginning around 3000 BCE. For example, in fourteenth century (BCE) Ugaritic, *rav* was used as part of a religious title to identify someone as a chief of priests, or a high priest. In the New Testament a *rav* is described as an itinerant preacher. With such examples Shanks demonstrates that earlier uses of the title *rav*, "make it

easier to understand that the use of *Rabbi* as a title for an itinerant preacher could easily have pre-dated the use of *Rabbi* as a title of an ordained scholar." [3]

Whether or not Shanks is correct that the use of rabbi in the gospels is not anachronistic, a more widely held belief is that "rabbi" first came in vogue during the tannaitic period in the generation after Hillel. The Hebrew term rabbi is used as a title for those distinguished in learning, authoritative in teaching Jewish Law, or, those serving as the spiritual heads of a community.[4] Literally translated it means "my master" or "my teacher." At the same time that the title "rabbi" was given to one qualified as master, an additional title of "*rabban*" was given as a mark of distinction to one who served as 'head of the academy.'[5]

In talmudic times ordination was conferred by three sages, only one of whom needed to have ordination himself. Ordination was valid only if both the ordainers and the ordained were in the Land of Israel.[6] After a time, the ritual of ordination recovered from the shock of exile and became valid in Diaspora as well. However, Babylonian sages, or the *amoraim* were then designated by the title "*rav*" and not "rabbi."[7] The title "*rabbenu*", is another distinction meaning our master or our teacher, and it was first given to Judah HaNasi as outstanding scholar of his day.

The Functions of Talmudic Rabbis

The primary function of the rabbi in talmudic times was interpreter and expounder of Biblical and Oral Law. There were three positions open to the talmudic rabbi. Either as president of the community, bearing the title "*nasi*," as head of a judicial court, bearing the name "*av beit din;*" or, one whose job does not go beyond being a master of civil and religious laws. Leaders of the community could only elect the "*nasi*," the members of the court elected the "av beit din," and the ordinary master was a more of a matter of duty imposed upon a rabbi.[8]

Talmudic rabbis also had the distinction of serving in the Sanhedrin, or the rabbinic governing court. According to Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:4 there were three ranks of scholars that served in the Sanhedrin. They sat in a semicircle according to rank. When there was a vacancy, due to death, or to complete the total number of 69 judges, (23 in each row) one of the members of the first rank would be ordained and moved to fill the vacancy of the highest position. Scholars from the third and second ranks would be moved up and a scholar from the assembly would be chosen to take a seat in the third rank. When a judge from the head of a row was moved up, everyone moved up one seat, leaving the open seat as the one lowest in rank. Only ordained scholars were allowed to pronounce the law and it was therefore both an achievement and honor to be ordained and moved among the ranks.

In addition to deciding law the Sanhedrin rabbis also judged civil suits; cases involving corporal punishment and fines; and had the authority to adjust the Jewish Calendar[9] when needed. They also had the right to annul vows and decide on the secular use of firstborn animals with a blemish,[10] and pass the ban of excommunication.[11]

The authority given to the ordained scholars was passed on in a formula of ordination, or *semikhah*. *Semikhah* literally means, "the laying on of hands." As a sage lays his hands on the disciple an accompanying formula is uttered. The formula was initiated in the Talmud when Rabbah b. Hana was about to go to Babylon. One sage asked, "My brother's son is going to Babylon, may he decide on matters of ritual law?" The rabbi answered, "He may." The sage asked, "May he decide on monetary cases?" "He may." "May he declare firstborn animals permissible for slaughter?" "He may."[12] The complete rite is: *Yoreh yoreh. Yaddin, yaddin. Yattir, yattir*. Translated, *May he decide? He may decide. May he judge? He may judge. May he permit? He may permit*. This formula was retained until the ordination of Rav, the founder of the academy of Sura in Babylonia. When he was to go to Babylonia, he was ordained only to exercise the first two of the three functions, *yoreh* and *yadin*. The reason for the removal of the third, *yatir*, was so that he did not spend his time studying animals, thereby gaining an excessive knowledge of blemishes that allowed him to declare the blemish permanent. After the destruction of

the Temple, firstborn animals could be slaughtered only if they had permanent defects. If Rav was an expert in judging blemishes he might declare something permissible to slaughter which might not be known to others. This would then lead the people to permit similar cases to Rav, even if they were not in fact similar, thereby permitting unblemished animals to be slaughtered. By taking away the power to judge permanent blemishes (*yatir*), it ensured that the people would not make incorrect judgments because of their lack of knowledge.[13] The limiting of his ability also indicates the elevated status of Babylonian rabbis versus Palestinian. The authority of Palestinian rabbis was valid "there" not "here", and Babylonian status was valid both "here" and "there."[14] By granting Rav most, but not all authority of Babylonian rabbi, it reinforces that the training of Babylonian rabbis was held in higher esteem.

It is interesting to note that the ordination formula has been preserved today. Both the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion use the traditional formula of *Yoreh, yoreh. Yaddin, yaddin.*[15]

The ordination of scholars was essential to the unity of the Jewish religious system. So much so that when the Roman Emperor Hadrian (reign 117-138) thwarted the Bar Kochba Revolt and renamed Jerusalem to *Aelia Capitolina* he attempted to forbid the granting of *semikhah* in an attempt to weaken what was left of the Sanhedrin. Anyone who performed

ordination was put to death, anyone who received ordination was put to death, and any city in which ordination took place was demolished.[16] S*emikhah* did not disappear completely as a few rabbis took it upon themselves to revolt against the system and ordain new rabbis in secret. In the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 14a, a story is recorded of R. Judah b. Baba, who was corpulent and bloodied the path upon which he traveled. He then went and sat between two large cities of Usha and Shefaram (so that the cities would not be destroyed) and ordained five sages: R. Meir, R. Judah, R. Simeon, R. Jose, and R. Eliezer b. Shamua. When his enemies discovered him, they drove three hundred iron spear-heads into his body. Though he succeeded in ordaining his disciples, secret ordination did not last long. In Palestine by the year 425CE, when the documents authorizing the appointment of Gamliel VI, the last patriarch, were revoked, *semikhah* discontinued.[17]

The Role and Title of Rabbi in Later Centuries

Though the official *semikhah* disappeared, throughout time, Jews found a way to authorize religious leaders in their communities. In Babylonia the leaders set up a surrogate system which established a license to judge (*reshut*) instead of *semikhah*. In post-*semikhah* Palestine the role of the ordained scholar was taken over by the "Yeshivah of the Holy Land" which authorized scholars to serve as the religious heads of

their communities as long as they had the title "*haver*."[18] The Geonim (589 - 1038) were also authorized to appoint scribes, scholars, leaders in public worship, judges, and teachers. These sages were supposed to take the place of the fallen Sanhedrin with one man, the *av beit din*, head of the academy. These few exceptions not withstanding, little is known of the rabbinate from the fall of the Roman Empire until the tenth century.

Beginning in the ninth century there was a renewal of Jewish immigration to Western Europe. The settlers in the west were merchants who put down roots in places where an opportunity for work existed. The first communities established in the tenth century were those of Mainz, Worms and Speier, or the *Shum*, communities.[19] Because of differences from their Christian neighbors in areas such as eating, praying and drinking, it became important to establish Jewish communal organizations. The Jews that settled in *Shum* brought good business to the region and the government greatly desired to keep them in the area. The government officials were willing to make concessions to keep them in the community and gave them generous authority to judge according to Jewish law. Initially, the *Shum* communities were without a rabbinic presence and relied instead on "seven good men" to lead the community. In time it became apparent that the communities needed a leader. One person from each city was appointed and given the title "*ha-rav*," in remembrance of titles of the talmudic period.[20] Rashi (1040 -1105), Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, one

of the most renowned Torah and Talmudic commentators came from the *Shùm* communities.

The Ashkenazi rabbis of this period served primarily in a judicial capacity. The leaders of the communities sought to limit their power, and the rabbis did not view expansion of power as a problem. They were therefore overly concerned with expanding the limits of their authority and fought for ways to protect their control. One of the ways that the rabbis gained prestige and power was to issue *herem*, a ban of excommunication, upon a member of the community. *Herem* is an expulsion from the community without any services or communication. As a tool to assert control, as well as to offer judgement on any number of legal offenses, great or small, *herem* became the popular weapon of choice among the rabbis. Consequently, there were efforts to limit the rabbi's ability to excommunicate. Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, the major German rabbinic authority, even urged that the ban be used cautiously.[21] The authority that the rabbi possessed was strictly reserved for his community.

Territorial boundaries between communities necessitated the title of "*mara de-atra*," one rabbi for each locality. In this model, the rabbi had to be obeyed as long as he was the rabbi for the community, however, his authority was contained only within the limits of his place.[22]

As the communities in Ashkenazic cities in Western Europe grew, Jews in Sephardic locales struggled to maintain their identity. Limited

information is available about religious leadership in eastern lands. Some sources emerged during the twelfth century, but the majority wasn't available until the sixteenth century, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Many of these sources come from a collection of *responsa* literature. The first discovered *responsa* dates to the eighth century, however, the majority was not published until later. In the twelfth century, when *responsa* began to emerge from communities other than those in Babylonia, the numbers increased, and, in the following centuries, local *responsa* came to be the most common form of rabbinic literature.[23] A community without a rabbi would address a question of civil or legal concern to a rabbi in a larger community. The rabbi would then compile the answer and rule on the dispute. Thousands of *responsa* published from this time period remain as insights into Jewish life in Spain.

For example, it is known that in Spain there was a division between those who had the title "*dayyan*," judge, and those who were considered to be a "*hakham*," or scholar. A *dayyan* had a higher rank than a rabbi and he alone had the power to punish offenders and judge. Both Maimonides and his father Maimon were given the title *dayyan*. The *dayyan* had the power to appoint a *hakham* and give ordinary citizens the right to judge. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Joseph Sasportas was invested with judicial powers in Tlemcen and Isaac b. Sheshet Perfet was appointed in Algiers.[24]

When the Spanish and Portuguese refugees settled in the Ottoman Empire they, like the Jews in the *Shum* communities, organized Jewish communities. They appointed a spiritual leader who was called *hakham*, wise one, or "*marbiz-Torah*," teacher of Torah. The absence of ordination necessitated that they call their leaders by a title other than "rabbi." In Israel, Egypt, and Syria, *hakham* was used instead of *marbiz Torah*. In North Africa the religious leader was called "*moreh zedek*." A rabbi in charge of most of the congregations in the city was "*ha-rav ha kolel*," the rabbi of everything.[25]

The *marbiz Torah*, or *hakham* (depending on location) was the highest religious authority. He was an expert in *halakhah*, or Jewish law, and he preached publicly on Shabbat and festivals. He had the control of finances for foundations and organized the redemption of hostages. He sometimes served as scribe or notary and judged in matters of ritual, marriage, divorce, *halizah*, and, financial disputes.[26]

Rabbinic Salaries: The Professionalization of the Rabbinate

Regardless of title or geographical location, the position of rabbi was an unpaid position. During the talmudic period it is recorded that the sages had private occupations in addition to their career as rabbi. Hillel was a wood chopper, Shammai was a builder (M. Shabbat 31a), R. Joshua was a blacksmith (M.Berachot 28a), R. Hanina and R. Oshaya were shoemakers

(M. Pesachim 113b), R. Huna was a water carrier (M. Ketubot 105a) and R. Hisda and R. Pappa were brewers of mead (M. Pesachim 113a). The majority worked in agriculture, but some were merchants. They worked at their trades one third of the day and studied during the remainder. Some worked in the summer and studied in the winter.[27]

The precedent of working for free initiated by the rabbis was a long-standing practice. It was thought that a rabbi must work for free because his primary occupation was bringing Torah to the community, and teaching Torah must be done for free.[28] For centuries rabbis were able to exist without a salary. They were freed from taxes and oftentimes completely supported by their communities so that they could study and teach. There were instances in which it was necessary to compensate a rabbi for his services. For example, when he lost time for having judged a case or drawn up a legal contract. Life cycle events were also occasions for which a rabbi received a stipend; matters of marriage, divorce and *halizah*, all held the possibility of compensation.[29]

It wasn't until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that rabbinic salaries became an accepted norm. The first recorded example of a rabbi who received a salary was Simeon b. Zemah Duran. In 1391 he fled from anti-Jewish riots in Spain and arrived penniless in Algiers. The community wanted him as their rabbi but he was unable to serve because he needed to earn a livelihood. In a classic example of *halakhic* compromise it was

worked out that he would be paid. However, he was not paid for doing his rabbinic duties, rather, he received *sekhar battalah*, or the compensation for the loss of livelihood due to preoccupation with the rabbinic office.[30] About this case Moses Isserles, in *Even Ha-ezer* 154.2 says, "Therefore it has become the custom in all places that the rabbi of the city has income and support from the community in order that he need not engage in other work."[31] This remains the legal basis in Jewish law for a rabbi receiving a salary.

Rabbi Duran was not the only rabbi to have received a salary. By the middle of the fourteenth century after the terrible plague of the Black Death wiped out much of the Jewish community, scholars who had survived found it necessary to use teaching Torah as a way support themselves. By the fifteenth century it was customary throughout the world to pay the rabbi a stipulated salary; the rabbinate went professional!

Once the rabbinate became professional and communities began paying their rabbis to teach them Torah they also began to stipulate the tasks of the rabbi. The normal method of stipulation was the *Ketav Rabanut*, or rabbinic contract. The oldest surviving contract dates from 1575 and belonged to Rabbi Man Todros of the German community of Friedberg.[32] From this and other such contracts it is possible to discern that the functions of the rabbis of the late middle ages became more varied in

their nature.[33] Roles were broadened and rabbis were responsible for more than judging and arbitration as had been the case in the past.

The momentum that the rabbinate gained once it became professional propelled through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and most of the eighteenth centuries. Then, through the hand of Moses Mendelssohn, another great change occurred which caused the position and requirements of rabbis to undergo a dramatic shift. Mendelssohn was disturbed that as long as the Jews lived in ghettoes, they were isolated from the larger community. He felt that while Jews in ghettos were cohesive as a community, they were intellectually sealed off from the rest of the world. He sought to end the isolation by aligning the ghetto with the modern world; to make Judaism compatible with an enlightened world. His mode for Jewish survival was to identify the rational truths of Judaism and make them universal, so that all Jews could find a part of Judaism that applied to them.[34] He translated the Bible into German and taught his people to speak the language of Germany and to feel that they were connected intimately to the country in which they lived.

Jews had lived in ghettos for centuries. The first ghettos were established in 1090 in Venice and Salerno. In later centuries they were established in Italy, Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Poland and Turkey.[35] Until the French Revolution, when the Jews realized that more existed outside of their small communities, life outside the ghetto held

no temptations for the Jews. After Napoleon Bonaparte demolished the ghettos and the French Revolution's motto of "liberty, equality and fraternity"[36] spread throughout the region, life outside the ghetto soon became desirable.

At the same time, rabbis were faced with another battle. Bonaparte wanted to remove religion from politics and abolished specific Jewish jurisdiction. Civil courts tried matters that previously had been decided in accordance to *halakhah*. Jewish law could no longer solely decide Jewish affairs and the rabbis lost much of their authority. With the influences of Mendelssohn and Bonaparte it became imperative for the Jewish community to gain a secular education as well as for rabbis to re-assert their authority over those in their community.

To respond to this need a group of rabbis arose who attempted to reconcile Judaism with the modern world. Abraham Geiger was foremost among the rabbis who devoted themselves to stirring the consciousness of the German Jews. The first rabbinical schools devoted to both Judaism and secular studies were in Metz (1824) and Padua (1829). In Padua, rabbinic candidates needed a doctorate in philosophy in order to be ordained. Abraham Geiger's wish for a Jewish faculty to be affiliated with a German university emerged into the seminary in Breslau (1854) which is linked with Conservative Judaism. The *Hochschule fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the Institute for the Academic Study of Judaism, was

established in 1872. Its primary emphasis was Jewish knowledge and its academic pursuit.[37]

These European rabbinical schools became the prototypes for the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshivah (1896), The Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (1875); and The Jewish Theological Seminary (1886).

The effects of Mendelssohn, Bonaparte and all of the rabbinical schools contributed to a very different rabbinate than had been seen before. Suddenly though the modern rabbi was somewhat trained in *halakha*, he was no longer expected to be the judge in matters of ritual dispute. Instead, a new model for rabbis emerged out of earlier models.

Today's Rabbis Versus Rabbis of the Past

To state the idea that a new model of a rabbi exists today is to make a radical statement. It asserts that there is one model and one set of norms for each rabbi ordained today, and that regardless of the individual, or congregation they serve, rabbis are generally performing the same functions on a daily basis. Fortunately, of the thousands of ordained rabbis today not everyone fulfills the same functions. There are many who go into congregational work and do preaching, teaching and pastoral care. There are others for whom pastoral care takes precedence over teaching, and still others for whom the act of leading services is the focal point of their

rabbinate. Many choose not to preach on a regular basis and instead try and spread their message through teaching, stories, and personal interactions. Moreover, there are rabbis that choose not to go into the congregational rabbinate and instead use their skills in other arenas. Each offers a certain gift to different congregants. Yet, despite all of these varied roles, today's rabbi is quite distinct from models of the past. The Sanhedrin no longer exists and Jewish law does not decide most legal disputes. Even the models established by the early German rabbis remain dissimilar from today.

How are rabbis today different from earlier rabbis? Do we focus on different functions than past rabbis or are we still concerned with the same essential principles? Are we acting more in one arena and less in another or do we still have the same balance as in the past? How have women shaped the rabbinate? Is there a model of a modern rabbi, which we can offer to our congregants and to our ourselves as the archetype for one who is ordained today?

To formulate answers to these and other questions it is essential to confine the study to a few specific periods. Of the periods examined in the historical overview, two can be identified as crucial to the development of the modern rabbinate and will form the following chapters of this thesis. A third and fourth will emerge as another dimension relevant to a changing rabbinate.

Chapter Two will span the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries after the rabbinate became professionalized. Once the rabbi started pursuing a rabbinical career as his primary occupation and received a salary for doing so, the figure of the rabbi took a decided turn. The rabbi of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries was responsible for some life cycle events and services, yet, his primary focus was as judge, arbiter and writer of *responsa*. During this time the *shaliach tzibur*, or prayer leader, was the one who really led the congregation in worship. This chapter will examine literature from this period, including several *responsa*, that address the role and authority of the rabbi. These will be compared with others that define the role of the *shaliach tzibur* in an attempt to focus on both aspects of today's rabbi.

The third chapter will cover the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the beginnings of Reform Judaism. The changes that have occurred in the rabbinate can largely be credited to the Reform Movement. Studying the early American rabbis in depth is a subject in-and-of itself. Consequently, this chapter will only highlight the year 1883. In that year the first four rabbis were ordained at the Hebrew Union College. By studying them it is possible to examine the role that they played as Early American Reform Rabbis.

A third time period not included in the historical overview will be the subject of Chapters Four and Five; a period which has made a major

impact on modern rabbis. In the 1970's and 1980's when women were ordained in the Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative Movements, a dramatic shift took place. For the first time the rabbinate was no longer limited to men. Women heartily took the challenge of becoming rabbis and brought their own skills and approaches to the rabbinate. This shift was not without controversy. In the years prior to the decision to ordain women rabbis many scholars from the Reform and Conservative Movements debated the validity of women's ordination. In debating the issues these scholars clarify the question, if a woman should or should not be a rabbi, who should the rabbi be? Answering that question will help define the modern rabbi and the functions he performs in regard to how women effect these functions. Chapter Five will deal with the changes that women rabbis have brought to the rabbinate. These two chapters will be limited to addressing the question of functions and changes, and will not cover the subject of women rabbis as a whole.

Finally, Chapter Six will culminate in modern definitions of rabbis. It will also serve as an analysis of the earlier questions and a guide for the future, as it anticipates the future direction of the rabbinate.

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[5] Salo Wittmeyer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jew,* 2nd ed. revised and enlarged, vol. II, Ancient Times (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1952),120.

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[7] Editorial Staff, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 13, 1445.

[8] Isaac Broyde, p. 294.

[9] Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 14a.

[10] Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 5b.

[11] Steven Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 3.

[12] Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 5a.

[13] Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 5a-5b.

[14] Babylonian Talmud, Sandhedrin 5a.

[15] Aaron Rothkoff, 6.

[16] Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 14a.

[17] Aaron Rothkoff, 2.

[18] Steven Schwarzfuchs, 4.

[19] Ibid., 6.

[20] Ibid., 10.

[21] Ibid., 14.

[22] Editorial Staff, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 13,1448.

[23] Peter J. Haas, *Responsa: Literary History Of A Rabbinic Genre* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996), 12.

[24] L.Bo, *Encyclopedia Judaica,* vol. 13, 1449.

[25] Ibid., 1450.

[26] Ibid., 1450.

[27] Judah David Eisenstein, "Rabbi: In Ancient Times" In, *The Jewish Encylopedia*, volume 10, 294-295.

[28] Pirke Avot Chapter 1:13.

[29] Hirschel Revel, "Rabbi" in *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia,* volume 9, 49.

[30] Editorial Staff, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1447.

[31] Quote in, Walter Jacob, ed. *America Reform Responsa* (New York: CCAR Press, 1983), 526.

[32] Steven Schwarzfuchs, 19.

[33] This Ketav Rabbanut will be studied more extensively in Chapter 2.

[34] Alfred Gottschalk, *To Learn and To Teach*, 19.

[35] S. Kahn, "Ghetto" in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Volume 5, 654.

[36] Ibid., 20.

[37] Ibid., 22, and, Max Landsberg, "Rabbi: Rabbinical Schools" In, *The Jewish Encylopedia*, volume 10, 295-296.

Chapter Two
Fifteenth Through Eighteenth Century Rabbis

In 1396, Simon Ben Zemach Duran was one of many Spanish refugees expelled from his home and forced to seek out new shelter elsewhere. In Spain, Duran had been a physician, but when he arrived in Algiers he found his scientific type of medicine to be expendable. Seeking a new occupation, he became the rabbi of the community in Algiers. As a result of his exile and inability to practice medicine, he was unable to earn a livelihood and was forced to accept a salary from the community for his services as rabbi.[1] Duran is recognized as being the first professional rabbi[2], and marks a change in the nature of the rabbinate in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries. Once rabbis received salaries and were held accountable for their daily duties by their communities, the rabbinic structure of the past ceased to function and the rabbinate emerged into something new.

Duran was forced to seek compensation for his rabbinic duties in part because of the political nature of his expulsion. The government exiled him from his homeland and he was forced to seek asylum in a new country with other refugees also desperate for work. The nature of his expulsion and resettlement did not afford him fair economical standing. The Spanish community was not the only Jewish community to face difficult political situations during these centuries. In Germany, Poland, France,

Egypt, (Jews living throughout the Ottoman Empire) and Italy, (the above were the largest Jewish centers at the time) Jews faced a political climate that, depending on the political ruler, could hold the possibility of change at any moment. Since the needs of each community were different depending on the government, within each locale, the rabbinate shaped itself to offer the most support to the Jews of their community. What worked for rabbis in Poland was not necessarily the most effective rabbinate in Egypt.

While it is possible to draw generalizations about the rabbis of the Middle Ages, in order to get a clearer understanding of the nature of rabbinic functions it is necessary to examine sources from different locales rather than focusing on one specific community. However, because each rabbi adapted to the particular nature of his community, a complete survey of the rabbinate of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries could lead far beyond the limits of this thesis. Consequently, this chapter will give a general overview of the functions rabbis performed during those centuries, evident in different *responsa* and texts from the main Jewish centers.

General Overview of Major Jewish Communities

The major feeling pervading the Jewish communities was tension between Jews and their Christian rulers. Though there was also substantial oppression by Moslem leaders, for the most part, they did not

participate in the massacres and social injustices of Christendom. For Ashkenazic Jewry, the peak of this tension was 1348-1349 during the Black Death. A plague descended upon Europe killing unprecedented numbers. With the advantage of hindsight, we now know that the plague was spread by rats from coming from Asia. However, then it was blamed on the Jews. It was believed that the Jews had poisoned their wells to destroy the whole of Christendom, a blasphemous lie used by certain political and social groups for their own ends. The misconception was so widespread that in some communities Jews were expelled even before the plague arrived. Jews were tortured and killed from Christian Spain to Poland, with the brunt of the massacres falling on the German Jews.[3] The Black Death greatly affected Jewish communities. In many places Jews were forced to flee for safety and begin life anew elsewhere. Also, the anti-Semitism that the Jews faced during the plague served as a visible reminder that despite moments of relative economic well-being and security, Jews could not be guaranteed a peaceful future.

For Ashkenaz Jewry after the Black Death, an increasing feeling arose that Torah was the only constant thing remaining for the Jews. After oppression in various countries, and the overwhelming feeling that they could no longer rely on the government to act in their best interests, the one redeeming authoritative guide to life was Torah. Torah was comfortable, familiar, and within their reach. It gave them a measure of

control when much of their world was beyond their control. The authority of scholars and sages who were able to teach and enforce *halakhic* dictums provided continuity and stability for the Jewish social structure. Communal rabbis were elevated in status and recognized as the "*mara d'atra*", or "master of the place." Leadership tended to be centralized and each communal rabbi was in charge of his domain, though, there were some rabbis whose education superceded that of the communal rabbis and who gained prestige as an authority in other communities. These rabbis influenced Jews in other lands as well.[4] By using *responsa*, question and answer documents, smaller cities became satellites for larger ones and influential rabbis began to hold authority in more than one domain. Lesser cities would write questions to famous rabbis seeking guidance on a problematic issue. A renewal of ordination in Germany and France spread during this period. Ordination gave objective status. Members of the community believed that those who had received ordination were at the top of the scale of Jewish knowledge and able to offer *halakhic* decisions for fellow Jews. Ordination both presented an objective standard of evaluation and supported the rabbi's right to make decisions.

Ordination was also practiced in Italy, though it was not as prevalent as in Germany or France. Those who were ordained (in large Italian communities by at least three rabbis) held the authority to rule on civil law and ritually forbidden matters; had jurisdiction over marriage, divorce and

other related matters; as well as the authority to excommunicate and impose bans.[5] In Italy, a different change occurred in the Jewish community. Beginning with the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Jews congregated in a new type of settlement. From Rome to cities in the center and north, the move brought Jews together in one communal center geographically and economically. Each settlement was united primarily around economic opportunities. The Italian Jews were highly successful as money-lenders and had great impact on the communities in which the settlements were founded.[6]

The settlements enabled the leadership of the Italian Jewish communities to centralize. Attempting to combat anti-Jewish pressures, synods were formed to address and solve problems that plagued the communities. The synods were influential in establishing Italian Jewish policy. In Southern Italy, these councils coexisted with the office of the Sicilian chief rabbinate.[7] The most important Italian synod to convene was 1554 in Ferrara, in response to the Hebrew book burning that took place the previous year. To alleviate future problems, the synod declared that no printer was able to print any unpublished book without the consent of three rabbis, each ordained by three rabbis, as well as the head of one of the communities nearest to the printer.[8] By issuing these declarations, the synod governed how many books were published each year, and had complete control on the content of published material and thus could both

protect the community from charges of heresy and book burning as well as control what was published. As a result of these steps, the synod could diminish the number of Jewish books that would be desecrated should another book burning occur, and as well prevent the Italian authorities from reacting against controversial material. The increased control of Jewish publication added a new dimension to rabbinic functions. As a result of the policy, Italian rabbis were enabled to exert more control over educational resources. They had the final say over published material in Italy, and could prevent or promote any texts they chose. Essentially, they decided what could be taught and what the Italian Jews could read.

In Christian Spain, the political climate for Jews declined after 1348. Waves of attacks began in Seville at the end of the fourteenth century and spread throughout the country. Some Jews suffered martyrdom, others were killed, and many were converted to Christianity. 1492 marks a crucial year for Medieval Jews. After more than a century of persecution, the Jews were expelled from Spain.

As a result, many began to settle in Bohemia, Moravia and Poland. There was also an increase in immigration to *Erez Yisrael*. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Polish and Lithuanian Jewry numbered approximately 50,000 people. By the seventeenth century there were over one-half million people making it the largest, wealthiest, and most influential Jewish community in the world.[9] The other large concentration

of Jews from Spain and Portugal was in the Ottoman Empire. A significant number found refuge in Egypt and Palestine under Turkish rule. There, Jews found themselves facing problems of adapting to a new land, and reconstructing Jewish life.[10]

In many of their new lands the Spanish Jews made a lasting impact on the rabbinate. From the early fifteenth century on, in each Spanish community, important matters were decided by a *marbiz Torah*, or teacher of Torah. The *marbiz Torah* had three primary tasks: preaching in public, ruling in matters of Jewish law, and teaching. In their new places of exile, the position of *hakham*, or community rabbi, was based upon the Spanish model.[11]

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, Don David ibn Yahya was appointed as community rabbi in Naples. At the time, he was not receiving a salary and wrote a letter appealing for a stipend. Financial matters aside, what is most telling from his letter, is a detailed listing of the functions that he was performing as *hakham*.

> I have troubled myself *much more than was required of me*... for I was only required to teach the Talmudic subjects, but I served as *repetitor*[12]... I was only required to teach in the morning, but I taught morning and mid day, and in the evening until six o'clock. I was only required to teach Talmud with commentaries, and I taught grammar and poetics and music and *Intentions of the Philosophers* and *The Book of the Examination of the World*. And I was not required to be their scribe... nor was I required to judge and to issue rulings, but only to rule 'yes' or 'no' [i.e. *to decide one way or another on halakhic issues*]. And I exhausted myself in inviting litigants to

> my home, to charm them and to force them to accept a compromise and to make peace among them, and it never occurred that a matter came to me which I judged according to the letter of the law, but only by way of compromise with the agreement of the two parties involved, taking great trouble with them. Nor was I required to compose the documents regarding transactions of individuals between one another—and in this matter also I humbled myself, to save them the cost of taking a Christian scribe, for there was no Jewish scribe in the whole community upon whom they could rely.[13]

From Rabbi David's careful description of his daily responsibilities, as well as those that he performed of his own volition, it would appear that as community rabbi his primary jobs were teaching (Talmud and commentaries), preaching, and ruling on *halakhic* matters. It is interesting to note that R. David makes no mention of reading Torah, leading prayers, or serving as spiritual head of a synagogue, functions associated with modern rabbis.

The *Shaliach Tzibur*

In the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, liturgical elements of Judaism did not fall under the jurisdiction of the rabbi, rather, were performed by a *shaliach tzibur*, messenger of the community, or a *hazzan*, cantor. This spiritual leader functioned as reader and cantor during worship. The role emerged from the Talmudic model (*Taanit* 16a), and was also commented upon in the sixteenth century in Rabbi Joseph Caro's *Shulkhan Aruch* (*Helek Orach Chaim*, chapter 53:4-9).

During the period of the *Geonim* the *hazzan* became the *shaliach tzibur* for the congregation. As the liturgy became increasingly more complex and overall knowledge of Hebrew declined, a desire emerged to enhance the service with musical content. The *hazzan* was then employed as permanent *shaliach tzibur*, instead of the former practice of congregational members leading the worship.[14] From the fourteenth century onward, it became a professional solo performance with the *hazzan* taking over the entire recitation of the service.[15]

Depending on the size of the community, the *hazzan* was expected to expound on the meaning of the Scriptural verses as preacher, as well as to be the author and composer of liturgical songs (*piyyuttim*).[16]

In his *responsum*, Rabbi Solomon Ben Adreth of Barcelona (1235-1310) teaches that the functions of the reader were varied and well-defined. "In addition to the reading of the service and scroll of the law, he had to make all the official announcements in the synagogue, to promulgate any new ordinance or regulation the community or its leaders thought advisable to pass from time to time, to make known the result of the election of officers, to read the proclamations relating to the sales of property, to pronounce the ban and its dissolution. It was also he who announced the *Ya'aleh V'Yavo* on *Rosh Chodesh* eve (a function now filled by the Beadle); and it was he who announced the espousals about to take place, and who read the *Kethubah* at the wedding ceremony."[17]

The status of the *hazzan* was not very high in the medieval hierarchy. In most cases he ranked among the lower officials of the synagogue, and was usually under the rabbi's control. In smaller communities, the *hazzan* frequently had to combine his position with that of rabbi, judge, teacher, or slaughterer to earn a living. And in other regions primary income came from weddings, funerals, and administering oaths.[18]

The dynamics between rabbis and *shlihei tzibur* were often strained. Perhaps due to the similar nature of their role, or because of the overlap between functions, (ie, the rabbi reading the service on the Holidays, or the s*haliach tzibur* being responsible for helping to teach children) slurs against service leaders were fairly common. Some rabbis demanded that they be examined for piety and voice, and argued that they must be married and bearded.[19]

In his collection of *responsa*, Rabbi Joel Sirkes attributes the presence of errors in religious services to the presence of many ignorant cantors who violate accepted forms and customs of prayer. He, too, included as the subject of one of his *responsum*, his frustration at hiring a cantor without a full grown beard.[20]

GERMANY

Rabbi Moses Mintz, a fifteenth century German rabbi studied the Talmudic requirement for bearded cantors, and explained other

requirements for the *shaliach tzibur*. Born between 1420 and 1430 (exact dates of birth and death are unknown) in Mainz, R. Mintz was a traveler who wandered the land observing different Jewish community customs. He wrote 120 *responsa* (119 were published) which cover economic and social realities of German Jews. In this particular *responsum*, he listed a comprehensive set of guidelines for the *shaliach tzibur*. He incorporated Talmudic citations, and much of his *responsum* is similar in form and word to the *Shulkhan Aruch*.

> **Opening Statement[21]:** I was requested by the congregation here in Ginvarak?[22] to order the matters of how the *hazzan* should conduct himself with the congregation and to expound with regards to: how one should elevate himself and have k*avannah* for prayer, and how the order of the reading[should be], and the repair [or proper treatment]of his clothes at the hour of prayer and related times. And [I endeavor to] write it and arrange it so that it would be organized in one's mouth (*hazzan's*) and heart when he recites God's prayer with the *kavannah* of his heart and with a perfect faith. Which is to say that [prayer] raises up the house of our God and rebuilds the Temple (*Beit HaMikdash*)[symbolically] (after the destruction). And this is expounded [demonstrated] by the *shatz*, the one who prays with *kavannah*. And here (at that point in the service) he says "to raise up" (*L'romem*) and [the words] *Gadlu L'Adonai Iti U'nrommah shmo yachdav* (*Declare the greatness of God with me, and let us exalt his name together.*) (Psalms 34:4) are recited. Which is to say that the *shatz* says before the congregation *Gadlu L'Adonai Iti (Declare the greatness of God with me)* and in response, *U'nrommah* (*Exalt*) is said. Which is to say that *Gadlu (Declare)* and *U'nrommah (Exalt)* are said together. Which is to say, that everyone says it with *kavannah* of heart and as one unit. And therefore it is worthy [enough] to raise up and rebuild the house. *Keyn Y'hi Ratzon.*
>
> And these are the judgements: It is proper for the *hazzan* to enter into the *Beit Knesset* first and leave last; and the laws

must be from the hands of the *hazzan* as it is written in *Taanit* 16a Our rabbis teach: "When they stand up to pray, although there may be present an elder and a scholar, **they place before the Ark only a man conversant with the prayers.** [Who is considered conversant with the prayers?] R. Judah says: **One having a large family** and has no means of support, and who draws his support from the produce of the field, and **whose house is empty, whose youth was unblemished, who is meek and is acceptable to the people; who is skilled in chanting, who has a pleasant voice, and possesses a thorough knowledge of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings and is familiar with all of the Brachot."** And it is also said in *Taanit*: "*My Heritage is become unto Me as a lion in the forest; she hath uttered her voice against Me; therefore have I hated her (Jeremiah 12:8).* What is the meaning of, *She hath uttered her voice against Me*? Mar Zutra b. Tobiah said in the name of Rab, some say R. Hama said in the name of R. Elezar: This refers to an unfit person who steps down before the Ark [to act] as reader."

And it is said in *Perek Mitzvah Halitzah* that R. Hiyya and R. Shimeon b. Rabbah were sitting in their dwelling place (on their porch) in casual conversation and it was said, the one who prays must cast his eyes downwards. As it is said, *I have hallowed this house, which thou have built, to put my name there for ever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.* (I Kings 9:3)[23] And it was said, The one who prays needs to cast his eyes to the heavens as it is said, *Let us lift up our heart with our hands to God in the heavens.* (Lamentations 41:3) For R. Ishmael said that R. Yosi said, with what are you busy? And he said to him, in prayer. And it was said that so did R. Abiya say that the one who prays needs to cast his eyes downwards and his heart upwards [towards heaven] in order that he would fulfill the words in both verses of Scripture.

And it was said in Tractate Shabbat 10a "R. Shesheth demurred: Is it any trouble to remove the girdle! Moreover, let him stand thus [ungirdled] and pray? Because it is said, *Therefore thus will I do to thee, O Israel: and because I will do this to thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* (Amos 4:12) **Raba son of R. Huna put on stockings and prayed, quoting, '*prepare to meet, etc.*' Raba removed his cloak**,

[Rashi: divested himself of his costly upper cloak as a mark of humility.] **clasped his hand and prayed saying, '*[I pray] like a slave before his master.*'"**

For there isn't here any anger which marks your soul and prayer. As it is said, *prepare to meet, etc.* And now (*Bet Tet Heh*)[24] [given the historical period in which we live] when anger is in the world you therefore need to stand as a slave before his master.

And there is no need to lengthen his creation, it is only my intention to organize a bit of how the *hazzan* needs to act, and also how he needs to act with his clothes. The *shatz* needs to have his clothes clean, without dirt, without fat, and [have]with [them] a particular overcoat and vest. And furthermore, his clothes must be long enough so that his legs are not seen. And if his clothes are not long enough he must wear leg warmers[25] to his knees. And the *hazzan* needs to be careful not to pray without pants or with pants that are not clean [and not] with urine. Therefore it is appropriate for him to have good, special pants of high quality that he can wear exclusively at services. And after the service he must remove the good, special pants. So must they be cleaned and ready whenever and for all special occasions. Which is to say that all year he must return to wearing them at any moments that people come to him [life cycle events].

He must expound in Hebrew in order that Hebrew will dwell on his lips [that he will be fluent]. He must be at peace when he stands to pray and turn his heart [away] from all evil and curses. And he must cast his eyes downwards so that he will not look at any man and engage in any matters [without] reverence. And he should only rest his hands under his overcoat with his right hand on top of his left hand like a slave who stands before his master with fear and reverence. And he shall not remove his hands one from the other [especially when chanting]. And he needs to do this to change the [*Hofin*][26] and to arrange his ascendance [spiritual and social status] and everything that relates to this. And he shall not engage in matters other than those befitting a *hazzan*. For there are a few *hazzanim* who have their hands engaged in nonsense, such as the placing of the lights at the hour of

prayer or with matters of custom and these and other matters he should not do.

Moses Mintz gives a detailed account of the life of the *shaliach tzibur*. His *responsum* offers insight into both the requirements, as well as the status. The beginning of his *responsum* paints a picture of the effectiveness of worship and its role in the congregation. By having the *shatz* recite lines from liturgy with a congregational response, Mintz stresses that prayer is worthy to rebuild the Temple [and bring the Messiah]. As evident from other sources from this time period, the overall level of knowledge in most of these communities was not high. It was the s*hatz*'s responsibility to recite the prayers, and especially the complex *piyyutim*[27] on behalf of the congregation. *Piyyutim* characterized Ashkenazic liturgy, disrupted the flow of prayer and were almost always incomprehensible or highly complex. The complexity of the service and the lack of knowledge are further indicated by the responsive nature of prayer.

After demonstrating why prayer is important, and indicating the importance of the *shatz* reciting before the congregation, Mintz lists other requirements such as arriving first and leaving last, and having mastery of Jewish law. It is crucial for the s*hatz* to be familiar with Jewish law so that he may perform all worship as dictated by Jewish law. Additionally, he cites the essential qualities stressed in Talmud. One may only officiate if he knows the prayers, has a large family, has an unblemished reputation,

is meek, and is acceptable to the people. This indicates the jurisdiction that congregations and rabbis had over *shlihei tzibur*. It alludes to the comment stressed earlier, that the *shatz* had fairly low status in the overall hierarchy in a congregation.

He must also be skilled in chanting, have a pleasant voice, and have knowledge of Jewish texts. The requirements for serving as s*hatz* were quite severe. The reason for the extensive stipulations were aimed at regulating a group of people prone to excess and lack of self-control. Mintz demonstrates the dichotomy between the former practice of having a member of the laity lead the worship, and between having a skilled leader. This separation is also alluded to in the discussion over clothing. While seemingly irrelevant to the role of the *shatz*, these stipulations reiterate how the *shatz* must elevate himself in knowledge, practice, and dress from the laity. Yet, despite all these requirements, he was still lower in status than the rabbi. Finally, Mintz wrote that the *shatz* must give his commentary on the Torah in Hebrew. It is apparent from this *responsum* that in the communities which Mintz visited, the *shaliach tzibur* was also the *darshan,* preacher, for the congregation. Not only was he expected to lead the congregation in worship, he was also expected to expound on Scripture and others subjects in Hebrew.

Studying Mose Mintz's *responsum*, as well as other resources on the *shaliach tzibur* is crucial to understanding the notion of rabbi. The average

lay person today, upon hearing the title rabbi in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, will assume that the role of the rabbi incorporates functions for which modern rabbis are associated, namely, those of leading worship and preaching. However, as we learn from the *shaliach tzibur* of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries, as well as throughout most of Jewish history, these functions were more a part of the job of the *hazzan* than the rabbi.

The Functions of Fifteenth through Eighteenth Century Rabbis

SPAIN - NORTH AFRICA

If the *shaliach tzibur* was responsible for leading worship and delivering sermons, for what was the rabbi responsible?

It is possible to glean ideas from Simon Duran's rabbinate. Born in Majorca in 1361, he studied under R. Ephraim Vidal, and showed great promise as a boy. In 1407 he succeeded *Barfat*, Rabbi Isaac b. Sheshet as chief rabbi in Algiers. He wrote over 800 *responsa* to different Jewish communities in North Africa and was well respected for his knowledge, compassion, and leniency towards women.[28] As Chief Rabbi, Duran received a fixed yearly salary for doing the following duties: "occasional preaching, especially on the Day of Atonement, and also the reading of the service on the High Festivals." Duran served as peace maker for communities in conflict, primarily the Barbary and Spanish communities,

two distinct classes of Jewry. He also was a religious reformer who did away with the custom of having minors read from the Torah, Prophets, and lead services.[29]

The bulk of Duran's rabbinate was devoted to his judicial responsibilities. He strengthened his rabbinate to the point that he had utmost authority on a myriad of issues. He was able to adjudicate monetary issues without the consent of those trained to oversee such financial matters. He also had the power to flog, ban, fine, even incarcerate a criminal, and was not subject to sanction by the governmental ruler.[30]

The example that Duran's *responsa* illustrate for the direction of his rabbinate were similar to other contemporary rabbis. Rather than being primarily involved in liturgy, rabbis of the fifteenth through eighteenth century served as judges and arbiters more than *shlichei tzibur*. It was not uncommon for a rabbi to concern himself with deciding monetary issues, settling communal disputes, even ruling on matters of marriage and divorce.

It is important to note that Duran, as chief rabbi, illustrates one model of a rabbi, his role was clearly exceptional within North Africa. His authority transcended that of most of the other leaders of the democratic Spanish communities, though he acted in partnership with them. Within each community, the rabbi decided many religious or civil issues. In matters for

which the rabbi was unable to offer a ruling, he consulted Duran as chief rabbi. Each community also had their own right to judge. This was done either by a *beit din* (three rabbis) or, a court. In communities without a *beit din*, judgment was usually offered by the sheik, the local North African governmental official. Financial disputes were presided over by *A* "League of Merchants". These members were very powerful, and Duran frequently sent litigants in complicated matters to appear before The League.[31] In Northern Africa, as in Spain, the synagogue was the center of each community. The synagogue was not only the place for prayer, it was the place where all communal, social, and religious affairs of the community were decided. It indicates the intimate connection between social and religious life in these communities.

EGYPT, OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Another example of fifteenth through eigthteenth century rabbinical functions is offered by Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra. R. Zimra was born in 1479 in Northern Spain (possibly Zamora). In 1492, when the Spanish Jews were expelled he fled Spain and went to Fez, then Safed and finally to Egypt, following the pattern of Spanish Jews described above. In 1514, he arrived in Egypt and served his first rabbinate in Alexandria. From there he continued on to the largest Egyptian Jewish community, in Cairo.[32]

To demonstrate the types of functions that rabbis in the Ottoman Empire performed, the following *responsum* proves noteworthy.

1. To escort the bridegroom, to escort the father of a new-born son, and to visit the family in which some happy event had occurred, or the house of a mourner.
2. After the Service the congregation would wait and allow the Rabbi to leave the Synagogue first.
3. To perform marriage ceremonies and issue divorces.
4. To act as judge between members of the congregation.
5. To Preach in public in the Synagogue and the Cemetery.
6. To be called up to read to the congregation the Song of Moses and the Ten Commandments.[33]

The above responsibilities of a rabbi bear striking similarity to many of those performed in a congregation today. Supporting families during birth, marriage, and death are important duties of a rabbi. The same holds true for performing marriage ceremonies, and in some cases, divorce. Preaching to the congregation is also an essential function of congregational rabbis, and it would appear equally important in 16th century Egypt. It is not known how often the rabbis preached in their congregations, however, preaching was a contentious matter in some cities. For example, a community in Salonica was forbidden to listen to the preaching of any rabbi but their own. When he went to other cities to preach, his son was allowed to take his place, serving as the only exception to the rule.[34]

Jurisdiction to preach aside, there are distinctions emphasized in this model. A rabbi in Egypt served as judge between congregants and had the

authority to excommunicate. Also, he was only called up to read from the Torah for the Ten Commandments and Shabbat *Shirah*, which signifies that his function as service leader was not a substantial part of his rabbinic position. It appears that calling him to the Torah on these few *Shabbatot* was a distinction of honor for the rabbi, because of the unique qualities of both portions, and was not part of his regular routine.

There were additional honors and responsibilities bestowed upon the rabbi, if he had earned the title "*haver ir*." These powers were, "to transfer charitable contributions from one fund to another, to use charitable funds for other communal purposes, to manage the property of the *heqdesh* and of the Synagogue, to dispose of their respective belongings, such as the sacred adornments for the Torah and other objects, and in general, to manage all which has been contributed to the Synagogue."[35] One earned the title *haver ir* by conducting himself in the following manner:

1. That all which is collected or contributed is given because of his leadership.
2. That he be the one who had been distributing the charities without any objections from others.
3. That he be recognized [by the community] as the "leader of the generation."
4. That he be well-established and permanently established in that city or community.
5. That the poor of that city or that *Qahal* should regularly be dependent upon him.
6. That he himself should not be a recipient of the charities of that community, so that no one shall suspect him that he has taken anything for himself.

7. That he be respected by donors, that he enjoy their confidence that he will dispose of their benefactions properly.[36]

The title seems to imply a great deal of authority with regard to money. Rather than having the title signify a higher status of education or something similar, this designation denotes the rabbi's additional position as financial officer and the fiduciary responsibilities given to him. He had to be trusted to collect the charitable contributions, distribute them in an appropriate manner throughout the community, and be respected throughout the community. It is interesting to note that the *haver ir* himself must not be receiving charity to keep him free from suspicion of illegal dealings. The position of rabbi as financial manager is that of a communal official. There are two separate elements to the financial responsibilities of the *haver ir*, fundraiser and allocator. The fundraising aspect is similar to rabbis today who are chiefly responsible for raising funds for their congregations and seeking out elderly congregants to will their estate to the congregation upon death, or, to rabbis who choose to focus their rabbinate on fundraising within the Jewish communities – like federation officials. More notable than the fundraising, was the job of allocation. Very few rabbis today have the power to distribute funds to different members of their community, or by themselves to determine communal allocation of funds. To a limited extent, the rabbi is free to decide what to do with his or her discretionary fund, but is generally limited in input on how to spend the

general budget. The congregational board is apt to make decisions on how much money to devote to education, building, staff, etc..., the rabbi generally has limited say in these matters. Budget allocations are lay person's responsibilities. That the *haver ir* held the money and distributed it to people he chose demonstrates a remarkable power and trust. Today it would be comparable to a person in charge of allocations for a philanthropy, rather than the congregational rabbi.

Like rabbis in North Africa, rabbis in Egypt did not function alone in the community. They were assisted in their communities by the *hazzan*, the Scribe, the one responsible for keeping community records, and the teacher who educated pupils.[37]

ITALY

In sixteenth Century Italy, it is evident that the rabbinic position involved a greater emphasis on teaching in the synagogue than on allocation of communal funds. The following contract denotes a rabbinic appointment from Verona, 7 Tammuz 5302:[38]

> [On Wednesday, the 7th of Tammuz, 5302.] As acts are greater than the one who performs them, and the reward of those who support the students of Torah is very great, we, the two lay leaders of the city at present, R. Abram of Conegliano and R. Seligman Hefetz, agreed to propose the following: First of all, we accept and take upon ourselves as leader, prince, judge and teacher the distinguished rabbi, R. Johanan son of Saadyah, to be the head of the Academy here in the community, i.e., the holy congregation of Verona, to teach

> Torah among us, as follows: the distinguished rabbi shall be required every day, early in the morning, following the conclusion of the prayer in the synagogue, to teach the Talmudic text to those who wish to hear it; he shall also be required to do so every day, for one hour or more, prior to the Afternoon Prayer, to come to the synagogue to teach the *Tosafot* in the special place set aside for study in the synagogue. And he shall likewise be required to teach in the synagogue, as well as between terms (around Passover and the High Holy Days), for an hour or more before Afternoon Prayer, one of the books of the codifiers, as the majority of his students shall decide. And he will not be allowed to teach (his students) more than seven hours a day at most, and the rest of the time left to him, he shall peruse and involve himself with matters which are to the benefit of the holy community, to chastise, to set aright, and to punish those who behave wrongly, to direct them in the way of ethics, and to strengthen those who study [Torah] and to require them to learn, by at means at his disposal. And he shall be required, upon the request of the holy congregation of Verona or of the majority of the leaders at the time, to enact or to ban or to agree to whatever matter or edict [they may ask,], provided that it is correct and proper and for the general good. And in payment for his trouble and his loss of time, he shall receive every six months seven and a half ducats, each ducat worth 4 lire 13.

The writers of this rabbinic contract were very specific about the subjects that Rabbi Johanan was to teach. In fewer than seven hours a day he had to teach Torah, Talmud, *Tosafot* and Codes to his students. In addition to highlighting the important functions of the rabbi, it is interesting to note that of all the Jewish texts written, these bore the most weight in the community.

The bulk of the rabbi's time with the community was clearly devoted to study and teaching. In addition to teaching, this contract demonstrates that in this Verona community and its synagogue, the rabbi was recognized

as being a figure of authority. After his extensive teaching during the day he was to guide his congregants in matters of ethical behavior, and was given legislative authority to enact bans or propose edicts that would benefit the community. The contract gives the impression that the rabbi was really the person to whom the Jews of the community listened in judicial matters.

The Italian rabbi of the sixteenth century needed to incorporate the skills of both judging and teaching to his rabbinate, and was expected to guide the members of his community toward the right path, by stressing proper behavior. By natural association, it seems that congregants would see the rabbis for complicated matters, as a form of counseling. By guiding them on the right path, the Italian rabbi was involved in matters of personal life for the members of his congregation, demonstrating a connection that is often associated with rabbis today.

FRANCE

A similar contract to R. Johanan's in Italy, was written for Rabbi Asher Loeb in France. Called Asher Lion because his book is called "The Roar of the Lion," he was a prominent rabbi in the second half of the 18th century. In 1765, he became the rabbi of the community of Metz, France. Upon his appointment, the leaders of the community issued the following contract co-signed by Loeb.[39]

1) The new head of the court (rabbi) will be appointed for six years but will bind himself not to accept any other rabbinate during the next twelve years. He will have to take an oath to this effect under threat of excommunication and deposit a letter of credit in the amount of 6,000 pounds.
2) He will receive a yearly salary of 1,000 pounds, with no possibility of increase.
3) He will receive three pounds for any engagement or marriage agreement, whether he drafts it himself or not, and whether it concerns a member of the Metz community or not. For administering the oath of the *Ketubah* to a widow or divorcee, he will receive 9 pounds if it is worth 1,000 Reichsthaler or less, 18 pounds if it is worth between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds and 24 pounds if it is worth more. There will be no exemption from the payment of these duties. As for weddings, he will receive six pounds on any dowry worth up to 1,200 pounds, and 12 pounds if it is worth more than 1,200 pounds. He will receive 30 pounds for any divorce or *Halitsah* he will arrange.
4) For testimonies related to insults and injuries, he shall receive 45 sous from both sides and no more, whether he registered them himself or not. If the testimony has to do with community ordinances he shall receive nothing.
5) He shall have full authority to exact alone a fine up to five pounds, but with his court, he shall have the right to impose a fine up to six Reichsthaler. For superior sums, he will have to get the community's agreement.
6) The head of the court will not deliver the title of *Haver* or *Morenu*, even free of charge, without the approval of the community council. For a *Haver* conferral (title did not require ordination), he shall receive 18 pounds. If the candidate is a well known scholar, the council may reduce this duty. 'The head of the court will be authorized to deliver the *Haver* conferral to the inhabitants of our town only two years after their wedding. Whoever has received the title of *Haver* from the head of a court of another city, will not be called to the reading of the Law here in our community with this title during this period until he has received a new *Haver* ordination from the head of our court in our community. We shall live and we shall not die (Psalm 118:17): the head of the court will not give a *Haver*, and even less a *Morenu* title to a deceased person without the community's consent and will.'

7) The heads of the community shall provide the head of the court with fitting accommodations for him and the bachelor members of his family. He shall be freed from the payment of all taxes, regular and irregular.
8) If the chief of a court should pass away, the community heads shall provide his widow with fitting accommodations as long as she remains here. She will receive a yearly pension of 200 pounds as long as she will not remarry and remains here.
9) The community heads will take it upon themselves to protect and free the head of the court from any suits and damages resulting from the exercise of his functions.
10) The community heads will not allow any stranger or local inhabitant to preach in public without the head of the court's agreement, and he shall not do so without his agreement.
11) For any judgment involving houses or matters of usucaption, he shall receive three pounds. For the sale of a seat in the synagogue he shall receive 30 sous. He shall keep a ledger with the indication of all the appeals he has to deal with. His sentence will not become final without the agreement of the administrators.
12) Any member of our community, plaintiff or defendant, may challenge the head of the court and prevent him from sitting on it as a judge.
13) Whenever the parties will agree to accept the judgement of the head of the court sitting alone, he shall judge only on matters involving no more than 75 pounds. Once the proceedings have begun, the parties cannot request him not to judge alone. He will keep a ledger of all his decisions. Payment will be made only after the sentence has been written down. The head of the court will not sit in court, alone or with his assessors, before noon, in order to give him the time to prepare himself for his teaching duties. He may nevertheless sit in judgement before noon, if the suit involves somebody who has come from another place. The judgement fees ill be divided equally between the head of the court and the other two judges.
14) Whenever the heads of the community will decide to enact an ordinance to prevent lawlessness or to avoid transgressing a prohibition, the head of the court is obligated to sign with them. He shall not proclaim a ban without their agreement.

15) The head of the court will take care of the interests of widows or orphans until he will have appointed, in conjunction with the community heads, guardians, unless the deceased has left a testament. The guardian will be appointed no later than three months after the demise.

16) The head of the court will compel recalcitrants to appear in court or to accept his sentence. He shall use every means to achieve this, but shall not proclaim a ban without the community's agreement. If it should happen that he has not done his utmost and one of the parties were to complain, he will be fined thirty-six pounds and an additional 6 pounds for every week of delay, until he complies and compels the other party to appear in court.

17) The young men who receive *Shabatot* (Days when *Yeshivah* students were provided for in community members' homes) in our community and who have been designated for this by the head of the court, will not be allowed to work as teachers, with or without pay, with a sole possible exception for the family which supports them.

18) The head of the court shall teach every day in the synagogue a chapter of the Mishnah immediately after the morning prayer. If unable to do this, he shall give this course after the evening prayer.

19) The head of the court shall care for all matters, especially when they concern our holy law, in order to avoid transgressing a prohibition or to prevent lawlessness. He shall preach in public every year on two special days of Shabbat: *Shabbat HaGadol* and *Shabbat Shuva*, and on three other Shabbat days.

20) The head of the court shall keep a strong-box in which to deposit all the monies entrusted to him, and he will keep an account of these. When returning the money, the recipient shall make known that he has received his money back.

21) The head of the court will be called to the reading of the law after the Kohen and Levi, [which are hereditary positions. He has the first honor and most important spot] (of seven) on *Shabbat Shuva* and *Shabbat ha-gadol*, and on the four Shabbat days on which the heads of the community are usually called to the reading of the law. On other Shabbat days he will be called last among the supernumeraries (for other special occasions there could be more than seven.)

22) The community heads will support twenty-five young men who will be the disciples of the head of the court. (Divided into two groups, twenty and five. Likely that community chose twenty and rabbi five.)
23) The head of the court shall sign these conditions within three days of his arrival, in order that he may enact them.

This very detailed rabbinic contract at first glance appears to document a large number of functions which Rabbi Loeb was expected to perform. Upon closer examination, the document lists a few functions that he was to perform, and a greater number of limitations to his power and authority held by the members of the community. In fact, the overarching tone of this document is the limitation of rabbinic power.

When deciding a judgement alone for a sum of money larger than five pounds he had to have the community's agreement. He was not allowed to confer the title "*haver*" or "*morenu*" without the community, and could be challenged from serving as judge by any member of the community who requested not to be judged by him. His judicial functions were further limited by the right of every community member to choose both a lay and non-professional judge who would together choose the third judge. Furthermore, he was not able to proclaim a ban to prevent lawlessness, thereby advocating moral action, without the agreement of the community. And, if he did not do his best to compel the guilty party into court, he would be fined weekly. The authority of Rabbi Loeb was severely

restricted by the leaders of his community who seemed to be cognizant of every action taken by the rabbi.

Aside from the limitations to his functions as judge and arbiter, what was Rabbi Loeb expected to perform? He served as an *ayd*, a witness, for marriage, divorce and *halitsah*. He judged in the court (with the above restrictions) on matters of personal and financial dispute, provided rabbinic care for widows and orphans, taught Mishnah every day in the Synagogue, served as keeper for certain finances, preached on five *Shabbatot* of the year, was called to the Torah for *aliyot*, and trained disciples. It is interesting to note the difference in subjects taught by the rabbis in Italy and France. R. Loeb was only required to teach Mishnah, while R. Johanan taught Torah, Talmud, *Tosafot* and Codes. It is also noteworthy that R. Loeb was not permitted to act as judge in the court until noon in order to provide him with an adequate amount of time to prepare to teach.

It does appear that Rabbi Loeb was provided for by his community, even if he was restricted. It is plausible that the community placed the restrictions on the rabbi in order to keep much of the control of religious and civil matters in their hands, rather than in the hands of one person who could exert power unfairly, or leave the community. He received a yearly salary (one unable to increase); received extra money from officiating at marriages, divorces or *halitsah*; was provided with accommodations for himself and his family; was guaranteed support for his widow upon his

death; and was given protection by the community from suits and damages as a result of his functions – an early glimpse at malpractice insurance.

POLAND - LITHUANIA

Further east in Europe, in Poland, Rabbi Joel Sirkes wrote *responsa* that demonstrate a slightly different status for the Polish-Lithuanian rabbis. Sirkes is referred to as *BaH* because of his extensive commentary on the *Arba Turim*, the *Bayit Hadash*. Born sometime around 1561, the exact date of his birth is unknown because of scarcity of information. It is believed that Sirkes was born and raised in Lublin, in the synagogue of Rabbi Isaac Luria. Sirkes lived for about eighty years and died in Cracow on the 20th of Adar, 5400 (1640.)[40]

The rabbi in Poland in the sixteenth century enjoyed an elevated status. It was not uncommon for the rabbi to have been appointed by the King and granted the power to excommunicate, and restrict Jews. Jewish self-government further raised the rabbinical status and equated it to the most prestigious of all professions.

From his *responsum*, Sirkes highlights rabbinic functions. "He was the official *ab beit din*, or "chairman of the court", adjudicating disputes and rendering legal decisions. He was also the *rosh metibta*, or "head of the college for Jewish studies". He directed Jewish education, supervised curriculum, invoked bans and solemn decrees upon the community,

solemnized marriages, inspected the adherence to the dietary laws, and bestowed titles of ordination upon the deserving. His signature was required in order for any community ordinance to become binding; his approval was necessary for establishing synagogue forms and procedures."[41]

The Polish rabbi, like most of his contemporaries, was involved in many different venues, primarily as judge and arbiter. He was in charge of education and deciding policy for community members. It appears that his jurisdiction with matters of education extended throughout the community to all its schools. His responsibility of education to the community denotes a very powerful aspect of his role. All schools were run by the community, and the rabbi was the head of education for everyone. His sphere of influence on education was vast. He also had control over his congregants by being authoritative with matters of dietary law and marriage. It was the rabbi who officiated at marriages making him an *ayd*, a witness. In addition to the rabbinic functions, we also learn of the importance of following traditional Jewish law in Poland at this time with Sirkes' reference to dietary laws.

In reference to the earlier discussion of ordination of future rabbis, this *responsum* confirms that ordination of scholars was happening in Poland at this time. Crediting the rabbi with the authority to grant ordination helps demonstrate the importance of the rabbi, his role of

training leaders for the future, and his elevated status with regard to authority.

In addition to the above functions, the Polish rabbi performed another, more prominent role. He was relied upon to be an interpreter of religious law, who pronounced statements based on his knowledge and authority. The best methods for the rabbi to demonstrate his command of Jewish law was through teaching and preaching, though the rabbi was usually called on to speak from the pulpit twice a year, on *Shabbat Shuvah* and *Shabbat Ha-Gadol*. On the rest of the *Shabbatot*, there were lay preachers who were granted authority by the local rabbis.[42] To this day Orthodox rabbis give a special exegesis on *Shabbat Shuvah* and *Shabbat Ha-Gadol* in the afternoon.

In Poland, rabbis had many special privileges bestowed upon them. Salaries were respectable and could be supplemented through leniency in taxes such as parsonage and exemptions. They were able to receive additional stipends for performing life cycle events such as funerals and weddings. And, many rabbis supplemented their income by writing legal documents for the community. Unlike other Jews in Poland, the rabbi was able to settle at will, dress elegantly all week, and was given the highest *aliyah* to the Torah every Shabbat and festival. Unfortunately, during Sirkes's time, the rabbinic tenure at a congregation was very short and most were unable to settle into a community for an extended period of

time.[43] If one was able to reconcile himself with the demands of moving from community to community, the role of the rabbi in Poland seems to have enjoyed a comfortable existence.

In general, when examined together it is possible to determine common rabbinic functions that were performed in each of the major Jewish centers. The rabbi of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries was primarily seen as a figure of authority in his community. He was called upon to act as judge and arbiter in his community for matters involving personal law, financial affairs, and legal disputes, and was often given the right to excommunicate, the highest form of law enforcement in Jewish communities.

Though his authority was often restricted by the leaders of the community, as learned from R. Loeb in France, the word of the rabbi was generally respected as authoritative. In affairs outside of court, he was expected to serve as an exemplar for righteous activity. He was not expected to live in an ostentatious manner, but was expected to clothe himself in a respectful manner, especially in Poland where the rabbi was the only member of the community allowed to dress in the finest clothing every day of the week.

In addition to serving as judge and arbiter, the rabbi was a teacher of Torah and other Jewish law. These sources gave the rabbi his authority as judge and provided him with the basis for declaring things wrong or right.

Outside of court he was expected to transmit this knowledge of Jewish law to his congregants. In many places he served as *rosh yeshivah*, thereby governing the education of children. In the synagogue he was expected to teach Jewish law to those in the community. And he was often expected to establish and train disciples to lead the future generations. Though the specific subjects varied from locale to locale, Torah was always a fundamental. He was therefore expected to have an exceptional command of Torah and Jewish law. Accordingly, in many communities the rabbi was limited to the number of hours he could judge in court and was required to spend a certain period of time each day studying and preparing to teach.

In addition to teaching in the synagogue, the rabbi was expected to appear in synagogue and make sure that the *hazzan* was fully qualified to lead services; thereby establishing the synagogue as a house of prayer. He was a preacher, however, his preaching was generally limited to two to five times a year, and he was called to the Torah only for an important *aliyah*, or to read The Ten Commandments, or, Song of Moses. In some cases the rabbi also concerned himself with matters of *hazzanut* and lay preaching, and impacted the life of the synagogue with his desires and concerns.

The rabbi of these centuries was responsible for financial affairs of the community. In addition to legislating financial matters, he was often expected to collect and distribute *tzedakah*, and store money for the

community. He was expected to be trustworthy, and was usually limited by severe restrictions on his own financial affairs to better help him appear free from questioning.

The rabbi was responsible for many life cycle roles. He served as witness for matters of marriage, divorce, *halitsah*, and officiated for funerals. His role in life cycle events emphasized the legal aspect, as witness, as with *ketubot* and *gittin*, more than liturgical recitation of the ceremonies.

In some communities during these centuries, especially in smaller communities, the rabbi was often the *shochet*, ritual slaughterer, and *mashgiach*, or one who supervises with regard to the observance of dietary laws. And, in a few cases, the rabbi, as in Italy, established personal connections to townsfolk and served in some sort of counseling role.

What the rabbi of this time period did not do, except on rare occasions in small communities or on a few specific holy days, was perform the liturgical component of daily prayer. The rabbi was not the service leader. This job was left to the *shaliach tzibur*, or *hazzan*. The rabbi often evaluated the capability of the *shaliach tzibur* and dictated how services should be led, but he did not perform the service himself. The *shaliach tzibur* and *hazzan* frequently served as the lay preacher, and Torah reader, keeping another commonly associated rabbinical task out of the hands of the rabbi.

[1] Isidore Epstein, *The "Responsa" of Rabbi Solomon Ben Adreth of Barcelona and The Responsa of Rabbi Simon B. Zemah Duran* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), XVII.

[2] While he is recognized by most as being the first paid rabbi, there is different opinion by Isidore Epstein in *The Responsa of Rabbi Simon B. Zemah Duran* (p. 18) that cites Rabbi Isaac Bonastruc as being the first salaried rabbi, receiving 30 doublons a year.

[3] H.H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 487.

[4] H.H. Ben-Sasson, 602.

[5] Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 33, 65.

[6] Robert Bonfil, 2-3.

[7] Salo W Baron, The *Jewish Community: Its History And Structure To The American Revolution*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1942), 316

[8] Salo W. Baron, Jewish Community. P. 321.

[9] Elijah Judah Schochet, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works and Times* (Jerusalem - New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1971), 1.

[10] Israel M. Goldman, *The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1970), 1.

[11] Robert Bonfil, 147. Hebrew translated by Bonfil from Hebrew edition of his book entitled, *ha-Rabbanut be-Italyah be-tekufat ha-Renessans* (Jerusaelm: Magnes Press, 1979), documents 4 and 8.

[12] This is a technical term used by the author. I liken it to being a teacher, whose function is to recite words or concepts aloud to the children in order for them to learn. It is significant, because it means that he was responsible for teaching subjects other than Talmud.

[13] Robert Bonfil, 149.

[14] Hyman Kublin, "Hazzan" in *Encyclopedia Judaica,* 1542.

[15] Salo W. Baron, *Jewish Community.* vol. 2, 103.

[16] Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. VII (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 80-81.

[17] Isidore Epstein, *The Responsa of Rabbi Solomon Ben Adreth.* P. 40

[18] Salo W. Baron, *Jewish Community*, vol. 2, 103.

[19] Ibid., P. 104.

[20] Elijah Judah Schochet, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes.* P. 171.

[21] Personal Translation of Moses Mintz Responsa #81. These requirements are a portion of the entire Hebrew responsa. In, *T'shuvot Maharam Mintz* (Tel Aviv: M'hadesh Publishers, 1568).

[22] Community in Germany, difficult to read exact name from the text.

[23] Word order in citation is not exact.

[24] Abbreviation, translation unknown, not found in any dictionaries of abbreviations.

[25] Something comparable to skins of leather that lace up his leg from ankle to knee.

[26] Exact translation of word unknown.

[27] *Piyyutim* are free poetic compositions on religious teachings or festival themes that were written during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. They were completely optional, and their content and form were not subject to regulation. With the addition of

the *Piyyutim*, public worship became long and involved and varied between communities and countries. Gleaned from, Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, translated by Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1993), 4.

[28] Biographical information taken from: Isidore Epstein, *The Responsa of Rabbi Simon b. Zemah Duran*.

[29] Isidore Epstein, 35-40.

[30] Ibid., 40.

[31] Ibid., 65.

[32] Israel M. Goldman, *The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra*.

[33] Responsa in, Israel M. Goldman, 90. Hebrew translated by Goldman from, *Responsa* of RDBZ Volume III, Furth, 1781, No. 518.

[34] Israel M. Goldman, 89.

[35] Ibid., 90.

[36] Requirements for *haver ir* in Israel M.Goldman, 90. Hebrew translated by Goldman from Manuscript of *Responsa* of RDBZ in J.T.S. Library, p. 44a.

[37] Israel M. Goldman, 91.

[38] Rabbinic appointment in Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, Appendix 3. Translated by Bonfil from Hebrew edition of his book, Document 17, 238.

[39] Steven Schwarzfuchs, *A Concise History of the Rabbinate* (Oxford, London and Cambridge, USA: Blackwell Press, 1993), 51 Translated by S. Schwarzfuchs from, 'The Contract of the Shaagat Aryeh in Metz', *Moriah*, XV 1-2 [169-70] (1986), 83-88.

[40] Biographical information found in: Elijah Judah Schochet, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes: His Life, Works and Times*, 15.

[41] Elijah Judah Schochet, 167.

[42] Ibid., 168.

[43] Ibid., 169.

Chapter Three
The First American Trained Reform Rabbis

The archetype of the rabbi of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries as discussed in the previous chapter is different from the model of the rabbi today. The demand that the European communities had for teaching, judging, and serving as head of the entire Jewish community shifted when the German reformers came to America. The structure of Jewish communities in America differed in part by virtue of the changing nature and emerging centrality of the Synagogue. Instead of having a rabbi for each community with duties determined by the community, rabbis performed functions specific to their congregation. Determined to continue the ideals that the Enlightenment inspired in them, the German reformers attempted to base American Judaism, most especially Reform Judaism, on the clear, rational thought that they had come to appreciate.

Isaac Leeser, was one of the more prominent Jewish leaders in America in the first half of the century. Though not a Reform rabbi, he did much to set the climate for reforms when he translated the Bible into English, attempted to establish a rabbinical seminary, and began efforts to bring unity to American Jews. He paved the way for rabbis like Max Lilienthal, Isaac M. Wise, David Einhorn, Bernard Felsenthal, and Liebermann Adler who cemented the beginning stages of German reform in America. They worked hard to adapt their ideals of rational thought in

Jewish practice with the freedom available in America. It is important to study the role that they played as rabbis in their communities in order to understand the climate open for Reform Judaism in America. The advances they achieved in America were evident in the first ordination class of the Hebrew Union College in 1883, those pioneering four rabbis will be the subject of this study.

Israel Aaron, Henry Berkowitz, Joseph Krauskopf, and David Philipson are remembered as the first four rabbis trained on American soil who led Reform congregations in America. Studying their careers from 1883 - 1900 sheds light on the role of the early American rabbi. Each of the four men used their American education to develop a different aspect of their rabbinate, providing a well-rounded look at the opportunities open to American rabbis. Though they continued to function, and in most cases flourish after the turn of the century, 1900 serves as a natural break in examining their history for two reasons. In his dissertation, *The Shul With the Pool*, David Kaufman explains that after 1900, the emergence of a Reform synagogue- center movement took Reform Judaism in a new direction, which in turn changed the role of the rabbi.[1] 1900 also marked the death of Isaac M. Wise, and the end of an era. Throughout his life he had a tremendous influence on the lives of those first students. Once he passed away, it was up to these remarkable men to carry on his legacy in their own ways. Studying the role of the rabbi in America from 1883 until

today, is too large of an endeavor for this chapter, therefore, the snapshot from 1883 -1900 provides a foundation for understanding the changes that the first American trained rabbis brought to the role of the rabbi, and the environment in which they worked.

Isaac M. Wise and The Hebrew Union College

In 1846 Isaac M. Wise came to America seeking a land that placed no limits on human powers. Still reeling from the tight restrictions of the Hapsburg rule, Wise yearned for more freedom in America. An avowed free spirit, Wise's concepts of freedom still consisted of authority and organization. It is said that individual freedom and organized effort were the watchwords of his life.[2] These concepts manifest themselves in Wise's impact on Reform Judaism. Wise endeavored to make reforms that would emphasize the opportunity for growth and development which Jews in America possessed. He wanted to create a strong and united Judaism in America. From his first pulpit in Albany, NY in 1846, Wise wasted no time in introducing changes in public worship customs. Shortly after his arrival in Albany he aroused controversy by introducing a mixed choir and family pews. He also directed his attention to the prayer book, advocating for a Reform ritual at the first gathering of rabbis in America in 1846. In 1855, after having waited until the time was right, he published his prayer book entitled, "Minhag America."[3] The very title of his prayer book

expressed his desire to provide a Judaism that would unite all American Jews. In his prayer book he eliminated all references to the return to Israel, the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, sacrifices, restoration of the priesthood or Davidic dynasty. Though these reforms were innovative, the rest of Wise's prayer book, with large amounts of Hebrew, was fairly traditional. It was used primarily by Jews in the west and south.[4]

In addition to his prayer book, Wise had distinctive goals for American Judaism. He aspired to be a national Jewish leader. He dreamt of a rabbinical seminary in Cincinnati, with a union of congregations to support it. As a vehicle for expressing his hopes, in 1855 he created the *Israelite*, a weekly Jewish newspaper, to serve as a sounding board for American Jews.[5] That same year he helped convene a conference in Cleveland to form a Jewish synod. Though the conference was aimed to unite all Jews, it failed because of a divergence of opinions on religious reforms.

Wise himself was unable to realize his goal of a Reform union, though the president of his Cincinnati congregation succeeded in such an endeavor. On October 10, 1872, Moritz Loth proposed a congregational convention. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) was established in Cincinnati on July 8-10, 1873. Thirty-four congregations in 13 states were accredited, representing close to 2,000 members. By 1875

the membership had more than doubled in size, representing seventy-two congregations and 4,000 members.[6]

The climate that allowed for a union of Reform congregations was not the only change that occurred since Wise's arrival in America. After forty years of settlement in America, the average economic and social level of the German Jews was very high, almost half of the Jewish men were in business, and 40 percent had at least one servant in their home. In 1880 the Jewish community numbered about 250,000, and was concentrated more in the Midwest and South than the Northeast. In 1880 there were 270 congregations in America, and other Jewish philanthropic agencies, hospitals and charitable organizations that ministered to Jews. The wealth of German Jews, which afforded them new opportunities in education and social life, as well as a growing social exclusion of Jews by non-Jews, led the German Jews to attempt to fit in with the rest of society, and contributed to a great assimilation of German Jews.[7]

The effect of this assimilation was to make the religious worship experience similar in climate to religious worship in Protestant churches. This was eminently true with regard to matters of decorum, the distancing of rabbi by title, limited chanting, and organ usage during worship. Many of the changes instituted by the radical reformers of the mid- nineteenth century had become commonplace by the 1880's. Nathan Glazer, in his book *American Judaism*, gives a detailed lists of the changes in many, but

not all congregations. "The service was no longer read and sung by the congregation but was read by the minister. Almost all of it was now in English. The congregation participated only in responsive readings and a hymn or two. Hats and prayer shawls were removed. An organ and a choir were introduced, and the choir usually included men and women instead of men and boys as in Orthodox practice. The balcony on which women sat, out of sight of the men, was removed, and men and women sat together. Some congregations even adopted a Sunday service. The main feature of the service became the sermon, in English."[8]

In addition to the changes during services, other Jewish rituals underwent transformation. The second days of festivals were abolished, Confirmation became primary, the celebration of Bar Mitzvah was left out of most Reform synagogues, and Torah readings were abbreviated. Reform Jewish education consisted only of Sunday or Sabbath school, which was a major step forward since most congregations previously had little or no Jewish education. Also, many of the Jewish life cycle rites, like standing under a *Chuppah*, or breaking a glass at a wedding, were abandoned. The aforementioned changes in prayer book reform reflect a desire for rational thought, and round out the picture of the Reform Movement last quarter of the century.

Glazer alludes to one more change in his book, the change from the title rabbi to minister. Using the title minister was fairly common at the

time. In fact, many of the early American rabbis preferred the use of doctor, or minister to rabbi, putting their position in an academic context rather than spiritual realm. The desire to claim a secular title could be a reflection of the longing to be more like their Protestant counterparts alluded to earlier. The title of minister for Reform rabbis has since dissolved although there are a few congregations who still retain the practice.

It was precisely at this moment that Isaac M. Wise wanted to open a rabbinical seminary to train American rabbis. When he arrived in America the few congregations that existed were served by incapable, sometimes ignorant men, many of whom had not received official rabbinical training. His quest was, "... that American congregations must have American rabbis, men educated in America, men filled with the free spirit of America, men who combined a modern American education with a knowledge of Jewish lore."[9] Isaac M. Wise did not want American men to have to travel to Germany to be trained to lead American congregations. He felt that the only way to have leaders that reflected the needs of the American Jewish community was to train them in America.

At the UAHC meeting in 1873, a constitution was approved which stated that its primary goal was the founding of a "Hebrew Theological Seminary" to be supported by the dues of UAHC congregations.[10] Though the initial fundraising efforts of the UAHC were tenuous, on October 3,

1875, the Hebrew Union College (HUC) held its opening services at Plum Street Temple.

College Life in the Early Years (1875-1883)

The curriculum offered to the first twenty students in the first HUC class is crucial to understanding the training of the first American rabbis. Wise created the curriculum so that his students would emerge from The College trained exactly as he envisioned an American rabbi should be. In choosing the subjects for the curriculum he placed the emphasis on the areas he felt relevant to American Judaism at the time. The instruction took place in basement schoolrooms of the Bene Israel congregation (now Rockdale Temple) on Mound and Eighth streets in downtown Cincinnati. The total program was to be eight years, with four years in a preparatory program and four years in a collegiate program. In the morning the students attended a local public high school (Hughes High School) and from three to five o'clock in the afternoon [11] had Jewish studies with Wise, Solomon Eppinger, and Max Lilienthal; Eppinger being the only paid instructor.[12] Wise taught them Pirke Avot, Eppinger taught a translation of Genesis and Hebrew grammar, and Max Lilienthal taught Jewish history.

Wise, knowing that his school must pass muster with the leading rabbinical figures in order to be legitimated, took pains to make the curriculum extensive. To gain admission the students had to pass an

examination in Hebrew reading and conjugation of the regular verb. They also had to be able to sight translate from the Book of Genesis, and have a basic knowledge of Jewish history from Abraham to Zerubbabel.[13] In addition to the Jewish requirements, they had to be admitted to a public high school. At the end of four years students were to have mastered Hebrew and Aramaic Grammar, be able to read most of the Bible, parts of rabbinic literature and Talmud in Hebrew, and be familiar with all of Jewish history. Also at the end of four years, they enrolled in the University of Cincinnati and earned a Bachelor's Degree in addition to their Judaic studies.[14] In 1878 a task force was established to formulate a complete curriculum for the collegiate program. Though Wise didn't agree with all the changes made by the committee, the curriculum eventually came into practice covering four subjects. "Biblical exegesis utilizing both traditional and modern commentaries, Talmud (including Codes), philosophy of Judaism (restricted to medieval texts), and history of Judaism. In addition there were language courses in Syriac, Arabic, and "Assyrian" (Hebrew and Aramaic having been mastered in the Prepatory department). There was also some "New Hebrew" (medieval poetry), theology (taught by Wise), and in the senior year two hours of homiletics."[15] It seems that for Wise and the committee, it was crucial for the students to have a firm foundation in Hebrew and Jewish texts. Despite the break with tradition that the reformers advocated, especially the turning away from *halakha*,

Wise still mandated that his students be extensively trained in Talmud. This speaks much about Wise's own ideology. As radical as he was in many of his reforms, there were obviously certain areas in which he would not relinquish his hold on Jewish tradition. The Talmud held a certain degree of authority and importance in his life, whether or not he believed in following all the laws, and he still felt it crucial to convey this to his students.

The amount and type of Biblical studies in the curriculum demonstrates that the emphasis was on traditional commentaries. There was some modern scholarship included, which probably touched on the scientific approach to studying Bible which flourished in Germany, but the bulk of Biblical studies came from the traditional Jewish perspective. Biblical criticism was absent from the curriculum, as I. M. Wise did not want it to have a place in his school. A liturgical component seems to be missing from the curriculum. It was not specified whether or not the students were trained in traditional liturgy and earlier prayer book changes made by the German Reformers. The HUC curriculum of the early days underscores the stress on preaching that was so apparent in the rabbinical functions at the turn of the century. The curriculum included a homiletics class for seniors ensuring that they would be trained in the essentials of writing and delivering a sermon, and would be able to carry on the legacy of rabbi as preacher begun by the earlier reformers.

At the end of each academic year students were required to stand in examination before three rabbis. Wise invited Reform rabbis like Adolph Moses, Lipman Mayer, S.H. Sonneschein, Max Samfield, J.K. Gutheim, and S. Falk to come to Cincinnati and examine the students. He also took a bold step and extended the invitation to leaders outside of the Reform Movement. He believed that an academic institution had room for more than one religious ideology, and that if scholars, no matter what their background, viewed the institution as being sound, then it would be worthy of support. He invited Orthodox Jews like, Lewis N. Dembitz, a layman versed in Bible and Talmud, and Sabato Morais the leading Orthodox rabbi of the time, and rabbi of Mikve Israel Congregation in Philadelphia to question the students as well.[16] Wise must have had a keen academic mind, because he did succeed in producing scholars; Morais (who went on to found and serve as President of the Jewish Theological Seminary) wrote a laudatory letter for the school after his examination of the students. However, as successful as Wise was in gaining the acceptance of Orthodox Jews for the academic standings of his students, one of Wise's crucial problems was his constant need to be a unifying force for all Jews. As was apparent from the failure of the first rabbinical conference in 1855, as well as the break made by the Orthodox members after the *Trefa* banquet in 1883,[17] uniting all Jews was an impossible endeavor. Though he was successful in conceptualizing the structure for American Judaism,

he spent much of his time looking over his shoulder waiting for acceptance from more traditional Jews, and alienated a large percentage of Reformers by going too far to the traditional side.

In addition to attending both schools, the students tutored local Cincinnati children, often staying as late as ten o'clock in the evening to help with the chores, only to then to return home and complete their own studies. As Philipson describes in his autobiography, "It was no child's play for those of us who were in earnest, and most of my fellow students were indeed earnestly-minded."[18] Wise was ambitious when planning his curriculum and it is astounding to think that with the workload the students carried, they achieved the success they did. Philipson graduated from Hughes High School as valedictorian and gold medalist, received Phi Beta Kappa status for his 1883 class at the University of Cincinnati, and wrote a rabbinical thesis on the philosophy of Saadia Ha-Gaon. Henry Berkowitz and Joseph Krauskopf also excelled in their studies, wrote their senior theses, and found the time to edit a weekly Jewish paper called, "Sabbath Visitor."[19] The first rabbinical students appeared to have devoted their entire life to their studies. They were accustomed to studying well into the night, and running themselves ragged day after day. This element of excessive hours at school and absolute devotion to a pursuit is helpful in evaluating the work habits of these rabbis once they began serving congregations. It is also important to point out that none of these students

were married. They either lived together in a boarding house, or were housed with Cincinnati families whose children they tutored. For the students living together in the boarding house, there was nothing preventing them from spending evenings and early mornings with their studies.

All the hard work that these men spent on their rabbinical studies came to fruition when they received their Bachelor of Arts degrees from the University of Cincinnati in June of 1883. The secular graduation was the dress rehearsal for their rabbinical ordination; on July 14, 1883, these four men became rabbis. As wonderful as this day was for them, for Isaac M. Wise it represented the realization of his dream. It symbolized the success of the Reform Movement in America and the next step towards shaping the future of The Movement.

Rabbi David Philipson put the feelings of the moment into words:

> The end crowned the work when, on the fourteenth day of July, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, in the presence of hundreds who had come to Cincinnati from all parts of the country, our fatherly friend and teacher laid his hand in blessing upon our heads and placed the consecrating kiss upon the brows of the four of us who were thenceforth to be known as ordained Rabbis in Israel, the first of a long succession in the American Jewish pulpit. Consecrated were we four to a great task, how great we knew not! True adventurers were we in an untried field, how adventurous we dreamed not!...
>
> The four pioneer Rabbis sallied forth with high hopes and yet with certain qualms. The ultimate success of the venture was largely in their keeping! By a strange chance they separated from Cincinnati as the center, to the four points of

> the compass, as though God ordained that the experiment of an American trained Jewish ministry should be tried out under differing conditions and in widely separated points — Aaron to the North - Fort Wayne, Indiana; Berkowitz to the South — to Mobile, Alabama; Krauskopf to the West — to Kansas City, Missouri; and Philipson to the East, to Baltimore, Maryland. The future of the Hebrew Union College lay in great measure in their hands. The record is now before us.[20]

Rabbi Israel Aaron

Of the first four rabbis, little is known of the career of Israel Aaron. David Philipson describes him as a genial soul, and a source of life to those with whom he associated. After ordination Aaron went to Fort Wayne, Indiana where he was rabbi for four years. From there he went to Buffalo, New York where he served for a quarter of a century. He was the first of the four classmates to pass away, which could have something to do with the lack of information published about him.

Though there is little known on the functions that he performed in Indiana or Buffalo, from an address that he gave to the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) in 1896, we gain a glimpse into his thoughts that Reform rabbis should clearly define the ideology of the Reform Movement for the laity. The title of the address is "Our Shifting Attitudes" and in his powerful words, he appealed to his fellow colleagues to formulate a statement of principles for Reform Jews. He wanted them to be able to articulate concisely what Reform Jews believed on issues

beyond those of belief in God and immortality. He claimed that it was necessary for a governing body such as the CCAR to exert authority on issues relevant to congregational life. The issues were: "The exact relationship of Jews to Christian churches; the limitations which consistency, good taste, and propriety put upon the use of temples and synagogues; the bearing which the theories and results of the higher biblical criticism have upon the integrity of certain Jewish principles and viewpoints; and upon other matters which from become from time to time 'burning questions'..."[21]

It is crucial to ask, was Aaron himself the one unsure as to his role with Christian churches, or did he frequently encounter congregants who questioned him about their position? As indicated by its inclusion in Aaron's list of concerns, it appears as though Reform Jews did have extensive dealings with the churches, and were often unsure of the proper limits to their interactions. The same question of Biblical criticism raised earlier in connection with the curriculum, is echoed in Aaron's words. How much should the modern Biblical criticism circulating among academicians influence the Reform Jews? Would Biblical criticism undermine some of the authority of the Bible for Reform Jews, or would its rational, scientific approach enhance their lives?

After he appealed for a formulation of principles, Aaron attempted to provide his opinion as to how it should be presented, and what format

would appeal to the most Jews. He alluded to the success of the Union Prayer Book with the congregants, as something which they could all share. He addressed the possibility of a single rabbi addressing the principles in a sermon. This approach, according to Aaron was not optimal, as the rabbi may not have the influence to promote harmony of Judaism. He listed the sermon as not being an all-powerful instrument. This statement could be interpreted as representing Aaron's own dissatisfaction with his authority in Buffalo. Perhaps he didn't feel as though his sermons were being heard, or followed by his congregants. Or, perhaps Aaron was not the homiletician that his classmates were, and preaching was not his optimal vehicle for expressing a message.

Another possible explanation is offered later in the speech. Aaron complained of a lack of masculine presence during services. He said that the same spirit that influenced men to remove their head coverings during services, had also succeeded in removing men. Attendance during services before the turn of the century had greatly decreased, and perhaps Aaron's sermons were not effective because there was no one there to listen to them. Israel Aaron, like many rabbis today, could literally have been preaching to the choir.

Rabbi Henry Berkowitz

Judging from the amount of published material on Henry Berkowitz, as well as the influence that he had on the Jewish Chatauqua Society, it is possible to say that Henry Berkowitz's rabbinate was decidedly different than that of Israel Aaron. Though not every moment was notable for Berkowitz, as a rabbi he had a tremendous impact on the Reform community in the realms of informal education and pastoral care.

Upon ordination, Henry Berkowitz moved to Mobile, Alabama to serve as spiritual leader. The Southern communities during Berkowitz's time were different than many of those today. Mobile, built on marshes, was a breeding ground for malaria, typhoid and other horrible diseases. The citizens were also still affected economically, communally and humanly by the Civil War, as it had a greater impact on the South than it did in the North. Berkowitz was faced with a community that was spiritually inactive and in need of help. The task facing Berkowitz was daunting, and with the help of his wife Flora, whom he married in October of 1883, he jumped into his challenges, feeling it his duty as a rabbi.

The first functions that he performed as a rabbi were fairly commonplace. Among them were: "... the preparation of two sermons a week: one for delivery on Friday evening to the younger members of the congregation and the other for delivery on Saturday morning to the elders; the conducting of a Sabbath school; the leadership of Bible classes;

officiation at weddings and funerals, and participation in various sundry civic enterprises."[22]

What made Berkowitz's rabbinate different from other rabbis serving in America, as well as from the earlier European models, was his emphasis on pastoral care. Berkowitz came to earn the title "Beloved Rabbi" not because of his phenomenal preaching, although his published sermons demonstrate his excellence in preaching, but because of his compassion towards his congregants. He was a pastor, friend, and, guide to his members and his home was always open to those in need. He expressed this compassion and genuine commitment to pastoral care in a sermon to HUC students delivered in April of 1918. Berkowitz reflected on what it meant to be a rabbi and said:

> I beg to emphasize its importance in the functions of a rabbi as teacher, as preacher, but most of all as a minister in the highest and most sacred office of religion which call him into the homes of the people and bring him into intimate touch with the individual. There are crises that come into every life. Such are the moments when the barriers of conventionality break down, when the artificialities of social life are shattered, and when all pretense is brushed aside like a gossamer film. In moments of great spiritual awakening, and especially when people are bowed by sorrow or crushed by the burden of some woe more heavy than death, the soul is bared in its inmost depths to the minister alone. Then comes the real opportunity of the rabbi to be a minister. [23]

Henry Berkowitz demonstrates a desire to touch the souls of his congregants in real life situations, absent from many of his contemporaries, who were more concerned with excellence in preaching. His focus on the

personal interactions of the rabbi also shatters a common misconception about the first American rabbis, namely, that the pastoral care element was missing in their work. In fact, as we can see from Berkowitz's first years in Mobile, he made pastoral care an essential function of his rabbinate. He proved that he could be a rabbi on the *bimah* and in the home, and was an exception to the rule.

Berkowitz earned a good reputation for himself while in Mobile, which transcended beyond the South. As HUC grew in prestige, congregations throughout the United States increased the demand for American trained rabbis. In 1888 Berkowitz received four offers to change pulpits, and he ultimately chose to move his wife, and daughter Etta Pearl, to Kansas City, Missouri.

In Kansas City, Berkowitz succeeded Joseph Krauskopf, his friend, classmate, and brother-in-law. He immediately resumed his status of "beloved rabbi" as he continued to perform his rabbinic functions. He pleased the congregation by continuing Krauskopf's mission of a modern interpretation of Judaism.

A little wiser in the "ways of the rabbi", Berkowitz further developed skills he had utilized in Mobile. He was drawn into the civic life of the community. As he was able to clearly articulate his thoughts, the daily press began to publish his sermons and lectures, and he gained prominence as a leader. He founded the first Bureau of Charities in

Kansas City, served on various committees, and in 1892 was appointed by the Governor of Missouri to be Chairman of the State delegation to the annual convention of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections.[24]

Serving as leader of charities was in keeping with Berkowitz's character of helping those in need. Whether through pastoral care or charity, Berkowitz excelled in listening to the needs of individuals. He used his rabbinic skills of public speaking and leadership to unite Jewish and non-Jewish communities around charitable giving.

He also used his gift of rhetoric to give a series of eight lectures on "The Story of the Jews." These discourses reached more than just those in his congregation. The daily papers printed each speech in full, and as a result he received invitations to speak in churches, both in Missouri, and in New Jersey and Philadelphia.[25]

The activities of Rabbi Berkowitz in Missouri demonstrate the depth and breadth of his rabbinate. As a rabbi concerned with pastoral care for his members, Berkowitz earned a "beloved" status. However, pastoral care was only a part of his rabbinate, he found the time and energy to excel in civic leadership to the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, and in public speaking/preaching. In just nine short years, Berkowitz had developed his rabbinate to a multi-faceted, prominent status.

Not surprising, Berkowitz was again inundated with offers to switch congregations. This time, his move took him East, where he joined his friend Joseph Krauskopf in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Berkowitz became the senior rabbi of Rodeph Shalom Congregation; replacing Marcus Jastrow, a German born rabbi who was recognized as a leader and scholar in America.

Berkowitz, forever a student of Isaac M. Wise, began to introduce reforms upon taking over from Jastrow. Unfortunately, not all of the reforms were well received by the older members of the congregation, most especially, by Jastrow himself. Though Jastrow's opposition distressed Berkowitz, he persevered with his changes. These changes are documented in his biography and include:

1893

1. First issue of Pulpit Message, the publication of Pulpit discourses by Dr. Berkowitz.
2. Adoption of plans for reorganization of the Congregational school. The study of German made optional.
3. Replacing of daily sessions of school by weekly sessions.
4. Exchange of pulpits with other Rabbis.
5. Rejoining of Union of American Hebrew Congregation by Rodeph Shalom.
6. Organization of Congregation Library, which in time became a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia.
7. Publication of first Annual Record and Directory of the Congregation.
8. Rendition by the pupils of the religious school of an original Hanukah entertainment: "The Symbol of Lights." This was an allegorical presentation of the

lessons of Judaism arranged for the Festival of Lights by Dr. Berkowitz.

1894

9. Introduction of Congregational singing in the public worship.
10. Introduction of the "Harvest Festival Service" as a part of the celebration of Succoth Decoration of the Synagogue with a "Succah" (booth), and participation of children in the service.
11. Organization of children's choir.
12. Holding of Union Thanksgiving Service with the Spring Garden Unitarian Church. This was not originated by Berkowitz, but he was responsible for its expansion to include Congregationalists and several other sects besides the Unitarians.
13. Adoption of Union Prayer Book as the form of service for the congregation to replace the Jastrow Prayer Book.

The changes instituted by Berkowitz were just as radical in comparison to the activity of the early reformers. On one hand, they indicate that as an American trained Reform rabbi, Berkowitz was willing, and desired, to take the movement in new directions. On the other hand, they represent a new focus in regard to the priorities of American reformers. For example, making the study of German optional demonstrated the assimilation of the German Jews prevalent at the time; part of fitting in with society meant speaking the same language. Since the prayers were no longer read in German, nor were sermons given in German (in the main), it wasn't as necessary to learn German. What was important to Berkowitz, was emphasizing certain festivals in the school. Having a Hanukah celebration in the school and a Succah in the

Synagogue were rituals abandoned in the early stages of American Reform. Decorum was the primary objective during services and the rituals associated with these festivals did not keep with the spirit of the "Protestant" motif. Berkowitz reintroduced the ceremonies as a way to reach children and help younger Jews feel at home in new, highly Americanized Jewish traditions. He also recognized that since these rituals were not observed at home, the emerging American synagogue needed to become the primary center for Judaism. Toward the same tone, congregational singing and a children's choir, both highly American and Protestant, were out of character in Reform services, yet, Berkowitz quickly added them to his list of changes.

Rejoining the UAHC and exchanging pulpits with other rabbis indicate Berkowitz's position as one of the first four American rabbis. It is probable that after studying with Wise for so many years Berkowitz learned to share his feeling that a union of congregations was essential for the success of Reform Judaism. Within that union, having everyone use the same prayer book represented that for the first time, continuity and similarity could be found in most UAHC congregations. Substituting the Union Prayer Book for Jastrow's was a very daring move for Berkowitz. It is not surprising that Berkowitz faced such opposition by Jastrow, as he reversed much of what Jastrow had instituted in just two short years.

It can be a very difficult task to succeed a rabbi at a congregation. Having to follow in someone else footsteps, especially those as lofty as Jastrow's, is no small task. Therefore, today many rabbis are instructed to slowly implement new changes in order to avoid alienating the former rabbi, or the congregation. Although, there is another school of thought which teaches that a new rabbi should make major moves quickly and then settle down. Perhaps Berkowitz was unsatisfied with the progress of the congregation, or, he felt that he would be recognized as rabbi posthaste if he was forceful in his changes. Whatever the reason, the gentle sincerity with which he advocated radical changes allowed him to continue to transform the congregation into a place committed to Jewish education, outreach to members, and pastoral care.

As successful as Berkowitz was as preacher, teacher, reformer, and pastoral care giver within his congregation, Berkowitz will be remembered for making a lasting contribution to all of Judaism, by founding the Jewish Chautauqua society. As was characteristic of Berkowitz's ministry, he found time work for the betterment of society.

At his first pulpit in Mobile, Berkowitz was introduced to the "Young Folks Reading Union" of the Christian "Chautauqua Movement." This church-sponsored reading group engaged younger congregants in literary pursuits.[26] To Berkowitz, this seemed like a natural way to incorporate

younger members of the synagogue while engaging their intellect; a new way of informal, creative education.

In Kansas City, Berkowitz incorporated that model into his proposal to actively engage congregants in the congregation. As a rabbi, Berkowitz was able to reach people in their homes, but felt that there was something lacking in the synagogue when congregants just went to listen to the rabbi read the service and deliver a sermon. There was nothing for them to gain by belonging to a congregation.

In 1888, as a way to transform the congregation into more of a community, Berkowitz proposed the following in a letter to the American Israelite: "I would organize the adults of this Jewish community into an auxiliary association, for the purpose indicated. Such an association could co-operate with our educational enterprises. It should conduct a literary society, course of lectures, classes for advanced instruction, become auxiliary to the Sabbath School Union of America, found a library of Jewish science, history, and literature, and to this end affiliate with the Jewish Publication Society of America, just beginning its work."[27]

The congregation responded enthusiastically to Berkowitz's proposal, and formed the L.A.C.E. Society. The letters standing for Literary, Aid, Culture, and Employment, the primary aims of the congregation.[28]

When Berkowitz went to Philadelphia he tried to organize a similar society in his new congregation. Unlike Kansas City, which did not have any similar organizations in place, Philadelphia had a plethora of societies, and Berkowitz's did not thrive as it did in Missouri. Inspired by his friend Joseph Krauskopf who had turned his small group known as the "Knowledge Seekers" into the Jewish Publication Society of America, Berkowitz did the same. The L.A.C.E Society became the impetus for the Jewish Chatauqua Society, proposed in April of 1893. Four years later he took his project national and achieved great success as the rabbi responsible for introducing informal education into American synagogues.

Joseph Krauskopf

Like his close friend Henry Berkowitz, Joseph Krauskopf, the third of the first four American trained rabbis, turned his ordination into an opportunity to develop an inspiring rabbinate, as one committed to social justice, and providing Jewish literature to the masses. He left lasting contributions in the world.

After ordination, Krauskopf traveled to Kansas City, Missouri to begin his career as a rabbi. Using his youthfulness as a benefit, he threw himself into his work like a zealot. He took it as his mission to spread the truth of Judaism. He preached about Judaism, strengthened Jewish life, and

attempted to educated others about Judaism, for those both in his congregation, as well non-Jews with whom he came into contact.

An idealist, his daily functions were not limited to his congregational responsibilities, though he did build up the congregation. In the community, he was a proponent of social and religious liberty. He lectured in many places throughout the city, and wrote extensively as well. His lectures on *Evolution in Judaism*, and *The Jews and Moors in Spain* were both published. He also found time to organize a *Free Labor Bureau*, and was appointed a Life Member of the Board of National Charities and Corrections. [29]

Theologically, Krauskopf was a radical Reform Jew. At the Pittsburgh conference in 1885 he was an active participant, and was elected to be Vice-President of the Conference, and Chairman of the Committee for the Platform. It was at that very conference where the rabbis stated, "We hold that all such Mosaic and Rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas altogether foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation."[30]

As a vocal member of the conference, and avid supporter of the platform, Krauskopf was willing to articulate his Reform theology, and belief

in the irrelevance of traditional Jewish law. In fact, though he wasn't a native American (born in Ostrowo Prussia), from the time he was fourteen he was raised among the adherents of Reform Judaism. His formidable years were spent under the tutelage of radical Reformers, and he, like the other three first rabbis, didn't know much else. The radical Reform ideology wasn't surprising. What is astonishing, is that Krauskopf played such an active role at the conference. Just two years out of rabbinical school, and still a man in his early twenties, Krauskopf was much younger than the rest of the men at the conference. Krauskopf was vocal in a setting that included such rabbis as Kaufmann Kohler, Felix Adler, Emil G. Hirsch, and Alexander Kohut. Apparently, Krauskopf was quite confident in his position of rabbi, or at least in himself and his beliefs.

In 1887 Krauskopf returned to Pennsylvania, this time to serve as rabbi of Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia. In accepting this pulpit, he followed in the footsteps of some of the greatest Reformers, David Einhorn and Samuel Hirsch. He remained at the congregation until his death.

Already labeled as a radical Reformer, Krauskopf was not one to disappoint. One week after his installation as rabbi he instituted Sunday services *in addition to* the traditional Friday evening and Saturday morning services. Krauskopf felt it unfair for those who, because of work related

reasons, were unable to attend on Saturday morning, and missed the Shabbat week after week.

As expected, Krauskopf faced his share of opposition. His critics felt that he could not offer Sunday services without taking away from the sanctity of Saturday, and that he could not bring young Jews into the congregation on Sunday without estranging them from Judaism, and pushing them into Christianity. Krauskopf proved his critics wrong, and Sunday services continued throughout his lifetime.

The one problem that he found with his addition of Sunday Services was the lack of an English prayer book suitable for the occasion. In 1888 he created a Sunday ritual book called, *Service Ritual*. The book had thirty completely different services, made a hymn book unnecessary, and introduced Psalms and selected Biblical readings into the liturgy.[31]

Again, Krauskopf's confidence as rabbi was quite evident in this endeavor. To create a prayer book with thirty different services is no small feat. In creating his English Sunday prayer book, Krauskopf filled what he considered to be a void in Reform Judaism. Unsatisfied with what lay before him, he simply created anew. There appears to be no hesitation in the changes that he brought to Philadelphia.

In addition to providing the congregation with Sunday services and a new prayer book, Krauskopf fulfilled many other functions as rabbi. He reorganized the religious school, organized a post-Confirmation class, a

weekly study group for young men and women called, a *Weekly Lyceum*, and the *Society of Knowledge Seekers*.[32] His "conception of a synagogue was that it should be not merely a house of prayer where men and women are led by exhortation and self-communion to righteousness, but that it should be an institutional centre of educational, social, and philanthropic activities, itself translating creed into deed, piety into right-living, spirituality into social service."[33]

Krauskopf is another model of an early American rabbi who, while an excellent preacher in his own right, was more concerned with involving young members in the congregation, and providing different avenues for them once inside. He recognized that the then current structure of his congregation did not offer younger members a chance to engage in serious study, or feel a part as though they were an active part of the community; there was no reason for them to go to temple. Part of his desire to make the synagogue an active place, and home to young Jews could be as a result of his youth. As a rabbi, he was not much older, in many cases younger, than the majority of his membership. By getting the younger members into the congregation he provided them with Jewish connections, and himself with a peer group to engage in serious intellectual thought. He was also aware that unlike in Europe, America lacked a community anchor to hold and root young generations. Without some sort of community, these generations could be lost in the new America.

His desire to unite young Jews was captured in *The Society of Knowledge Seekers,* whose purpose was to study literature, history, and current topics. It was created to draw the younger generation within the walls of the synagogue[34] and was the impetus for the *Jewish Publication Society.* Aware that the wealth of Jewish information was not available for those who wanted sincere study, Krauskopf advocated for a publication society. In a published sermon in 1887, Krauskopf pointed out that almost every Christian denomination had a publication society, yet, there wasn't one single Jewish publication society. In January of 1888, *The Society of Knowledge Seekers* issued a call to congregational presidents to send a delegate to an a conference for the purpose of establishing a Jewish publication society. In May 1888, Krauskopf, with Dr. Solomon Solis Cohen issued a call for a publication society with the following objectives: "To Familiarize American Jews with 1—the Ethics of Judaism, 2—The History of the Jewish People, 3—The Writings of Jewish Ministers."[35] On June 3, 1888, *The Jewish Publication Society of America* was constituted, Krauskopf was named secretary. The significance of Krauskopf's endeavor was monumental. American freedom and voluntary community demanded literacy and knowledge as their mainstay, and the Jewish Publication Society was able to provide a strong foundation.

Krauskopf continued his community involvement in Philadelphia. The impact that he had on the Philadelphia community, among others, is

astounding. Within his first five years the size of his congregation doubled and he was constantly in demand as a lecturer throughout the city. In 1892 he organized the Personal Interest Society, the forerunner to Social Service agencies. In February 1893 to rid the city of its slums he established the Model Dwelling Association. In March of 1893 he helped organize the Liberal Ministers Conference of Philadelphia, and in December of 1894 established a *Model Kitchen* for the city's poor. In 1898 he studied relief conditions in various United States Army camps, in 1900 investigated agricultural conditions in Europe, in 1901 organized the Board of Jewish Ministers of Philadelphia, and in 1903 was appointed director of the Isaac M. Wise Memorial Fund for the Hebrew Union College. He is best known for forming the National Farm School in 1896. Founded largely with his personal savings, the purpose of the school was to provide agricultural opportunities to large numbers of Jews, and to secure safety to afflicted people.[36] After observing the Jews of Russia working the land, he decided that the agricultural instinct to earn a living from the land, fostered so prevalently in Biblical times, still lingered in Jews, and needed an opportunity to flourish in America. With the chance to earn a living from the land, Krauskopf believed he could provide work for those in America who were in desperate need of financial assistance.

The Farm School demonstrates another aspect of Krauskopf's rabbinate that he chose to emphasize, namely, social action. A man of

action, he tried to single-handedly help the Jewish and non-Jewish poor and oppressed of the world. This concern for social action and civic concerns is characteristic of a large number of early American rabbis, including Emil G. Hirsch. Though, unlike Hirsch, Krauskopf also devoted his rabbinate to welcoming and engaging men and women in serious Jewish study within the congregation. The impact that he had on American Judaism within the first ten years in Philadelphia is truly admirable.

David Philipson

In similar fashion, David Philipson had a great impact on his own community, and left his mark as an outstanding rabbi and preacher who led his congregation for more than sixty years.

After ordination, Philipson decided to stay in Cincinnati and teach at "The College." Eager to use his new found rabbinical status, he began the year by accepting an invitation to lead High Holiday services in Dallas, Texas. Though all of his classmates had served High Holiday pulpits while at HUC, Philipson had not yet had the opportunity.

Having gained from his inaugural congregational experience, Philipson returned to Cincinnati to begin teaching. Isaac M. Wise, however, had different plans for the young man, and had accepted a job for him at Har Sinai Congregation in Baltimore. Wise deemed it necessary for Philipson to go because it was the first Eastern congregation to be served

by an HUC graduate, thereby marking the first spread of Wise's influence on the East Coast. It also enticed him because it was David Einhorn's pulpit. For one of Wise's toughest critics to desire an HUC graduate was no small thing, and Wise felt the need to fill their request.[37]

Indicative of Einhorn's remaining influence on the congregation, for his trial sermon, Philipson was to preach in German. What was commonplace for his Reform predecessors was horror for Philipson, a native born American. Though he had learned German from his mother, it was by no means his language of choice. Forever the master of challenges, Philipson preached in German, and accepted the offer to lead the congregation. On January 1, 1884, he began as rabbi of Har Sinai, on the condition that only one sermon a month would be in German.[38]

For Philipson, one of the advantages of serving this Baltimore congregation was having John's Hopkins university in close proximity. Eager to continue his academic pursuits, he took post-graduate classes at the university. He did not graduate from Johns Hopkins because he felt it more important to have a degree from a Theological Seminary. He continued correspondence classes with HUC, and earned his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1886, right before his marriage to Ella Hollander.[39]

In addition to his academic work, Philipson led the Baltimore congregation. His responsibilities at the congregation were not especially demanding, and he devoted every morning to study. From this practice he

never waivered throughout his life, unless it was for a funeral or congregational function. The congregation was fairly small and Philipson did not have many responsibilities during the week, the bulk of his time went towards his sermon preparation. On Monday he began thinking about the sermon, and usually had it written by Wednesday, at which point he committed it to memory. Preaching was his foremost responsibility as rabbi of Har Sinai.

"During my first months in Baltimore I preached twice a week –at the regular service on Saturday morning and at a gathering on Sunday evening. The Sunday -evening meetings had no religious service, merely the lecture. During that first winter I delivered lectures on Jewish history. They were well received. Besides conducting the religious school, I taught a Bible class, which was attended by about twenty young ladies of the congregation. This was an entirely new activity in Baltimore, since none of the congregations had any provision for religious education beyond the religious school, which most of the children left either after Bar Mitzvah or confirmation."[40]

The Sunday evening lectures were very different in theory from the Sunday gatherings at Krauskopf's congregation. Philipson made it very clear that there was no worship component to these sessions. They emphasize the importance that both Philipson, and Har Sinai, placed on the notion of the rabbi as scholar, and master of rhetoric. Unlike Krauskopf

and Berkowitz who used their preaching to enable them to do other community pursuits, Philipson was the ultimate preacher, who made his preaching his other community pursuits.

While in Baltimore he was a member of the Charity organization society, was the speaker at the Hebrew Benevolent Society, and eulogized Henry Ward Beecher, one of America's greatest preachers from the pulpit.[41] Having a Jew pay homage to a Christian speaker from the pulpit was so unusual that the local paper published his speech in full. This was just the beginning of Philipson using his pulpit for such endeavors.

Having his work published came to be routine for Philipson. The 1887 UAHC conference sparked an interest in writing a series of lectures on *The Jew in English Fiction,* which was published. That publication was joined by his articles in the *Mennan Monthly*, and his book, *The Reform Movement in Judaism.*[42]

His fame as lecturer and writer earned him many calls to serve other congregations. Like Berkowitz and Krauskopf, as one of the first four HUC graduates he was in high demand by the Reform Movement. In 1888 he accepted a position at Bene Israel (Mound Street) to succeed his friend and teacher, Max Lilienthal.

In November of 1888, Philipson returned to Cincinnati with his wife, they were welcomed with open arms by the congregation. Isaac M. Wise

installed his pupil in this new pulpit. After moving words by Wise, Philipson stressed his own vision for his new position.

> For such work, friends, we form a covenant today. You have called me to this post. Let the bond that unites us be one of mutual sympathy. I want to be one of you and with you, rejoicing in your happiness, sorrowing in your grief, leading you in the noble deeds that may go forth from among you. May our labors, blessed by God, redound to the welfare of Israel and of all mankind. May our lives be interwoven in love even as our names are in sacred Scripture: VA-YAKHEL DAVID KOL BENE ISRAEL, '... and David gathered all the children of Israel' (*Bene Israel*). May God's blessing be upon us. Amen![43]

The feeling of rabbi and congregational togetherness which Philipson promoted in his first sermon to the congregation lasted throughout his tenure at the congregation. He was truly devoted to the congregation, and the Cincinnati community, which was reflected in every thing he did.

From the beginning of his time at Bene Israel he immersed himself in his work. The first change he brought to the congregation was to change the religious school. The chairman of the school board committee had served as dictator for the school for years,[44] Philipson let his authority be known to the chairman, and insisted that he no longer bully the students or the teachers. The chairman, along with a teacher who could not tolerate having Philipson in control, left soon after. Philipson then put himself in control of the school and directed how he wanted it to be run. At the time, the school met for one hour on Saturday before services, and all Sunday morning. Philipson assumed as one of his rabbinical functions to serve as

the head of the religious school.[45] In addition to the school, Philipson started a congregational organization for young people, and was president throughout his tenure.

These two examples of functions that Philipson included in his rabbinate are reflective of a similarity in most of the leadership of the first four rabbis. Eager to found new groups and appeal to different needs of the congregation, they also deemed it necessary to be president, or in control, of each new endeavor. The men seemed uncomfortable allowing their laity to pick up the mantle of leadership, and made themselves integral parts of each new group. They led as though a group could not function without the rabbi. One explanation is that they were young and were attempting to establish their authority as knowledgeable leaders. Another reason is that the groups were all beginning for the first time and needed to have rabbinic control to succeed. A third reason could be due to the sense of anarchy that existed in Jewish life at the time. Boards ruled at will and rabbis had minimal tenure protection at all. These four rabbis were trying to swing the pendulum the other way and create and strengthen the position of rabbi.

Philipson continued the preaching and writing that he had started in Baltimore. He wrote weekly articles in Wise's *Israelite*, and gave weekly sermons. One constant theme which he expressed in both his writing and preaching was how proud he was to be an American.

This statement is echoed in Philipson's recollections of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. He attended the special seminar on world religions and met with religious leaders from almost every denomination. He gave a lecture entitled, "Judaism and the Modern State." During the conference, he became involved in a controversy over the future of Judaism in America. One of the older rabbis gave a warning for the future, when the men trained for the rabbinate in Europe would all be gone and the future of Reform Judaism would be left to those trained in America. Philipson took the statement as a personal attack, and responded with the following quote, "It may be a misfortune not to have been born in Europe, but I cannot consider it as such; in fact, I am thankful that I was born in this country. It may further be a misfortune not to have been educated in Europe, but to judge by the results attained by some who were educated there, possibly it is not so great a misfortune after all."[46]

Through this powerful, somewhat harsh quote, Philipson confirms I.M. Wise's success in training American men to serve American pulpits. There was a difference in ideology between those trained abroad and in America, and Philipson stood at the forefront of this difference. Through and through, he was an American, and proud of his American ideals. He found great strength in being an American Jew, which he applied to thoughts on the concept of Zionism.

For the most part, Reform rabbis, with a few notable exceptions, were against Herzl's proposal for a Jewish homeland. Philipson was a staunch anti-Zionist. He felt that since Jews are not a nation in the usual sense, rather a religious community, there was no need to form a Jewish state. The Jews could be a community no matter where they were, a return to Palestine held no power for Philipson. He met Herzl in 1902 through his various political contacts, but never changed his position. Even as he wrote his autobiography in 1939, when many Reform rabbis had reversed their positions on Zionism, he remained firm to his anti-Zionist stance.

Philipson was well known throughout Cincinnati. In addition to his congregational responsibilities (mostly preaching), he returned to HUC to instruct future students. He taught classes in Assyriology and other semitic languages, as well as homiletics.[47] He was at the college four days a week, and was an integral part of shaping the lives of HUC students, as Wise had done for him.

He was well qualified to teach homiletics, as he was in constant demand as a speaker. In one noteworthy week of his life, he gave eleven addresses throughout Cincinnati. He primarily spoke on Jewish subjects, but occasionally felt the need to preach on politics, or corrupt public practices if need arose.

In a 1911 report to the CCAR on relations between the rabbi and congregation, Philipson articulated his thoughts on appropriate subjects for preaching. "The congregation has the right to expect Jewish sermons from the pulpit. The pulpit is not a platform for the discussion of miscellaneous themes of an encyclopedia nature. Conversely, the pulpit is the rabbi's domain; it is sheer presumption for any officer or member of the congregation to dictate to him what to preach. It should also be his privilege to invite into his pulpit anyone whom he thinks has a right to stand there."[48]

It appears that by 1911 when Philipson wrote this statement, the social/moral sermon that was preached so often by Reformers around the turn of the century, had changed to specifically Jewish sermons. Including his comment about the pulpit being the rabbi's domain, he foreshadows Stephen S. Wise and his formation of "The Free Synagogue" to combat the leadership of Temple Emanu-El who sought to limit his speech.

With the emphasis placed on preaching as the foundation for his rabbinate, Philipson reinforces the idea that much of the role of the rabbi in the late nineteenth century was that of preacher. He gained his notoriety as rabbi from his preaching.

Conclusions

By looking at each of the first four American trained rabbis, it is possible to gain a glimpse of the changes in the rabbinate that came with an American rabbinical seminary.

The first American rabbis devoted themselves to their work. From their early days in school they learned to spend their time immersed in activity. It is striking that there is scarcely a mention to family life in any of the writing of the four men. All four mentioned being married, two of them even stress how important it is to choose the right wife so that she can be devoted to the congregation as well. Yet, children are blatantly missing from the lives of these rabbis. Henry Berkowitz is the only one with mention of children in his work, which is not surprising since his biography was written by his son. Joseph Krauskopf also had a daughter, though she was absent from the majority of his biographies. Did the two other men have children? Did they spend time with them and take an active role in their upbringing, or were they too busy with their congregational activities? It is a surprising conclusion that for the most part, they spent a large amount of time working with youth in the religious school, yet, don't refer to children in much of their work. This is indicative that in the time which they lived, during the turn of the century, the majority of men left child-rearing to their wives. Also, these men might have neglected to dwell on the lives of their children as a way to exert rabbinic authority. Portraying the picture of

a rabbi home with his children all day minimized the work they could do in a congregation. Though, these men did have time to spend at home with their children, references in their memoirs are scare.

It is possible to identify a few important areas of the role of the rabbi. First and foremost, it was largely about preaching. Preaching was used to educated and inspire, as well as emphasize a great civic concern. It gained prominence because it was a singular forum for the rabbi to influence the congregation. It gave the rabbi prominence and authority in the community, and allowed congregants to view him as leader. They were very involved with Jewish and non-Jewish members of society, and helped create fairly good relations with Christian clergy as well. These rabbis were the pioneers for interfaith relations.

All four rabbis engaged in life cycle officiation, primarily weddings, funerals, births, and Confirmation, yet very little of their history is devoted to specifics within these life cycle events. Pastoral care was relegated almost exclusively to moments surrounding death and marriage, though Henry Berkowitz was an exception to this rule. In his 1911 report on the rabbi and congregation, Philipson called pastoral care outside of marriage and death a sham.

One of the key emphases for all four men was education. Each felt the need to shape their congregational religious school, and was devoted to educating children, and adults, on the important points of Judaism. By

doing so, they schooled the children in areas they felt relevant, and attempted to reverse the cycle of minimal Reform Jewish education for future generations. This was a change from the European reformers who did not spend nearly as much time educating as the American trained rabbis.

The first class of HUC in 1883 was trained to be rabbis skilled in public speaking, knowledgeable about Judaism, Hebrew, and Jewish texts, and capable of enacting change in the various congregations to which they ministered. They represent a snapshot of what life was like for rabbis in the late nineteenth century. It is encouraging to see that while they all had the same training, each fashioned his rabbinate into something unique. Whether through informal education, Jewish publication, pastoral care, civic concerns, or preaching, each of the first four American trained rabbis followed in the footsteps of Isaac M. Wise, and made a name for himself.

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[1] David Kaufman, "Shul With a Pool: the Synagogue-Center in American Jewish Life, 1875 - 1925" (Ph.D. diss., *Brandeis University, 1994),* 75.

[2] Rabbi David Philipson, D.D., "Isaac M. Wise," *Popular Studies in Judaism*, date unknown, 4.

[3] Rabbi David Philipson, "Isaac M. Wise", 9.

[4] David Einhorn, one of Wises' toughest critics, and rabbi at Har Sinai in Baltimore, wrote a prayerbook titled, *Olat Tamid*, which was dominant in the North and East.

[5] Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 243.

[6] Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 261.

[7] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism: Second Edition* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 45.

[8] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, 46.

[9] Rabbi David Philipson, "Isaac M. Wise", 23.

[10] Michael A. Meyer, *Hebrew Union College: A Centennial History 1875 - 1975,* 1976; revised edition (Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press,1992), 17.

[11] These hours are based on the autobiography of David Philipson. In his history of HUC, Michael Meyer notes the hours as being 4:00- 6:00pm. As this is a study of the first four rabbis, I have decided to list the hours detailed by Philipson.

[12] Rabbi David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew: An Autobiography* (Cincinnati: John G. Kidd and Son, Inc, 1941), 7.

[13] Michael Meyer, *Hebrew Union College: A Centennial History*, 19.

[14] Ibid., 20.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] Rabbi David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew*, 10-11.

[17] Here again, Wise's goal of uniting all Jews came to shoot him in the foot. A banquet was planned after the ordination service at The Highland House resort. Knowing that there would be representatives from the different movements at the celebration, the committee engaged a Jewish caterer. Unfortunately, the Jewish caterer was ignorant in the dietary laws and outraged many of the rabbis present by serving shrimp. It was a result of this banquet that the Jewish Theologial Seminary of America was founded.

[18] Ibid., 13.

[19] Max E. Berkowitz, *The Beloved Rabbi: An Account of the Life and Works of Henry Berkowitz* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1932), 9.

[20] Rabbi David Philipson, "Speech at the memorial service for Dr. Joseph Krasukopf at Temple Keneseth Israel, in Philadelphia, on November 4, 1923." In Feldman, Rabbi Abraham J, *Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf* (reprinted from *The American Jewish Year Book*, volume 26, 1924), 7.

[21] Dr. Israel Aaron, "Our Shifting Attitudes" in *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* (Cincinnati, Ohio: May and Kreidler, volume 6 -7,1896 -1897), Appendix A, 93.

[22] Max Berkowitz, *The Beloved Rabbi*, 15.

[23] Henry Berkowitz, *Intimate Glimpses of the Rabbi's Career* (Cincinnati: The Hebrew Union College Press, 1921), 22.

[24] Max Berkowitz, *The Beloved Rabbi*, 22.

[25] Ibid., 26.

[26] David Kaufman, *Shul With A Pool*, 58.

[27] Quote taken from the *American Israelite* 35:18 (Nov. 2, 1888), 3. Found in David Kaufman, *Shul With a Pool*, 64.

[28] Ibid., 67.

[29] Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman, *Rabbi Joseph Krausopf*, 8.

[30] Quote taken from the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform. Found in Michael A. Meyer, Response to Modernity, Appendix, 388.

[31] Rabbi Abraham J Feldman, *Joseph Krauskopf*, 13.

[32] Ibid., 14.

[33] Horace Stern, "Dr. Krauskopf's Thirty Years' Ministry of Keneseth Israel." in Dr. Louis Grossman, *Dr. Krauskopf in the American Rabbinate*, privately printed, 11.

[34] Ibid., 11.

[35] *Quote in* Rabbi Abraham J. Feldman, *Josepf Krauskopf*, 17.

[36] Ibid., 22.

[37] Rabbi David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew*, 27.

[38] Ibid., 29.
[39] Ibid., 37.
[40] Ibid., 32
[41] Ibid., 52.
[42] Ibid., 57.
[43] Inaugural sermon, Bene Israel. *In*, Rabbi David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew*, 61.
[44] As described by Philipson in his autobiography. Rabbi David Philipson, *My Life As An American Jew*, 61.
[45] Ibid., 62.
[46] Ibid., 91.
[47] Ibid., 65-66.
[48] Rabbi David Philipson, "Report of Committee On Relation Between Rabbi and Congregation." in, *The Rabbi and the Congregation* (Cincinnati, 1911), 9.

Chapter 4
Women Rabbis

What do Julia Ettlinger, Ray Frank, Martha Neumark, Helen Hadassah Levinthal, Tehilla Lichtenstein, Paula Ackerman, and Regina Jonas have in common? The answer is that all of these women had either pursued rabbinical studies, acted as rabbis, or, been ordained as a rabbi before 1972. That they served in some capacities as rabbis is astonishing, by virtue of the fact that in 1972, Sally J. Priesand was heralded as the first ordained woman rabbi. She should in fact be celebrated as the first American woman ordained as a rabbi, who followed footsteps traveled by these heroic women.

The stories of these early pioneers helped shaped the debate in the Hebrew Union College community in the early 1920's over the issue of ordaining women as rabbis. The memory of these women was recalled again in the 60's, 70's and 80's when both the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, as well as the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements debated the ordination of women.

During the debates, the two communities focused on *halakhic* barriers to women rabbis, the essential personal characteristics of a rabbi, as well the functions that he, or she, could be called upon to perform. Furthermore, they speculated on the contributions that women rabbis

would bring to the rabbinate. The ordination of women in the 70's and 80's represents a dramatic shift in the attitudes and behaviors of rabbis that surpasses initial speculation.

Early Female Pioneers

When the Hebrew Union College (HUC) opened its doors in 1875, Julia Ettlinger, an eleven-year-old girl, was among the fourteen students sitting in Cincinnati's Mound Street Temple. She was there at the behest of Isaac Mayer Wise, who stated that he was open to allowing women to study in his rabbinical school. It is unsure whether he was serious in his acceptance, therefore, it is commonly thought that Julia Ettlinger was at the College to study and increase the numbers of students enrolled in the College.[1] Julia Ettlinger marked the first of generations of young women who enrolled and earned bachelors degrees from the Hebrew Union College.[2] In fact, according to historian Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus, there has been at least one woman student in every decade of HUC. Some stayed long enough to get their Bachelor of Arts degree, but until 1972 none went any further in their studies.[3]

Unlike Julia Ettlinger, Rachel (Ray) Frank attended lectures at the Hebrew Union College with the intention of enhancing the rabbinical skills of preaching and leading services that she was using in congregations around North America. A Californian, she was raised in an Orthodox home

and was well versed in Jewish history and Judaism. Her academic prowess enabled her to teach school in Nevada, work as a journalist, lecture, write short stories, and preach to congregations. During an 1890 visit to Spokane, Washington, she learned that there was no congregation for the Jews of Spokane. She urged them to form a congregation and promised to conduct services if they organized. She was held to her promise as she conducted their High Holiday services that year. In her Yom Kippur sermon, she urged them to overcome such differences as whether to wear hats in services and come together as one permanent congregation.[4] In 1893, already somewhat of a celebrity in American Jewry, because she had preached from both Christian and Jewish pulpits, she was asked to speak at the Women's Congress convention in Chicago.

Though never actually employed as a rabbi in a formal contractual sense, as someone whom the congregations considered as their spiritual leader, she was the closest thing to a female rabbi in the late nineteenth century.[5] In 1890 she wrote a letter to an editor describing what she would do if she were a rabbi. "... I would not if I were a rabbi, endeavor to impress the nature of my calling by loud and shallow words, nor by a pompous bearing unbecoming the man of God. I would not say to my fancied inferiors, 'I am the rabbi,' and you must therefore do this or that; but I would reach their actions through their hearts."[6] With words this powerful, it is no wonder that Ray Frank achieved prominence in the late nineteenth

century. Unfortunately, during her lifetime, the climate was not right for a female rabbi. While there are reports that she did come to Cincinnati to study at HUC, she never actively pursued ordination.

By the early twenties, discussions of women rabbis at the Hebrew Union College began to make a more serious turn. This was due in part to the appearance of Martha Neumark, the daughter of HUC professor, David Neumark, who announced her intention to receive rabbinic ordination. When she petitioned the faculty of HUC for a high holiday pulpit assignment in 1921, she sparked a two year debate over the ordination of women.[7] In 1923 the HUC Board of Governors ultimately rejected the decision of the HUC faculty and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) who voted in favor of ordaining women rabbis, and sealed the fate of Martha Neumark becoming a rabbi.

In 1925 following the death of her father and marriage to University of Cincinnati student, Henry Montor, Martha withdrew from the Hebrew Union College. She had completed more than seven years of the nine year program and was granted the first HUC Sunday-school superintendentship certificate.[8]

The strong stand against women rabbis taken by the HUC Board of Governors in Cincinnati, did not prevent Helen Hadassah Levinthal from attempting her own path towards the rabbinate at the Jewish Institute of

Religion (JIR). A New Yorker, and daughter of an esteemed Conservative Rabbi, Helen Levinthal appeared in the early 1930's on the JIR campus.

During her senior year at JIR, when the issue of whether to ordain Helen arose, the faculty decided that she was just an average student, and therefore, not worthy of the debate. Frustrated, she, and others refused to let the issue drop. In a show of support her father, Rabbi Israel Levinthal, invited her to preach at his congregation, the Brooklyn Jewish Center. This was a tremendous breakthrough, considering that his pulpit was Conservative and he was known as one of the great preachers of the twentieth century.[9]

In the end, Helen Levinthal graduated as the first and only woman ever to receive the Master of Hebrew Literature degree from JIR. She also carries the distinction of being the first woman in American Jewry to actually complete the requirements for ordination.[10] As with Ray Frank and Martha Neumark, opinions of prominent Jewish leaders dictated that the time was not yet right for a woman rabbi.

In Germany, the situation was a little different. In the late twenties, Regina Jonas began her rabbinical studies at the *Hochschule fur die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (College of Jewish Studies), the liberal rabbinical seminary and institute of advanced Jewish studies in Berlin. The *Hochshule* was the precursor of the Hebrew Union College. Though little is known of her years at the school, it is known that the title of her thesis was,

Can a Woman Hold Rabbinical Office?[11] Jonas' conclusion was affirmative, that women could become rabbis. After finishing her thesis she awaited her own ordination. However, a professor of Talmud refused to ordain her. In December of 1935, Rabbi Max Dienemann, of Offenbach, a leader of German Reform Judaism, granted her ordination.[12] She served as a rabbi until 1940 when she was sent to Theresienstadt and died.[13] *Rabbiner Doktor Regina Jonas* will be remembered as the first ordained female rabbi.

In addition to the pioneers who studied at the rabbinical seminaries, there are other women who served rabbinical functions in congregations. Paula Ackerman, wife of Rabbi William Ackerman, actually assumed control of a congregation upon her husband's death. In Meridian, Mississippi, Ackerman was an intrinsic part of congregational life. She taught in the Sabbath school, assisted the sisterhood with their endeavors, and substituted for her husband on the pulpit if he was ill. When he died in 1950, the congregation voted unanimously for her to carry on his ministry until they could hire a rabbi. The press publicized her as the "the first woman in the U.S. to execute a rabbi's functions."[14] For three years she served as rabbi to Beth Israel. She "led weekly and holiday services; officiated at confirmations, marriages (permitted in Mississippi), baby-naming ceremonies, funerals, and unveilings; addressed congregational meetings; preached; and handled the tasks essential to sustain the

congregation and its congregants."[15] Ackerman lived long enough to see the ordination of women rabbis, and was buried by a woman rabbi at her own funeral.

Though Paula Ackerman did much to pave the way for women rabbis, she wasn't the first to serve a congregation in America. Ray Frank had already fulfilled rabbinic functions, as well as, Tehilla Lichtenstein, another wife who took over her husband's congregation upon his death. From 1938, until her own death in 1973, Tehilla continued to work with the *Society of Jewish Science* that she and her husband established in 1922. Their society joined the efforts of other Reform rabbis who combined prayer techniques of affirmation and visualization, with the realities of science and modern medicine. Throughout their prayers, they affirmed that God alone is the true source of health, and that God's power to heal lies within each individual.[16]

As leader of this congregation, Tehilla preached at Sunday morning services, edited *The Jewish Science Interpreter*, the society's magazine, taught classes in Jewish Science and Bible, counseled, trained others to be practitioners or spiritual healers, and hosted a radio broadcast.[17]

These pioneering women opened doors in Reform Judaism, and forged territory for women in the rabbinate. They served as models for a new way of viewing women in Judaism. By seeking ordination and fulfilling rabbinic duties, they alerted the world that women sought equality in their

religion. Though the obstacles to their quest were daunting, these women exhibited bravery by continuing to "go against the grain." In many cases they were verbally attacked by males in the field, were subject to many years of school without the promise of ordination, and were made to feel as though their desired career was not a viable choice for women. These women are joined by others who pursued career advancements in Judaism such as: Irma Lindheim, Lily Montagu (Great Britain), Henrietta Szold, Beatrice Sanders, Dora Askowitz and Avis Clamitz.

The Change of Women's Roles in Society

In addition to the contributions that these women had on the eventual ordination of women, different advancements in various points of American history have influenced Jewish women.

In Philadelphia, in 1801, Rebecca Gratz helped organize the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances. Later, similar agencies were established in Jewish communities.[18]

In 1853 the Protestants ordained Reverend Antoinette Brown Blackwell, as the first woman of any denomination ordained in America.[19]

In the early 1890's when the National Council of Jewish Women was founded, the quest for equality by Jewish women gained momentum. Two decades later that success was joined when women were given the right to

vote in America (1920). In 1922 Judith Kaplan, daughter of Reconstructionist rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, became the first woman to have a Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

In 1923 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) declared women eligible for membership on the board. In 1925 a liberal rabbi named Joseph Leiser announced that Jewish women of his day were prepared to serve mankind and Jewry and had equality with men.[20]

By the late 40's, about one-third of Conservative congregations held some sort of Bat Mitzvah celebration. The Reform Movement took initiative from Conservative congregations, and began calling women to the Torah and encouraging them to become Bat Mitzvah in the late 40's as well. The Bat Mitzvah service did not flourish in Reform congregations to the extent of Conservative, by 1953 only 35 percent of Reform Temples offered Bat Mitzvah to their members.[21] By 1950, in almost every town and city containing a sizeable Jewish community, there were one or two women who were exemplary leaders.[22]

In 1963 Betty Friedan's, *Feminine Mystique* was published. The premise of the book was that many of Friedan's classmates from Smith College, who were supposed to be happy staying home and taking care of their children in fulfillment of the "American suburban dream," were actually bored, depressed, and anxious with their lives. By exploring the personalities of these women, Friedan found that aspects of modern

culture, specifically media and educators, were responsible for perpetuating the stereotype that the proper role of a woman was to stay home and be supportive of her husband; denying her own career desires for the sake of family harmony.

Friedan argued that as a result of the glorification of women in the home, women's growth was stifled, human potential was wasted, and women were tremendously dissatisfied with their lives. To combat this, Friedan urged women to assert themselves, and demand equality in both home and workplace.[23]

Friedan's book caused an uproar in America. There was a major backlash against Friedan from women who were happy staying home, and felt that her book raised an issue that didn't need to be raised. Criticism aside, Friedan's book lit a fire under many women. With increasing numbers women began to reach out for more in life. They sought political and economic opportunity, national office, and real equality. In 1970 Friedan helped found the National Organization of Women (NOW), which sought to end the discrimination of women in the workplace. Members of NOW lobbied for paid maternity leave, child care facilities, legalization of abortion, and an Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution which would prevent discrimination based on sex.[24] The book, written by a Jewish woman, created a social revolution, and inspired the feminist movement.

The First American Ordained Woman Rabbi

The ordination of the first American woman rabbi came on the heels of the feminist movement and growing support within the Reform Movement. In the fifties, many Reform rabbis and faculty members of HUC went on record in favor of women's ordination. With all of the mitigating factors falling into place, finally, the time was right for a woman to be ordained as rabbi. On June 3, 1972, Sally J. Priesand was ordained in Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1946, Sally became active in her Temple Youth Group, the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) and attended the UAHC camp in Zionsville, Indiana. Not long after camp, she set her sights on the rabbinate and was accepted to the Hebrew Union College undergraduate department in the category of "special student" -- "enrolled for credit but not enrolled as a Pre-Rabbinic student."[25] In 1968 she passed from the undergraduate program to the rabbinic program. With her transition in programs she gained popularity among the media. Her fame as the woman aspiring to be the first woman rabbi [sic] spread among both Jewish and non-Jewish press. She was mentioned in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* within the same year. Sally Priesand was also in demand as a speaker in synagogues and churches across the country. HUC faculty member Norman Mirsky observed that she became, "a genuine heroine to nearly every non-Orthodox Jewish women's

organization."[26] Despite the period of ardent feminism in which she studied, in her speeches, Priesand focused more on God, Torah and Israel, than feminism. "I believe that a rabbi is a scholar, a teacher, a preacher, a leader, a counselor, a comforter, a preserver of Judaism, *and a human being.*"[27]

Though at the beginning of her tenure most of the professors at HUC ignored her, then president Nelson Glueck supported her desire for ordination. He would return from Central Conference of American Rabbis meetings and report to his wife the discussions on the ordination of women, "I don't say anything, but, when I am ready, I am going to ordain them."[28] When he passed away shortly before her ordination (1971) her quest seemed to be in jeopardy. The newly appointed president Alfred Gottschalk assuaged her fears when he promised to ordain her.

To prepare for her ordination, Priesand began work on her thesis. Though she had originally chosen to work on the Yom Kippur afternoon service, after discovering material on Regina Jonas, Martha Neumark, and others, Priesand changed her thesis.[29] Her rabbinic thesis was, "Toward a course of Study for Reform High School Youth Dealing with the Historic and Changing Role of the Jewish Woman."[30]

After more than fifty years of discussion in the College, the historic moment, of ordaining a woman, was sealed when President Alfred Gottschalk, placed his hands on Priesand's head to confer ordination. The

historic moment was momentous. "There was utter silence as her name was called and she walked to face Dr. Gottschalk. He placed his hands on her head and pronounced a blessing, whereupon cameras appeared all over the synagogue, recording for all time this deeply significant occasion in Jewish history. Then, with total spontaneity, the members of our class rose to applaud our classmate Sally, now Rabbi Priesand."[31]

Though Priesand was ordained and received applause from her classmates, the struggles of female rabbis, as well, as the debate on the ordination of women were far from over. The arguments raised by the Board of Governors and some of the faculty members of the Hebrew Union College beginning in 1921, were continued in the 70's and 80's in the Conservative Movement. Studying both debates sheds light on the role of the rabbi as defined through the arguments supporting and rejecting the ordination of women. In both debates, the proponents demonstrated why a woman should or should not be a rabbi, based on her ability to perform certain functions encompassed in the rabbinic role.

The Debate Over The Ordination Of Women: HUC and HUC-JIR

When Martha Neumark petitioned the HUC faculty for the right to serve a High Holiday pulpit, she opened a pandora's box for the HUC faculty. When the subject of women rabbis was first broached, the Board of Governors appointed a committee to discuss the ordination of women.

On June 29, 1921, the following was recorded in the Board of Governors minutes of the Hebrew Union College:

> Since Reform Judaism teaches the equality of women with men in the Synagogue, your committee can see no logical reason why women should not be entitled to receive a rabbinical degree.
>
> However, because of practical considerations, your committee is of the opinion that the admission of women to the Hebrew Union College, with the aim of becoming rabbis, should not be encouraged.[32]

The first half of the resolution was adopted by a vote of four to two, however, the second paragraph proved controversial to the members of the committee. A minority report was presented along with the first resolution which recommended that women not be graduated or ordained as rabbis due to numerous grounds of dissension. The writers of the minority report argued that having women perform the functions of rabbis went against Jewish tradition; that women rabbis would seem absurd, outrage most of the Jews in the world; and that part of the Jewish obligation for women is to be married. The authors felt that by being married (and presumably pregnant) at times it would make it impossible for the women rabbi to appear in public. Furthermore, they argued that "When a woman, after being graduated, marries she would very likely leave the rabbinate. The college will have trained and supported her for eight years for nothing."[33] The distraction that women would be to the males in the classroom, as well as a lack of accommodations at the college for females, are two other disturbing factors cited as reasons not to ordain women. The minority

report lost by a vote of five to nine, and the final determination at the meeting was that the opinion of the HUC faculty needed to be sought on the ordination of women.

At a later meeting, acting president, Julian Morgenstern, submitted a report stating that, "the faculty had expressed the opinion by a vote of four to one that it sees no objection to women preparing themselves for ordination at this time."[34] Dr. Jacob Lauterbach offered a dissenting opinion. In that same letter, the faculty members addressed the *halakhic* barriers to female ordination. They cited Mishnah *Shevuot* IV 1 (based on laws for the testimony of guilt from Leviticus 5:1, and Deuteronomy 19:17) as proving that women cannot act as judges. The Babylonian Talmud (*Gittin* 5b) also cites that a woman cannot be admitted to a *beit din*, or make rulings on the correctness of a bill of divorce or other document.

In light of the *halakhic* barriers presented, Dr. Neumark, offered an alternative way of viewing the restrictions. He declared that the ordination of women had never been raised in Jewish legal literature. And, furthermore, to those who cite Bible and Mishnah as proof that women cannot have these rights, it is wrong. For as is shown in Jewish sources, there is information about R. Meir's wife, Beruriah, and Yaltha, the wife of R. Nahman which demonstrate that learned women could render decisions in ritual questions. Furthermore, Neumark argued that if the members of the faculty were Orthodox, it would be against Orthodox practice to have a

women fulfill the functions of judge. However, the ordination of HUC graduates is not to train them to render ritual decisions, since most students don't observe ritual law. He concluded that the HUC diploma is a certificate proving that the holder can instruct and teach religion.[35] The points in Morgenstern's letter confirmed the complexity of women's ordination.

On February 1, 1922, the HUC minutes quote a letter from the CCAR secretary stating that the executive board had decided that the subject of women rabbis was not a subject for a paper, rather, it should be submitted to the Committee on *Responsa*. In 1922, Jacob Lauterbach, the voice of dissension among the faculty, wrote a *responsum* on this issue. He stated, "... There are definite teachings and principles in traditional Judaism, of which the rabbinate is the exponent, which demand that its official representatives and functionaries be men only. To admit women to the rabbinate is therefore, not merely a question of liberalism, it would be acting contrary to the very spirit of traditional Judaism which the rabbinate seeks to uphold and preserve..."[36]

Lauterbach came to this conclusion after listing specific reasons why women rabbis would be detrimental to society. He felt that ordaining women would go against the spirit of traditional Judaism which the rabbinate seeks to uphold. He asserted that until the issue of women rabbis was raised, no distinction could be made between modern rabbis

and rabbis of preceding generations. He also claimed that women would not raise the standard of the rabbinate, and the rabbinate demanded one to serve whole-heartedly. He felt that a woman could not do this because of her role as both wife and mother; he was not able to picture a woman balancing her personal life with her professional life. Finally, Lauterbach claimed that a woman would not find a husband who would be merely "a helpmate to her" so she would not be able to devote herself to the congregation.[37]

As disconcerting as Lauterbach's statements may sound to the modern ear, they indicate the climate of the times. As discussed above, it wasn't until the late 60's that a majority of women finally began to exert their independence in the world. Until then, a woman's career was secondary to her primary job as mother. One interesting note, is the break from tradition that Lauterbach felt women rabbis would bring. His ideology on this issue seems to have been more traditional than classical Reformers. In fact, Reform rabbis had already broken the line of tradition when they chose not to let Talmud be the guiding authority in their lives.

Lauterbach's *responsum* prompted debate from the members of the CCAR. The majority of those present for the discussion voiced their opposition. The discussion was lively in character, and at one point, Julian Morgenstern, acting HUC president, asked the wives of the rabbis to voice their opinions on the subject. One of the most largely cited reasons, by

both the rabbis and their spouses, for the necessity of the ordination of women was the basic principle behind women's ordination. They cited equality and advances that women had made in both America and the Jewish community as rationale for ordaining women. Rabbi Raisin was quoted as saying, "As a matter of principle women ought to be ordained as we now recognize that they are entitled to the same privileges and rights as men."[38]

Rabbi Witt stated that as a matter of principle, the body of men should not do anything to stand in the way of the future movement of women. He explained that because Reform Judaism was forward-looking, there was only one action to take, "to fall in line with what is the destiny of the women of the future."[39] He wanted to see women ordained.

On the other hand, Rabbis Weiss, Brickner and Levi disagreed that women should be ordained because of principle, and agreed with some of Lauterbach's claims. Rabbi Weiss felt it to be unwise at the present time, Rabbi Brickner felt that Jewish masses did not want women's ordination, and Rabbi Levi felt that it would break the chain of tradition. A number of other rabbis, including Morgenstern, raised the issue of practicality, and asked if it was expedient and worthwhile to ordain women rabbis.

In his *responsum*, Lauterbach claimed that ordaining women would cause a schism between the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Movements. To this point as well, the rabbis argued vehemently. Rabbi

Englander replied, "During all the conferences in recent years there are many actions that we would have not taken had we feared this [schism].... Twenty years ago this conference put itself on record favoring absolute religious equality of women with men. Are we going back on our own action?"[40]

Rabbi Raisin echoed Rabbi Englander when he stated that the functions of modern rabbis is very different from those of the past. He claimed that because Reform Jews are followers of the prophets more so than the rabbis, and since the Bible had recorded instances of women prophets, Reform Judaism would not be inconsistent if they went on record in favor of female ordination.

These two rabbis were not the only ones fearless of causing a schism in denominations. Rabbi Joseph L. Baron also felt it irrelevant to discuss the possible break with other Jews. He stated, "And if women are not recognized as leaders in the orthodox synagogue, let us not forget that neither are we recognized as such. There is a distinct difference made, even in the Yiddish terminology between a *rav* and a *rabbi*. Again, we broke with tradition long ago when we declared that a rabbi need not be an authority on questions of *Kashruth*; and I need not mention, which, from the point of view of orthodoxy, is the greater offense."[41]

Another point of discussion came in response to Lauterbach's claim that a woman cannot be both a professional and mother at the same time.

To this point as well, many of the rabbis voiced their disagreement. Perhaps the most eloquent statement was that of Rabbi David Neumark, father of Martha Neumark. He stated, "If she [the woman rabbi] marries and chooses to remain a rabbi, and God blesses her, she will retire for a few months and provide a substitute, as rabbis generally do when they are sick or meet with an automobile accident. When she comes back, she will be a better rabbi for the experience. The rabbinate may help the women, and the woman rabbi may help the rabbinate."[42]

Though not all of the rabbis that spoke in the discussion were opposed to the *responsum*, the majority seemed to be in favor of women rabbis. On July 5, 1922, the secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) sent a letter to the secretary of the HUC Board of Governors expressing the opinion of the CCAR on the ordination of women. He reported that, "the resolution favoring the ordination of women as rabbis was carried amid great enthusiasm by a vote of 56 to 11."[43]

Despite the votes of the both the HUC faculty and the CCAR favoring the ordination of women, on February 10, 1923, the following statement was issued by the Board of Governors. "Resolved, after full discussion of the subject of the ordination of Women as Rabbis, that it is the belief of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College that no change should be made in the present practice of limiting to males the right to matriculate for the purpose of entering the rabbinate."[44]

It is encouraging to note, that in 1923, before many of the advancements of women's equality had been made in the world, that the Hebrew Union College faculty, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis were committed enough to the principle of women's equality that they were ready to accept the ordination of women. Unfortunately, the members of the Board of Governors had the final say and sealed fate to the contrary. Perhaps because the Board sought not to have The College make tremendous waves in the movement, or because the ordination of women would bring such a significant change to The College, the vote fell short.

Dr. Ellen Umansky, a scholar in the field of women's studies, believes that the vote failed because of a lackluster approach taken by the faculty and CCAR. The reasons offered for the need for female ordination were not convincing, and instead, the overriding sentiment given was that there was nothing preventing the ordination of women.[45] It was too overwhelming a position for the board to take simply because there was nothing preventing the ordination of women. They needed strong affirmative reasons, imperatives and voices.

The discussion of women rabbis was resumed again in the 1960's when the UAHC voted to support the ordination of women at HUC-JIR. In marked contrast to earlier opposition, the HUC-JIR Board of Governors did not object to women's ordination. In 1968, without much fanfare, the

college finally decided to admit and ordain women in the rabbinical program.[46]

The Debates Over The Ordination Of Women: JTS

The HUC debates in the 20's were largely contained to the Hebrew Union College, and did not have extensive influence in the other seminaries. Though female students had been studying at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in various capacities for many years, it wasn't until the ordination of Sally Priesand, that feminists in the Conservative Movement began to create a stir. An all embracing group of women known as Ezrat Nashim was founded, and in 1972 they showed up at a Rabbinical Assembly meeting arguing for women's rights.[47] In 1973, the same year that women were given the right to be counted in a *minyan*,[48] the seminary refused to accept female rabbinical students.[49] In 1974 a minority report was offered which declared that women should be permitted to serve as witnesses in legal proceedings, including *ketubot* and *gittin*.[50] According to Rabbinical Assembly bylaws, if a decision is supported by a certain number of committee members, then the practice supported can be an acceptable option for a congregation. Therefore, in 1974, congregations were given the option to allow women to serve as witnesses. The debate went back and forth and in 1977, the Rabbinical Assembly passed a resolution for the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary to, "establish an

interdisciplinary commission to study all aspects of the role of women as spiritual leaders in the Conservative Movement."[51] The fourteen member commission deliberated for two years on *halakhic*, ethical, and other considerations involved in the ordination of women. The report advocated, that irrespective on one's views of *halakha*, the role of the rabbi incorporates a wide variety of functions. Among these, teaching, preaching, counseling, officiating at religious ceremonies, representing the Jewish community, etc. Functions such as serving as *shaliach tzibur* in a prayer service, receiving an *aliyah*, or even signing a *ketubah* or *get* are not among the essential functions of a rabbi.[52] Ultimately, they came to this decision, "the signatories to this majority opinion recommend that qualified women be ordained as rabbis in the Conservative Movement."[53] A minority opinion was held by three members of the commission who remained opposed to the ordination of women rabbis in Conservative Judaism. Unfortunately, the opinion of the commission was not strong enough to dictate a reversal in policy.

Around the same time, the Conservative Movement undertook a survey of their constituency on women's ordination. It is noteworthy that within the movement at the time, many members were open to, if not in favor of having women rabbis. In Table II of the Liebman - Shapiro study, 38.6% of the 963 respondents said that they would be disappointed, or probably leave the movement if women were NOT ordained. 15.1% said

they would be disappointed, or would probably leave is women WERE ordained.[54] Despite all of these proactive stances on female ordination, as well as the opinion of a large proportion of congregants, on December 20, 1979, the JTS faculty decided not to ordain women.[55] The decision not to ordain women demonstrates that for JTS, the professors of Talmud, who offered most of the dissenting opinions, and who had threatened to boycott if women were granted ordination, were the ones holding much of the power on the faculty, most definitely on matters of ordination and law. From this decision not to ordain women, it also shows that the faculty of JTS has more power to enact or prevent change that the members of the Rabbinical Assembly, an inherent part of the structure of the movement. Unlike the HUC decision where the board went against the decision of the faculty, with JTS, the Talmud faculty had the ultimate say.

The debate in the Conservative Movement did not end with the suggestion of the commission, the views of the faculty, or, the Liebman-Shapiro study. In 1983 position papers were compiled from members of the JTS faculty both in support, and opposition to the ordination of women. Many of the papers dealt with specific points covered by the commission.

In marked contrast to the HUC faculty who spent more time discussing the principle of women's ordination, as opposed to *halakha*, the JTS debates revolved more on *halakhic* issues because they see themselves as *halakhic* Jews. Though, important issues of women's

equality were raised to bolster the argument in favor of women's ordination. In her paper on the ordination of women, Anne Lapidus Lerner, argued that *halakha* permits, and ethics compels the ordination of women. She identified the following changes in the Conservative Movement that led to the need to ordain women: The recognition that women deserve more and improved education, family seating, *B'not Mitzvah, aliyot* for women, permitting women to count in a *minyan*, as well as new *ketubbot* that recognized the rights of the wife.[56]

In another paper arguing in favor of the ordination of women, Robert Gordis tackled *halakhic* arguments. He argued that the *halakhic* argument cited against women's ordination that "women are exempt from the obligation of prayer" and therefore cannot serve as rabbis, is not adequate. "The major functions of the modern rabbi, preaching, teaching, conducting funeral services, serving as *mesadder kiddushin*, 'officiant" at marriage ceremonies, personal counseling and adult education are none of them prohibited by extant rabbinic sources." [57] And if that is not reason enough, he concludes that "The truth is that the *halakha* neither sanctions nor forbids the ordination of women - it never contemplated the possibility."[58]

David Weiss Halivni, a JTS faculty member who left the seminary because of this issue, argued for the rabbinic prohibitions that Gordis dismissed. He cited specific rabbinic prohibitions for women not acting as *shelihei tzibur* (14th century Orchot Chayiim, p. 37 and Kolbo, p. 8c.).[59] He

stated that if a woman is ineligible to serve as *shaliach tzibur* in place of a man, then they cannot recite marriage blessings, or act as officiator (*m'saderet Kiddushin)*, rendering them unable to perform crucial rabbinic functions. He also disputed the recommendation that JTS ordain women who vow to fulfill all of the time-bound commandments. He argued that women could either annul their vow, stop practicing, or worse, if they did observe all the *mitzvot*, it would seem to congregants as though Judaism was a religion only intended for clergy because the only females abiding by the commandments were rabbis. Halivni suggested another argument based on time constraints. It was Halivni's belief that the committee had not spent sufficient time exploring female ordination, and should consequently delay the vote. Finally, he suggested that women should become *shochetim* or *mohelim* because there were no specific *halakhic* issues preventing them.[60]

The variant opinions offered by the members of the JTS faculty indicate the diversity of opinion in the movement. The voices of those in favor of women's ordination gained volume as the decision continued to be debated. Also, the fact that both the Reform and Reconstructionist Movements had successfully been ordaining women rabbis for years, as well as the continued quest for the equality of women, compelled the conservative leaders to discuss the issue.

In May 1980, the Rabbinical Assembly went on record as favoring the ordination of women. In 1983 the RA attempted to admit an HUC ordained woman for membership, the attempt failed. In the Spring of 1983, JTS Chancellor Cohen, an influential part of the process, brought the issue to the floor again. Finally, in October of 1983, the faculty voted to ordain women. In 1984 twenty four women began the JTS rabbinical program. In May of 1985, Amy Eilberg officially ended the debate when she became the first ordained Conservative woman rabbi.[61]

Functions of Women Rabbis

Dr. Sarah Lieberman, a religious school principal from Massachusetts addressed the Conservative Movement's commission on the ordination of women rabbis and asked the following question, "What does the contemporary rabbi do which a woman is not capable of doing?"[62]

In order to fully answer the question, it is important to examine the functions that women rabbis are expected to perform on a daily basis. Are there certain functions that most rabbis find themselves performing? Do children and spouses prevent women from serving these functions? Can a pregnant rabbi lead a congregation? Does being a woman hinder counseling relationships with congregants, or does it enhance them? Are there differences in functions between male and female rabbis? Do congregants treat the rabbi differently because she is a woman?

In the vast field of work done on women rabbis, very few list the specific functions of the female rabbi. Moreover, while there has been significant scholarship done on the figure of the female rabbi and her place in the congregation, much is no longer relevant. While a female senior rabbi might have been an anomaly 10 or 15 years ago, it has become more commonplace today. And while it might have been socially unacceptable for a woman to choose a part-time pulpit, or take time off to raise a family, it has finally become accepted. The amount of time that both male and female rabbis are spending with their family, as well as the desire to have a Shabbat at home with the family are also changes appearing in recent years. Accordingly, now that the number of women rabbis ordained has increased dramatically, more are serving as senior rabbis, and the entire rabbinate is undergoing change, the daily responsibilities of women rabbis have changed.

To get a current perspective on the functions of women rabbis, rabbis and professors who have done research on women rabbis were interviewed and questioned about the primary functions as well as the changes that women rabbis have brought to the rabbinate. Of the six rabbis interviewed, four were ordained by the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in the 70's. They will be remembered in history as four of the first eleven women rabbis ordained. The fifth, ordained much later, currently serves as the co-coordinator of the Women's

Rabbinic Network (WRN), the sixth is recorded in history as the first ordained woman in the Reconstructionist Movement. One of the professors is affiliated with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The second is a professor of religion at a private college, and has spent many years researching and writing about women in the rabbinate.

When asked about their regular functions, the majority stressed the same activities. Those include: Leading the congregation in worship on both Shabbat evening and Shabbat morning; delivering sermons at services; teaching adult education, working with *B'nai Mitzvah* students both before and during the ceremony; officiating at funerals; meeting with conversion students and officiating at their conversion; Baby-naming ceremonies for boys and girls; teaching Confirmation class as well as other religious school classes; counseling wedding couples before marriage and officiating at the ceremonies; leading *shiva minyanim*; and visiting sick congregants in the hospital.

Aside from these primary functions, there were numerous other functions that represent the diversity of each woman's pulpit. Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, rabbi at B'nai Yehuda - Beth Shalom congregation in the Southern Chicago suburbs, spends a large part of each week attending meetings. In addition to the school board meetings, there are Temple board meetings, ritual committee meetings, the Jewish council co-op (composed of three Synagogues and the JCC), ministerial meetings,

meetings of the Chicago Board of Rabbis, and the Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis.[63]

Rabbi Rosalind Gold, in Reston, VA echoes the notion of attending meetings, but stressed a separate category of meetings. On a regular basis she maintains contact with her congregational president, both purposefully, as well as "just to check-in."[64]

In San Diego, Rabbi Deborah Prinz spends a portion of her time involved in Outreach. Both in her congregation, as well as in the community she is involved in interfaith activities. She helped to bring the "Stepping Stones" program (now called Pathways), and a "Taste of Judaism" to the area. Though no longer on the committee for each, she remains involved. Additionally, she is on a clergy council in the area. When faced with an incident of graffiti at her Congregation last year, she and fellow clergy from the area got together, responded to the situation, and provided the community with a follow-up program.[65]

Rabbi Laura Geller, Senior Rabbi at Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, also does a fair amount of work in the community, including work with Teach for America, and speaking engagements at the JCC. Unlike the other rabbis, she stresses that one of her functions of rabbi is fundraiser.[66]

When thinking of the primary functions of rabbis, primarily liturgical and spiritual in nature, the notion of fundraising might not come readily to mind. Jews and money tend to go hand-in-hand in modern lore, yet rabbis

and money are often not associated together. There appears to be a desire to keep money and prayer separate, like the holy from the profane. And, as the leader associated with prayer, the rabbi is distanced from finances. However, as Rabbi Geller demonstrates, the rabbi is often expected to bring funds into the congregation. At various stages in development, congregations undergo changes to the building and program. Whether through the expansion of classrooms, administrative, or social space, or through the building of a completely new building, the rabbi frequently is expected to use congregational connections to help solicit funds, thereby spending fair amounts of time serving as fundraiser.

Rabbi Amy Schwartzman, a senior rabbi in the Washington DC, area mentions another form of connection with congregants as being part of her primary function. She leads monthly discussions for her working congregants. Meeting in various offices downtown, she leads discussion on "Bringing values into the workplace," and other such topics. With the younger generation, she touches their lives through *B'nai Mitzvah*. Last year her congregation welcomed 96 new *B'nai Mitzvah* into the community, and this year they will welcome 72. When asked if she spends her time attending all of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah parties she emphatically responded no! She has a rule that if the party is at the Temple she will attend for twenty minutes, if the party is outside the Temple she does not attend at all, unless the Bar Mitzvah is a child of a board member.[67]

The functions that these women rabbis describe closely resemble those of their male counterparts. Meetings, counseling, officiating at life cycle events, leading services, are all primary functions of male rabbis. Is there a difference between functions of male and female rabbis? The majority of rabbis interviewed said that they could see no difference between themselves and their male colleagues. A few have male assistant rabbis, or have had male senior rabbis and have compared the functions over the years. While the functions themselves might not be different, many of the women do speak of a difference in how they perform those functions.

With regard to conversion, Rabbi Geller will not officiate at a *Hatafat Dam Brit* ceremony, but for women, she will take them into the *mikveh.*[68] Rabbi Prinz speculates that a difference in her style might be to stress the concept of a *brit* ceremony for both girls and boys.[69] Similarly, Rabbi Gold cites baby-naming ceremonies as one of her regular functions, but explains a possible difference in how she officiates. She is apt to hold and play with the baby during the ceremony. She is frequently told by her congregants how much they enjoy seeing her interact with the baby. In an attempt to put the difference into words she said, "it's because women are socialized different from men and do things differently."[70]

Rabbi Gold is correct that traditionally men and women have been ascribed to different social roles. However, it is important to point out that

just easily as she might hold and play with babies at their naming services, there are also male rabbis who look forward to holding the baby and introducing him or her to the congregation. Whether or not a woman holds a baby at a ceremony is not the issue, rather, the emphasis that female rabbis put on the life cycle event is a contribution they have added to the rabbinate!

A difference in function can also be attributed to how congregants view the rabbi. For example, Rabbi Dreyfus has had a few women from other area congregations come to her for counseling saying, "I can talk to you, but I can't talk to my male rabbi about this."[71] For some congregants, having a rabbi of the same gender may make it easier to discuss personal issues. And for many women, it may be intimidating to discuss issues of child-birth or discrimination with a male rabbi. Having a female rabbi can open up new possibilities for female congregants.

Congregational responses to gender are often evident in interactions with the Temple Sisterhood, and Brotherhood. Rabbi Prinz explains that she is present at every Sisterhood meeting. She is invited to all of their programs, and because they are at the Temple during business hours, she frequently attends for a portion of the time. With regards to the Brotherhood, she just "pops" in to their meetings and is not invited to most programs. She sees a subtle difference in regard to gender role. In a wonderful illustration, she relayed a story of their latest river rafting trip.

She was not invited on the trip because she would then have been the only woman with the group. If it were a male rabbi he would have been invited and encouraged to participate. [72]

Both Rabbi Weinberg Dreyfus and Rabbi Schwartzman disagree. In fact, in her congregation, Rabbi Schwartzman and her male assistant rabbi try to be aware of expected gender trends and push the stereotype away. Rabbi Dreyfus speaks at Sisterhood functions, and attends Men's club breakfasts. She also bakes for any bake sales, only because it fulfills her role as mother in the congregation.[73] And, throughout the Movement, there are many male rabbis who actively participate in and encourage sisterhood programs.

In the JTS community, Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner does see a difference between male and female rabbis. She explains that more women tend to be willing to settle for small congregations. Also, they tend more to go into educational positions or chaplaincy than men. For example, many of the Rabbis-in-Residence at the Solomon Schechter schools are women. It is important to note that there is still some degree of animosity over women rabbis at JTS. There are under 150 women in the Rabbinical Assembly and there is almost a universal percentage of fewer women rabbis than males in pulpits.[74] One explanation for this phenomenon is the thirteen year time lag between the ordination of women at HUC and JTS. HUC women rabbis have had more time to further

opportunities for growth, and had less opposition to face surrounding their ordination than did JTS. It would be interesting to track the numbers of women rabbis serving pulpits in another ten years and compare that to where HUC is now.

One of the pieces of contention in the debate over women rabbis stems from the issue of a rabbi's marital status. Namely, can a rabbi be both wife and mother? It is clear from his *responsum* that Jacob Lauterbach was convinced that a woman could not reasonably do both, is there validity to his claim?

The answer to that question is multi-faceted. Most women believe that they can adequately perform both roles, in fact, that their rabbinate may be enriched by their motherhood. There are others though, who believe that the congregational rabbinate demands many sacrifices and children suffer in the long run. In recent years there have been women leaving pulpits in order to spend more time with their children. There is not one single perception of the impact that pregnancy, spouses, and children have on women rabbis.

The conflict between rabbi and mother begins with the rabbi's pregnancy. Seeing a pregnant rabbi leading services can be jarring for some congregants. Pregnancy is a visible sign of a rabbi's sexuality, which is something that many congregants try to dissociate from their clergy. With pregnancy comes the issue of maternity leave. When Rabbi Prinz

was interviewing for her second congregational position the board was very concerned with pregnancy. In her contract, they stipulated that if she became pregnant, she would be responsible for providing proper coverage for the congregation. When she shared this story with Malcolm Stern (then CCAR Placement Director), the CCAR began to create a policy that provided time off for parenting for both male and female rabbis.[75]

Rabbi Schwartzman found that when she was pregnant it sparked conversation in the congregation. She reports that in the same way that boundaries are blurred in society, they can be blurred in the congregation. She cites the media as one of the best ways to illustrate these "gray" areas. On television there are numerous commercials for female products like tampons, yeast infection treatments, etc. Though the advent of Viagra has increased discussion of "male issues" in the media, it is still rare to see a commercial for a specifically male product like Jock-itch creme. She says the same issues appear in her congregation. Before she became pregnant she encountered many members who felt it their need to know her personal life. "When are you going to get pregnant?" During her pregnancy, her congregants discussed it publicly. "Are you going to nurse?" She received much advice and noted that it was constantly a subject of conversation. She is not sure that the same open candor would not have also occurred in a law firm with a female lawyer.[76]

Rabbi Dreyfus, who holds the distinction of being the first rabbi ordained while pregnant, encountered other issues with her pregnancy. She opted not to go into a full-time congregation immediately after ordination. She encountered two types of resistance. From males she heard condescending and paternalistic comments, "of course you'll stay home." From the women rabbis she received some true hostility. "Why are you doing this, you will brand us as unreliable (if you don't immediately take a congregation.)" From her ordination in 1979 until 1987 she fulfilled various part-time rabbinic positions, including: hospital chaplaincy, education internships, high holiday positions, and part-time congregations. As she prepared for the birth of her third child she looked to switch from her part-time congregation 40 miles away from her home to one closer. When her successor came in for an interview he offered the board the following quote, "I may not be as attractive as your rabbi, but I won't get pregnant and leave you."[77] Indeed, the issue of pregnant rabbis can bring out interesting reactions to fellow Jews.

The stories told by these women highlight some of the difficulties encountered by pregnant rabbis, there are many others. For example, how do women balance the physical changes that their bodies experience during pregnancy (like nausea or constant fatigue) with their responsibility to the congregation? How much time do you spend on maternity leave

when the congregation is waiting for your return? How much time can you spend with your baby?

Spending time with the baby is an issue that seems to be constant in the rabbinate. It emerges into, how much time can you give to your husband and children while still functioning as rabbi? This issue is one with which many women rabbis struggle. When a rabbi goes to meetings three to four nights a week, she often feels as though she is neglecting the children. And when her children are home from school in the afternoon, often it is the only time that she has to work with other children in the congregation on *B'nai Mitzvah* preparation. On the other hand, because a rabbi has the ability to be more flexible during the day, she is often able to attend programs and meetings at the children's school that other parents are not able to attend. Additionally, there are many rabbis who treasure their days off as a chance to focus entirely on the children.

Being the rabbi's husband can also be difficult. One rabbi reported that when she was single she resented some of the extraordinary demands on her time. However, after she was married she had to deal with the looks from her husband when his time with her was taken away by the congregation. As demonstrated from the diverse functions that women rabbis are performing, they are often expected to participate in various social functions in the community and congregation. At these occasions, the husband is frequently just seen as the escort, it is really the rabbi that is

the center of attention. It takes a secure partner willing to deal with his spouse having unconditional attention.

Issues surrounding pregnancy, marriage, and child-rearing seem challenging, and it is crucial to point out that while they may emerge more prevalently in women, they can be just as problematic for men. Any male rabbi who is devoted to his marriage and family is going to feel conflicted when he is called to the Temple for meetings three or four nights a week. Furthermore, in recent years, society has placed added emphasis on the role that fathers play in the lives of their children. Men are spending less time at the office and more time coaching their daughters on the soccer team. To a male rabbi whose congregation prevents him from being at his daughter's soccer team, he may feel quite a bit of resentment. Issues of spending time with the family have become central to the lives of dedicated rabbis and could prevent a woman from becoming a rabbi just as easily as they could prevent a man. Whether you are a man or a woman, gender isn't going to prevent someone from feeling guilt when they miss tucking their child into bed for the fourth night in a row.

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[1]Gary P. Zola, "Twenty Years of Women in the Rabbinate: An Introductory Essay," in *Women Rabbis: Exploration and Celebration*, (Cincinnati, New York, Los Angeles, Jerusalem: HUC-JIR Rabbinic Alumni Association Press, 1996), 1.

[2] Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980* (New York: KTAV Publishing House and Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1981), 76.

[3] Jacob Rader Marcus, "The First Woman Rabbi" found in *American Jewish Archives News from the Press Bureau*: (New York: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, February 1972.)

[4] Ellen M. Umansky and Dianne Ashton, eds., *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality - a sourcebook* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 129.

[5] Jacob Rader Marcus, 78.

[6] Jacob Rader Marcus, *The American Jewish Woman: A Documentary History* (New York: KTAV Publishing House and Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1981), 381.

[7] The details of the debate will be elaborated further later in this chapter.

[8] Pamela S. Nadell, *Women Who Would Be Rabbis: A History of Women's Ordination 1889 - 1985* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 71-72.

[9] Nadell, Pamela S., 84.

[10] Nadell, Pamela S., 80-81.

[11] Nadell, Pamela S., 87.

[12] Her ordination certificate is included in the Appendix for reference.

[13] Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewish Archives Press Bureau, 1972.*

[14] Quote in, Pamela S. Nadell, 123.

[15] Pamela S. Nadell, 125.

[16] Ellen M. Umansky, "Tehilla Lichtenstein" in *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*. Paula E. Hyman and Deborah Dash Moore, eds., vol. 1 A-L (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 850.

[17] Ibid., p. 850.

[18] Jonathan D Sarna, "From Antoinette Brown Blackwell to Sally Priesand: An Historical Perspective on the Emergence of Women in the American Rabbinate." In, Zola, *Women Rabbis: Exploration and Celebration,* 44.

[19] Jonathan D. Sarna, 45.

[20] Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewish Women*, 131.

[21] Paula E. Hyman "Bat Mitzvah" in *Jewish Woman in America: An Historical Perspective*, vol. I, A-L, 126-128.

[22] Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewish Women*, 144.

[23] Marion Kaplan, "Betty Friedan" in *Jewish Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. I, A-L, 482-485.

[24] Ibid., 483.

[25] Quotes in Pamela S. Nadell, 150.

[26] Quote in Pamela S.Nadell, 154.

[27] Quote in Pamela S. Nadell, 155. Emphasis mine.

[28] Quote in Pamela S. Nadell, 164.

[29] Pamela S. Nadell, 166.

[30] As listed in Hebrew Union College library card catalog.

[31] Rabbi Daniel B. Syme, *Why I Am A Reform Jew* (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1989), 166.

[32] AJA, MS. Col.#5, Box 23, Minutes of the Hebrew Union College Board of Governors, Jan. 1921 - Dec. 1922, 81-83.

[33] AJA, Minutes of the HUC Board of Governors, 82.

[34] AJA, Minutes of the HUC Board of Governors, 162.

[35] AJA, Minutes of the HUC Board of Governors, 161-162.

[36] Jacob Z. Lauterbach, "*Responsum On Question, "Shall Women Be Ordained Rabbis*?" in Jacob Rader Marcus, *Documents*, 739.

[37] Ibid., 740-742.

[38] CCAR Yearbook, "Discussion on Shall Women be Ordained as Rabbis." (New Jersey: CCAR Press,1922), Volume XXXII, 168.

[39] CCAR Yearbook, 164.

[40] CCAR Yearbook, 166.

[41] CCAR Yearbook, 169.

[42] CCAR Yearbook, 177.

[43] AJA, Minutes of the HUC Board of Governors, 1922, 8.

[44] AJA, MS. Col. #5, Box 23, Minutes of the Hebrew Union College Board of Governors, Jan. 1923 - Dec. 1924. No Page numbers given, minutes from Feb. 10, 1923.

[45] Ellen M. Umansky, "Women's Journey Towards Rabbinic Ordination" in *Women Rabbis*, 33.

[46] Gary P. Zola, "JTS, HUC, and Women Rabbis" in *Journal of Reform Judaism*. Fall, 1984.

[47] Anne Lapidus Lerner, "A Brief Position Paper on the Ordination of Women" in *Ordination of Women* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1983), 2

[48]Jacob Rader Marcus, *American Jewish Women*, 155.

[49] Pamela S. Nadell, 193.

[50] Rabbi Gordon Tucker, *Final Report Of The Commission For The Study Of The Ordination of Women as Rabbis* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, January 30, 1979), 15.

[51] Rabbi Gordon Tucker, *Final Report Of The Commission For The Study Of The Ordination of Women as Rabbis,*1.

[52] Gordon Tucker, Gordon, 16.

[53] Gordon Tucker, 26.

[54] Anne Lapidus Lerner, "A Brief Position Paper on the Ordination of Women" Appendix D.

[55] Gary P. Zola, "JTS, HUC, and Women Rabbis" p. 41.

[56] Anne Lapidus Lerner, "A Brief Position Paper on the Ordination of Women," 9,10,13.

[57] Robert Gordis, "On the Ordination of Women" in *Ordination of Women* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1983), 8.

[58]Robert Gordis, 10.

[59] David Weiss Halivni, "On Ordination of Women" in *Ordination of Women* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1983), 9.

[60] David Weiss Halivni, "On Ordination of Women,"18.

[61] Pamela S. Nadell, 211-214.

[62] Reena Sigman Friedman, "The Politics of Women's Ordination," *Lilith Magazine*, No. 6, 1979, 9.

[63] Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, 5 October, 1999,Cincinnati, OH.

[64] Rabbi Rosalind Gold, 5 October, 1999, via telephone.

[65] Rabbi Deborah Prinz, 4 October, 1999, via telephone.

[66] Rabbi Laura Geller, 6 October 1999, via telephone.

[67] Rabbi Amy Schwartzman, 13 October, 1999, via telephone.

[68] Rabbi Laura Geller, 6 October, 1999.

[69] Rabbi Deborah Prinz, 4 October, 1999.

[70] Rabbi Rosalind Gold, 5 October, 1999.

[71] Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, 5 October, 1999.

[72] Rabbi Deborah Prinz, 4 October, 1999.

[73] Rabbi Amy Schwartzman, 13 October, 1999, and Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, 5 October, 1999.

[74] Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner, 13 October, 1999, via telephone.

[75] Rabbi Deborah Prinz, 4 October, 1999.

[76] Rabbi Amy Schwartzman, 13 October, 1999.

[77] Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, 5 October, 1999.

Chapter 5
Changes Women Have Brought To the Rabbinate

Rather than discouraging more women from entering the rabbinate, or forcing them to leave the rabbinate once they got married as Jacob Lauterbach predicted in his 1922 *responsum*, issues of marriage and family have led to positive changes in the rabbinate.

The rabbinate of today is different than when Sally Priesand was ordained in 1972. The common sentiment shared by the four rabbis who were ordained in the late 70's is that women rabbis are different today. They stress that for a while it seemed that those who went through earlier were kicking and screaming and demanding equality. There was a burden that came with being a rabbi in the early 80's, whether because of inequality in the field or backlash from congregations who didn't want a female rabbi. At the beginning women rabbis were constantly trying to make sure that things went well so that other women could get ordained and have jobs.

Rabbis Prinz, Drefus, Geller, and, Gold all emphasized how hard it was to be a rabbi when they were ordained. They shared the sense that they were doing something that raised eyebrows in the community. They all mentioned that the majority of women rabbis today have no sense of history, of how hard it was. Rabbi Dreyfus explains that, "they tend to be overly optimistic, confident, and think that the gender-bias period is over."[1]

Rabbi Geller argues a similar, crucial point, that there are rabbis today who believe that being a woman rabbi is not a feminist issue. She says, "that it is hard to imagine that a woman rabbi wouldn't be a feminist. What we are doing has EVERYTHING to do with feminism!"[2]

Fortunately, these women did have the sense that they were fighting for a cause, and opened new ground for women in the rabbinate. As they struggled with placement, gender issues, equality, and marriage and family issues, they brought new quality of life developments into the rabbinate that are experienced by both men and women.

Once women became rabbis and achieved equality in Judaism, the language with which they communicated their faith became inadequate for some. Reform Judaism used to exist almost exclusively on the notion of *Aveinu Malkeinu*, Our Father our King; God was always referred to as He. When women entered the rabbinate and children began to see that both men and women became rabbis, the Movement also became sensitive to the fact that children should be able to hear God as He or She, depending on their own beliefs. Sally Priesand, in a postscript article celebrating 20 years in the rabbinate, explains: "Whenever we refer to the rabbi as he, rather than he or she, we set limits in the minds of women and men. Whenever we refer to God as He, ignoring the feminine characteristics of *Shechinah*, we create an image that interferes with every individual's right to imagine God in any way he or she finds meaningful. And whenever we

create liturgy that contains only female imagery, we run the risk of destroying for some the ability to pray as part of our community."[3] Rabbi Priesand is not advocating using only masculine language or only feminine language, rather a mix of the two – or, separate prayers that mention the mothers as well as the fathers. This quest has taken on great significance for many Reform Jews. Congregations have found the Gates of Prayer prayer book to be inadequate when it comes to gendered language, and the CCAR has published a temporary gender neutral edition until a new prayer book can be created. Eliminating all gendered references may not be the best solution. Taking away *Avinu Malkeinu* from a Yom Kippur service might help some expand their concept of God, but might alienate another. Finding creative ways to highlight both the feminine and masculine sides to God, at different times, might offer a compromise for both.

In Biblical commentary as well, the absence of the female presence has been noticed. Women and men are no longer comfortable listening only to the Patriarchs. In 1997 the Women of Reform Judaism published a women's commentary on the Torah. The commentary brings together women clergy, scholars and educators of the Reform Movement who comment on three portions from Genesis, Exodus and Numbers. Not only are the Biblical women gaining mention, but modern female scholars are having their voices heard as well.

In addition to gender-sensitive language and women's Torah commentary, women in the rabbinate have brought about an increase in life cycle events for girls and women. Most noticeably are services of *Brit Bat*, a covenant ceremony for newborn daughters that celebrates their entrance into Judaism. *Lifecycles*, by Rabbi Debra Orenstein contains two volumes of life cycle events for women. They include rituals for stillborn birth, miscarriage, divorce, beginning of menstruation, and, menopause. Both male and female rabbis have sensed a need from their female congregants to have Judaism present during the crucial times in their lives. Though the rabbis in the Talmud didn't find it necessary to celebrate menstruation, since women have been included in the rabbinate, some of today's Jewish women certainly do. In finding a voice for previously silent aspects of a woman's life, women rabbis have brought a level of diversity to the rabbinate.

The influence of women is also being heard in the variety of alternative worship and gathering events. In her work with women rabbis across the country, Dr. Ellen Umansky has noticed a difference in how women express their Judaism. She cites the rise of *Rosh Chodesh* groups, women's discussion breakfasts, women's study retreats and women-only retreats as indicating an increased female presence in Judaism.[4]

In addition to the tangible evidence that women have had on the rabbinate, there is much that has changed, but may not be visible to the

un-trained eye. The ordination of women has raised quality of life issues for both men and women. In an attempt to prove that a women can be both rabbi and mother, many women have struggled to introduce the concept of a balance into the rabbinate. Instead of falling in the patriarchal model of rabbis who found it necessary to devote their entire selves to their congregations, seen in many of the older male rabbis, women are drawing boundaries. "Speaking of their need for a 'balanced life' and their desire to be a 'whole person' whose life is not circumscribed by the synagogue, they [women rabbis] argue that the rabbinate need not consume all their time and energy "to the exclusion of all other things."[5]

Not letting the rabbinate consume them has led women to seek ¾ time positions in congregations allowing them to be home when their children arrive from school. It has also led to split pulpits. Rabbi Shira Milgrom and Rabbi Tom Weiner are an example of a shared pulpit in White Plains, NY. They have a rabbinic partnership that allows both to be role models for congregants. By serving the congregation together they allow the other to have Shabbat with their family at least once a month, and demonstrate that rabbis do not have to be on the pulpit at all times for it to function and for them to be recognized as rabbis. They not only preach about spending time with their family, they act on their words. In order to help congregants feel that both rabbis have the same position and status in

the congregation they renovated the building and came up with a plan so that both offices are exactly the same, one across from the other.[6]

Rabbi Sandy Sasso and her husband are another example of how sharing a pulpit can enhance the quality of a rabbis life. She and her husband Dennis are married, and share equally the responsibilities of their Indianapolis congregation. Upon ordination, she served the congregation on a part-time basis and her husband full-time so that she could be home with their children. When the children went to school she increased to full-time hours. Their functions are divided equally between the two. They both share the pulpit, deliver *divrei Torah*, sermons on High Holidays, engage in pastoral work and lead services. She works with the *B'nai Mitzvah* students, he teaches the conversion classes. They co-officiate at most life cycle events; with one reading liturgy and the other giving the charge.[7]

Unlike the model of Shira Milgram and Tom Weiner, Rabbi Sasso and her husband do not share their rabbinate in order to reduce their hours at the congregation, or allow for one Shabbat off a month. They share the congregation so that both husband and wife can be together every Shabbat.

Rabbi Sasso explains that there can be problems associated with sharing a pulpit with her husband. For example, they hardly ever leave the building, and tend to take more home with them at night. There is little

difference between the congregation and outside life. On the other hand, she and her husband can have business lunches together every day. They are fortunate to see each other frequently, and are able to jointly share in the lives of their congregants. She thinks that his has been very good for her family, and her children have a strong sense that they have a Jewish congregational home. Everyone in the congregation knows their children. If she and her husband were at two congregations this might not be the case and would be an issue for the family.[8]

Not only is their model of a shared pulpit a contribution to the rabbinate, but Rabbi Sasso and her husband demonstrate another change that has occurred since women have been ordained; that of rabbi-rabbi couples. With increasing frequency, rabbis who study together are falling in love and starting families together. Some share congregations, others have two separate congregations, and still others have one spouse in the congregational rabbinate and one using rabbinic skills in a different way. Though it can be difficult for two rabbi families, it can also be refreshing to be married to someone else who shares the same passion about being a rabbi.

All of these issues play a part in shaping congregations for the future and finding ways for the rabbi to have personal and family time. Spending one Shabbat a month at home does not require a shared pulpit. It has become common in pulpits with more than one rabbi, or in those with an

active lay-leadership to do the same. In all cases, it reflects a desire on the part of both male and female rabbis to spend more time with their family, while still being dedicated to their congregations.

Other rabbis are now re-defining the full time rabbinate in terms of a 40-hour work week. They are attempting to prove that an energetic and well-organized rabbi can be just as productive in 40 hours as those who work 70 and 80 hours a week.[9] For example, if a rabbi does not attend every Bar Mitzvah or wedding reception, or if they empower lay leaders to conduct Shabbat morning services, they can decrease their time in the congregation, while still fulfilling all of their responsibilities.

Newly installed CCAR president, Charles Kroloff addressed the issue of rabbis taking care of themselves at the conference last Spring. He said, "We need to take better care of ourselves so that we can take better care of others and also 'get a life'."[10]

He credits the realization of this need to the introduction of female rabbis in congregations. "I watched some women choose part-time positions so that they could better balance being mothers, spouses and partners. I saw some women become senior rabbis of large pulpits, enter Hillel or academia, juggling demanding responsibilities and, at the same time, keeping their priorities straight. I saw them learning how to take care of themselves and their family and still be mighty good rabbis. And then I saw some of my male colleagues starting to do the same."[11] The very fact

that a CCAR president openly acknowledged the influences that women rabbis have had on their male counterparts demonstrates the global changes that the ordination of women has brought to Reform Judaism.

Rabbi Geller also speaks of the need for a rabbi to take care of herself. She explains that the desire to have friends, exercise, be in a loving relationship, and nurture children is not gender-related, it just took women to say that it's off balance.[12] Fortunately, many male and female rabbis are attempting to harmonize these aspects of their life to produce happier, healthier rabbis.

Women rabbis have also brought a sense of intimacy to the rabbinate. In an article on women rabbis in *Lilith Magazine*, author Julie Goss writes, "Women rabbis across Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative movements alike are reinterpreting the relationship between rabbi and congregant. Instead of the traditional roles of omnipotent patriarchal leader and humble follower, women rabbis are quietly but decisively redefining the roles and narrowing the hierarchical gulf."[13] This perspective is one extreme response to the historical role that male rabbis have played, it is important to point out that while many men may have fit the described patriarchal image, this model is not at all universal. There have been many male rabbis who went out of their way to break down the barriers between men and women and create an equal space for all members.

In that same article, Rabbi Nina Cardin from JTS teaches, "The push now is to change the image of the rabbi: to speak near the congregation, not from above. It's no longer the distant holy man, but rather that of hand-holder, an educator to inspire and teach."[14]

A rabbi who is inspiring as an educator can teach in any size congregation. Women in the rabbinate have slowly come to show that in terms of pulpit size, bigger isn't always better. Though more and more women are serving the larger congregations, as we see with Rabbi Laura Geller, the first woman to be called to serve an "E" size congregation (more than 800 families), and Rabbi Janet Marder who was recently appointed to serve an "E" congregation as well, the majority of women rabbis are serving smaller congregations. There are some who say that this is because women have not yet fully gained equality in the rabbinate. There are others who credit this to be the decision of the rabbi. When it comes to balancing a family and outside life, women have shown that perhaps working in Hillel with more weekend time off, or serving a smaller congregation of under 250 families where you know everyone by name is a legitimate trade-off after all. If serving a smaller congregation means that the rabbi can spend quality time with both her family and congregation without letting either suffer, then women are teaching that in many cases, having a bigger congregation isn't necessarily better. A mindset, that began to appear with some Reform rabbis in the 50's and later.

Women in the rabbinate have contributed much in the way of quality of life. They are bring a sense of balance and intimacy to a profession that is enriched by both. By removing their need to be "up front" and present at all times they are allowing for others to come and fill the gap. Lay leaders are being encouraged to lead services, serve on caring committees, and lead *shiva minyanim* for fellow congregants. Women are not the only ones to inspire these changes. In some cases, male rabbis attempted these changes long before the ordination of women. However, they have become more prevalent with the rise of women rabbis. It would be wrong to say that all of the positive changes in lay leadership, and congregational intimacy that have occurred are due to women rabbis. There is a sense though, that by focusing on themselves and their families in addition to the congregations, that women have added much to both their male colleagues, as well as their congregants.

There is still so much to accomplish. There are boundary issues that women rabbis face on a daily basis. Since women are socialized as being warm and nurturing, it can be easy for congregants to overstep boundaries. There are other difficulties that women rabbis face in regard to marriage and family. How much time can you spend with your husband and children without your congregation becoming jealous? There is a separate issue in regards to single women rabbis. Whom can the rabbi date, how can she

meet him, and how much privacy can she expect? Homosexual rabbis bring with them an entirely difficult set of complicated problems.

There are currently two women rabbis serving as the senior rabbi of an "E" congregation, which is inspiring on one hand, and disappointing on the other. Why are there only two? Are women being offered the same large positions as men? Finally, while newly ordained rabbis all begin on the same pay scale, many women believe that a gap exists between male and female salaries.

Though these issues still exist for women rabbis, incredible strides have been made in granting equality to Jewish women. Thanks in part to many heroic women, and men; it has been more than 25 years since the first woman was ordained, and HUC has ordained 326 women rabbis! In congregations throughout the world women are leading services, teaching, preaching, counseling, and officiating at life cycle events. Though it hasn't been easy, as demonstrated by the endless debates and frustrations faced by the early pioneers, it has become normative to hear in many parts of the country, "Wasn't that a beautiful service, didn't the rabbi do a nice job? Yes, *SHE* did." This proves that women have "made it" in the rabbinate, have contributed much to the rabbinate in general, and are serving congregations to the best of their abilities.

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[1] Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, interviewed by author 5 October 1999, Cincinnati, OH.

[2] Rabbi Laura Geller, interview by author, 6 October, 1999, via telephone.

[3] Sally Priesand, "Postscript" in Gary P. Zola, ed. *Women Rabbis: Exploration and Celebration* (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR Alumni press, 1996), 119-120.

[4] Dr. Ellen Umansky, interview by author 14 October, 1999, via telephone.

[5] Janet Marder, "How Women are Changing the Rabbinate," *Reform Judaism Magazine* , Summer 1991, 5.

[6] Dr. Ellen Umansky, 14 October 1999.

[7] Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, interview by author 29 December 1999, via telephone.

[8] Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, 29 December 1999.

[9] Janet Marder, "How Women are Changing the Rabbinate," 6.

[10] Rabbi Charles Kroloff, "Installation Response" Given at the CCAR Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. May 26, 1999.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Rabbi Laura Geller, 6 October 1999.

[13] Julie Goss, "Reworking the Rabbi's Role," *Lilith Magazine* , Fall 1990, 16.

[14] Julie Goss, 17.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

The following description of "the perfect rabbi" is being circulated on the Internet:

> The results of a computerized survey indicate the perfect rabbi preaches exactly fifteen minutes. He condemns sins but never upsets anyone. He wears good clothes, buys good books, drives a good car, and gives about $50 weekly to the poor. He is 28 years old and has preached for 30 years. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all of his time with senior citizens. The perfect rabbi smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes 15 calls daily on congregation families, shut-ins and the hospitalized, and is always in his office when needed.
> If your rabbi does not measure up, simply send this letter to six other synagogues that are tired of their rabbi, too. Then bundle up your rabbi and send him to the synagogue on the top of the list. In one week, you will receive 1,643 rabbis and one of them will be perfect. Have faith in this procedure. One congregation broke the chain and got its old rabbi back in less than three weeks.

Though clearly written as a joke, the irony in this description is that there are congregations today who have expectations that in ways conform to the above description. Many congregations expect their rabbis to be homiletical masters who can preach to a large audience for a perfect amount of time. They are expected to entertain the congregation, engage them in serious study, move them to tears, fill the Sanctuary with laughter,

and do all of this without making anyone feel uncomfortable, all while speaking for less than the unspoken "magic" amount of time.

Preaching is only one of the functions at which the rabbi of today is expected to be adept. He or she is also expected to provide pastoral care to members. Whenever a congregant is sick in the hospital, recovering at home after surgery, celebrating the birth of a child, or mourning the death of a loved one, the rabbi is expected to be with the family. He is also asked to offer pastoral care to couples with marital difficulties, children of divorce, victims of abuse, and those suffering from depression or other emotional disorders.

When not performing the above functions, the rabbi is counted upon to teach students and adults, lead services, officiate at life cycle events, be active in both the Jewish and general community, serve as references for congregants seeking jobs or students applying to colleges or for scholarships, fundraise for congregational building initiatives or programs, and work with Temple boards and committees. Even more, congregants rely on their rabbi to be available for meetings and other visits whenever convenient for them. In short, the rabbi is frequently forced to be "the jack of all trades" and is generally evaluated against unrealistic expectations held on account of skewed perceptions of what they believe the rabbinic role should be. Often, being the rabbi that many congregants want requires sacrificing one thing for another. Whether it's time with family,

intensive pastoral care relationships, experience in community work, personal time at the gym or with friends, preparing great sermons, youth involvement, the "perfect rabbi" that so many have come to expect is more than a full-time job, it's a way of life.

The questions posed in the first chapter of this thesis were directed at rabbinical functions. Namely, how are rabbis today different from earlier rabbis? Are they performing functions more in one venue than another? How have the contributions of woman rabbis shaped the rabbinate? Is there a model of a modern rabbi we can offer to ourselves and congregants as archetype for a recent ordinee?

The answers to some of these questions, as well as a host of other observations become evident throughout the development of this work.

Are rabbis today different from rabbis of the past? Yes, and no! With the professionalization of the rabbinate and the advancement of Reform Judaism in America, the current rabbinate has a very different flavor. First, it is primarily a congregational rabbinate. Rather than judging and arbiting for the entire community, rabbis first and foremost are beholden to their congregation. They may provide opinions on complicated religious subjects, however, their response is more guidance, instruction, presentation of options than legislative decision. Exceptions of course, are present in the ultra-Orthodox communities where rabbis still serve as *mara-de-atra* for most daily decisions of *halakha* and daily conduct. These

exceptions are few and far between and are beyond the scope of this study.

As with all matters of congregational life, this thesis is limited to the liberal sects of Judaism who approach Jewish law and observance emphasizing and embracing personal autonomy and choice. The authority of the rabbi today is not the same as it once was. Rabbis can no longer exert authority by issuing *herem* as they once could. With the power that congregational boards yield, rabbis are often very limited in their authority. Even the smallest decision made by the rabbi has the potential to be overturned by an active board.

Similarly, rabbis are not assigned the same degree of authority in the community as they once were. The nature of the community has changed, allowing lay leadership to become a powerful force. Unlike the earlier centuries where rabbis were the only ones with Judaic knowledge, and consequently had to act on the communities' behalf, today's membership doesn't have the same demand for those skills. Lay leaders have created voluntary Jewish institutions and philanthropies that do not require rabbinic leadership and are open to different types of governance – places where almost any committed Jew can find an area in which he or she has jurisdiction. In other cases, Jewish communal service workers, educators, cantors, social workers who have acquired Jewish education are given leadership positions and extended the same authority and respect as

rabbis. This has led to diminished rabbinic authority, and battles over territory in some communal institutions.

Legislation of Jewish and civil law is just one area where rabbis differ from the past. Another is in regard to the emphasis placed on preaching in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Preaching is still a very important aspect of the rabbinate, but in most cases it no longer holds the esteem that it held for rabbis like David Philipson and Joseph Krauskopf.

Providing a congregation with a sermon is but one way for the rabbi to reach out to members. Today, through enhanced concentration on life cycle officiation and pastoral care, the rabbi plays a more intimate role in the life of his or her members. Rabbis have always had some sort of involvement in life cycle events. Whereas the rabbi of the middle ages played a predominantly *halakhic* role as witness for marriage and divorce, rabbis of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries broadened that to include officiation. Now, the rabbi is even more of an integral part of a Jew's life from birth to death. No longer just witnesses, they are the ones creating and leading the ritual. For example, when a family has a child who becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, they often meet with the rabbi for three or four private sessions before the actual event to discuss such subjects as family dynamics, the spiritual meaning of the day, the content of the Torah portion and speech, and the child's ambitions for the future. On Shabbat when the rabbi stands up to offer a blessing for a Bat Mitzvah she

frequently speaks of out familiarity to both the student and the family; through the process she has become connected closely. A similar phenomenon takes place with wedding couples and conversion students. The rabbi certainly brings a sense of intimacy to the occasion, yet, much of it comes from the family.

As the role of the rabbi changed in relation to the Jewish communal structure, congregants have found new ways to elevate the importance of the rabbi. Their desires and understanding of what the rabbi can offer is different from earlier desires and understandings. Congregants are asking for alternative life cycle events, and are encouraging their clergy to bring individual creativity, involvement and personal warmth to their ceremonies.

Different life cycle events have been added to reflect the changing needs of members. Bat Mitzvah, *Brit Bat* ceremonies, rituals of divorce and separation, moments acknowledging miscarriages, baby naming services in the congregation, anniversary celebrations, consecration, frequently occur in congregations throughout the United States and Canada and consume much of a rabbi's time. They help demonstrate the changing nature of the rabbi, and the different functions that he or she is being asked to perform. From communal functionary to family pastor, friend and tradition accessor.

In contrast to the rabbis of the past who were not expected to lead services or read from the Torah, rabbis today are the primary service

leaders. Liturgical aspects of the congregation are under the auspices of the rabbi and cantor, if the congregation employs a cantor, and are an extensive part of the rabbi's responsibilities. On almost every Shabbat, rabbis lead evening Shabbat and Shabbat morning worship. The recitations of liturgy, reading from Torah, offering a story, sermon, or short exegesis on the weekly Torah portion, and providing any other life cycle or related matters are all encompassed in this leadership. In many congregations, rabbis are also the ones to create alternative worship services or congregational *minhagim*. No longer is the rabbi only on the *bimah* for two or three *Shabbatot* a year!

One of the primary functions of earlier rabbis was that of teacher. This still holds true today. No matter what time period in which he or she lives, a rabbi will always be expected to teach. In the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries rabbis taught in *yeshivot*, and in communities. The first rabbis ordained from the Hebrew Union College worked to improve religious school education of that era; today, rabbis are working for the same goal. Technological advancements like computers, the Internet, television, video cassette recorders (VCR) and digital cameras provide modern rabbis creative methods of teaching, but the underlying task is still there -- to offer an edifying lesson to those in the community. Today many rabbis spend their days teaching confirmation classes, adult education, Introduction to Judaism, and current events that impact on the Jewish

people throughout the world, and especially on Israel. Most also incorporate Jewish texts and modern lessons to inspire their congregants to act in accordance with Jewish tradition.

One of the obvious reasons why rabbis today perform different functions from the past is because issues of the day are different. Family dynamics have deteriorated over the years. Divorce is prevalent in our society and the rabbi is frequently called upon to intervene with matters of divorce. Whether it's offering counseling to children or spouses, or creatively thinking of ways to involve divorced parents and step-parents in life cycle events, there is not a single rabbi free from the pain of divorce in the community.

Gender divisions have also evolved since the days of the first HUC rabbis. Women have earned the right to lead and serve congregations. Growth is evident whenever a woman is on the *bimah*, president of a Temple board, called up for an a*liyah* on Shabbat, or given the chance to mutually exchange rings and vows with her husband in a wedding ceremony. The mere fact that there is now a Women's Rabbinic Network (WRN) demonstrates how far the rabbinate in America has come since the CCAR began in 1889.

Issues brought before the rabbi have also deepened in complexity. Suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, harassment, domestic violence, eating disorders, high rates of unemployment, all plague the rabbi

on a daily basis. In pastoral settings the rabbi is more of a social worker than were rabbis of the past. Consequently, education for these convoluted issues has emerged as a need. Having a reference book for alcohol abuse on a bookshelf is one thing, knowing how to counsel a congregant battling alcoholism is quite another; both are incorporated as responsibilities of a rabbi. This is yet another result of the different understanding that congregants have of the role that the rabbi can offer. They have come to view the rabbi as a spiritual leader and counselor and turn to the rabbi for guidance in almost every aspect of life. Also, as the effect of these issues takes prominence in modern life, they emerge as factors in a variety of settings. Clergy are not the only ones affected by the change. Most people in the "helping professions," like medicine or teaching have had to update their knowledge on these problems.

Another crucial difference in congregations today is the issue of the non-Jew in the synagogue. Intermarriage rates have climbed in recent years. Many members with whom the rabbi works are in intermarriages and expect the rabbi to be sympathetic to their situation. Balancing outreach to the non-Jew with congregational worship and ritual practice issues, providing outreach programming to intermarried couples, and educating both spouses frequently monopolize a rabbi's time. Working with prospective candidates for conversion adds an additional commitment.

Taking all of these factors into account, it is possible to make the assumption that rabbis today do perform many functions of earlier rabbis. However, in terms of balance of time for each activity, the depth to which one is expected to be trained, as well as the myriad of areas in which the rabbi is to be skilled, the role of today's rabbi is ultimately not the same as in the past! Moreover, the synagogue of today is not the same as the past, and requires a different leader. As the synagogue grew into a major center for Jewish life, the rabbi changed into a functionary of that synagogue. The synagogue became the place to which congregants looked for spiritual guidance, religious worship, education, Jewish programming, family programming, and general cultural awareness. As the rabbi for this cacophony of life, he and she became expected to perform tasks appropriate to each aspect. The new synagogue became a center for Jewish life, and the new rabbi became the leader for that emerging center.

The Future for Rabbis

Is there a rabbi of today? Is there one model that we can hold up to congregants as the quintessential archetype? Thankfully, there is not! Just as there isn't one model of a Jew, so should there not be one model of a rabbi! Rabbis today are individual people who happen to devote their lives to the same profession. *Semikha* unites them, vocational interests often divide. Rabbis today use their training in congregations, in colleges

or universities, hospitals, prisons, Hillels, federations, national organizations, even writing and publishing. In each of these venues they are called by the title "rabbi." The demands of a congregation are different from the demands of a hospital, and each requires a specific set of tools. Even among strictly congregational rabbis, no two rabbis are the same. One may spend more time in outreach to the community, another might commit herself entirely to work with youth. Therefore, when a congregation seeks a rabbi, they need to look at his or her interests, talents, skills and training, and not just at the title. For many, this poses a difficult challenge. It seems, that for many years rabbis were held to one set of standards, and were expected to be something other than who they really were.

Rabbi Jack Bloom has done extensive work on this problem, calling the rabbi a "symbolic exemplar." He writes, "laymen expect rabbis to be more caring, moral, helpful, sure of themselves, better husbands and fathers, more inner directed, more loyal in sexual thought and deed, and to work better with others than the other professionals."[1]

There is more involved than laymen placing this role on the rabbi, Bloom explains how this dysfunction is perpetuated by both sides. He sees how easy it can be for a rabbi to get caught up in the public persona. "The pulpit rabbi is, most of all, a symbolic exemplar. He or she, as the case may be, is the symbol of something other than themselves. The pulpit rabbi is a symbolic leader who is set apart to function within the community

as a symbol of that community and as an exemplar of their desire for moral perfection. The rabbi is thus a walking, talking, living symbol. He stands for something other than himself and in order to function, he must be seen and perceived that way. And in order to function, the rabbi must act in such a way as not to destroy that symbol."[2] As Rabbi Bloom describes in his work, it can be difficult and draining to constantly have to fit the image cast upon the rabbi because of his title. Being a symbolic exemplar means having a spouse or children held under a microscope, it can mean having to smile, nod, and follow the flock in order to keep the image intact. It detracts from having true friends in a congregation, dulls the boundaries between a personal life and public life, and makes being a rabbi a difficult occupation. Rabbi Bloom himself left the rabbinate to escape from this unhealthy persona. Having congregants view the rabbi as someone nobler than they, can be a serious problem associated with the rabbinate. The detriment is on both sides. For one, it encourages the rabbi to work harder to continually live up to that expectation. It also prevents them from being who they really are. If one spends his days smiling and nodding because he envisions that his congregants want him to be so, he is not being true to himself. After years of this practice, he may have deadened his true soul and forgotten why he entered the rabbinate. On the opposing side, for congregants, if they view the rabbi as being separate, and not a "real person," they limit their interactions with the rabbi, leave room for hurt and

disappointment when they discover that the rabbi is not really that person, and place unhealthy demands on the rabbi.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, UAHC president, describes another problem that rabbis have encountered over the years, a problem that has manifested itself in a shortage of rabbis. "We... expect our rabbis to be 24-hours-a-day people, available every night and every weekend until the day they retire. We expect them to preach the virtue of family life but never to spend time with their own families. We expect them to make personal sacrifices that even the most hard-working among us would never contemplate making. We may deny it, but it's true: Many young people immersed in Jewish life consider the rabbinate, because of all its satisfactions, but then turn away because it exacts too high a psychic and spiritual price."[3]

Rabbi Yoffie's message is all too familiar in the rabbinate today. A backlash has emerged from rabbis who devoted their entire beings to the congregation without stopping to find balance in their lives. There will always be those who give 110% percent of themselves without stopping to breathe, but, by and large, rabbis today are changing the tide and making the rabbinate a more desirable career. They are finding a *balance* between devotion to a congregation, and devotion to personal needs. They are asking for one Shabbat off a month to spend with their families. They are taking sabbaticals to engage in serious study and reflection, they are attending conferences and seminars on the wellness of the rabbi, and they

are leaving the congregation a few minutes earlier to coach a child's basketball team.

There are positive and negative consequences to the image of rabbis over the past forty years. On one hand, there are many children who grew up watching their fathers (and in a few cases, mothers) commit their entire soul to the congregation and see the role of the rabbi as some somewhat magical and awe-inspiring. They know all the goods things that being a rabbi can offer to congregants, and many are pledging their own lives to following in their father's rabbinic footsteps. Conversely, there are congregants who watch their rabbis work long difficult hours and complain that being a rabbi is "not a job for a nice Jewish child" and encourage their children to seek out other professions. It is well known that while being a rabbi is a rewarding occupation, it is also extremely demanding. Right or wrong, the repercussions of the image of the rabbi as one who devotes himself to others and neglects his own being will be felt for years to come, as rabbinical seminaries struggle to recruit students and congregations are left without rabbis.

It is not to late to turn the tide for the future of the rabbi. With a growing awareness of the problems keeping potential students from applying, a recognition of quality of life for rabbis, as well as an understanding of the future directions of synagogues, changes are in the offing.

Newly elected CCAR president, Charles Kroloff is committing himself to initiatives promoting the health of the rabbi. He describes the rabbinate that attracted him when he was fifteen years of age as very different from the rabbinate today. He contends that the rabbinate must be re-shaped to reflect the need for personal health. He stresses that rabbis must find ways to make time for themselves and their families. They also need to be reminded that they have to set limits for themselves. One suggestion is to relinquish some work in the community, to say no when asked to join every new committee. He doesn't believe that a rabbi has to get rid of everything, rather, achieve balance between time in the congregation and time at home. If quality is maintained in everything that is done, it shouldn't diminish from the position or authority of the rabbi.[4] Instead of serving on twenty committees adequately, be extraordinary on five.

The Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion recognizes that rabbis today are fulfilling different roles and need to have training that reflects this diversity. Faculty members from each of the College-Institute's four campuses have been meeting in the past year to formulate a curriculum that meets the changing needs of Jewish life, from the perspective of both the rabbis, and the congregations, and communities which they serve. They operate under a few overarching assumptions. First, that it is much more of a complex job to be a rabbi today than ever before. Second, that there has been an explosion of information with the

technology of the Internet that allows congregants to gather more information and demand more of their rabbi. Third, there is a difference in how people relate to one another. The authoritarian model of rabbi is probably less successful now than it once was. Finally, that the sociology of the community and what people expect has changed.[5]

The faculty is in the process of discussing ways to incorporate the basic assumptions into coursework. They have identified five primary rabbinic roles: liturgical, educational, pastoral, communal and organizational, and spiritual. These roles may be fulfilled in settings such as classroom/didactic teaching, congregational settings, hospital, camps, Hillel/University settings, youth work, work with the elderly (nursing homes) and UAHC and Federation settings.[6]

Therefore, the curriculum of the future will have to find a way to train a student to work in each of these settings. All campuses will have a greater emphasis on "Practical Rabbinics" and will encourage students to have more "hands on experience." Students will have a greater opportunity to acquire rabbinic mentors, and coursework will be integrative, to encourage the student to put the totality of their education together.[7] For example, a course on the Ten Commandments might have a student study the laws in Bible, Midrash, Talmud, Theology and Philosophy in order to formulate his or her personal conception of the Ten Commandments, and then be able to relate that to a congregation.

All of the initiatives are designed to help a rabbinical student, see the synagogue as a place of change. Though Jews have always expected spirituality, education, and warmth from their congregations, today they are looking for deeper connection in all of these areas, and in different ways. They want to read from pages of Talmud and understanding the rationale behind the laws. They want the Kabbalah to inspire them to look deeper into their souls. And, they want to write their own Midrashim to illuminate the stories missing in Torah. The rabbi can be the leader behind the transition. It is the rabbi's job to help congregants grapple with the serious theological questions. There are significant models of congregations with intensive education models already in existence, however, they are the exception more than the rule. In the past few years a serious emphasis has been placed on classes such as *Introduction to Judaism*, to bring in those members who had not yet seriously engaged in Judaic study. The programs have been phenomenally successful, and now it is time to go beyond an introductory course and offer them serious enlightened education to guide them in their lives.

The Reconstructionist Movement, in their collection of recently published essays on the role of the rabbi, echoes the fact that congregations are different places and need a different type of leader than the past. Like the Reform Movement, they also encourage rabbis setting time boundaries, however, one of their emphases calls for an overall shift

in the mentality of the rabbi. They advocate that it is not about how many hours one is in the congregation, rather, it should be about how he or she views the rabbi's overall role. "Moving towards a spiritual leadership model does not only call for a change in the way synagogue boards function. It requires a different mindset on the part of the rabbi as well.... a true spiritual leader never runs an hourly clock on the time spent helping an individual with a problem, leading a crusade for social justice, or teaching Torah. Rabbis who understand what it means to be a true leader of communities and of people are also prepared to shoulder the responsibilities that come with the role."[8]

Many Jews are ready this new type of rabbi and congregation, others, simply because of their place in life are not. One of the most dramatic changes in the congregation concerns the member population. Congregations today are diverse places with Jews, and non-Jews from every walk of life. The rabbi needs to be able to serve the needs of his parents as easily as he reaches out to children, teens, twenty-somethings, empty-nesters, and the elderly. Programs for parents of pre-school aged children who have never raised a Jewish child before are as important as sessions with teens who struggle with complicated adolescent issues.

Diversity in congregations must be maximized, rabbis must meet congregants where they are at, and then find effective ways to bring them along on the journey and help them grow into the communal Jewish story.

Everyone must be encouraged to work for the betterment of the community. Only then will our congregations be places of change.

A rabbi cannot accomplish these transitions alone. One of the greatest gifts offered to rabbis is the ability to seek out help. If one Shabbat a month with the family means leaving the congregation without a rabbi, then lay leaders must be trained to lead services. Programs, committees and services can all be shared with a creative and dedicated laity. Therapists should be included in a rabbinical package so that every rabbi has an outlet for personal reflection and growth. The burdens that a rabbi faces daily can be very intense. Having a confidential objective source to listen to the rabbi, dissect a specific situation, reflect on how that plays in their life, and offer suggestions for a further course of action which alleviates the task of rabbi's spouse as always serving as "sounding board." Furthermore, having time to do serious reflection encourages the rabbi to think about deeper aspects of his or her life to grow in other situations. Developing close relationships with colleagues is also essential for a healthy rabbi.

Finally, rabbis have to truly love what they are doing! It is impossible to view the rabbinate as just a job, it is a way of life. A rabbi is a rabbi whether they are teaching, coaching a basketball game, playing with their children, grocery shopping, or blessing a child at a baby-naming ceremony. The "title" rabbi is such that once it is acquired it is always a part of the soul

of that person. The title cannot be left behind when it is inconvenient, rather, the owner of the title has to find ways to balance the realities of life with the title; to realize the gifts that he or she can offer to congregants, while at the same time appreciating the blessings that come from holding such a title. The rabbi is a master, a teacher, and a spiritual leader, a person who has the potential to touch people at their most intimate moments of grief and joy.

Rabbis today are not the same as rabbis of the past. It would be impossible to be so, since the role of the rabbi has always been in a stage of change. Using the models of earlier moments in time and a glimpse into the future, rabbis today stand on the brink of new and exciting challenges. As some of the first rabbis taught, "Hillel and Shammai received [the Torah] from them.

> Hillel says: Be disciples of Aaron,
> loving peace and pursuing grace,
> loving people and drawing them near to the Torah."[9]

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[1] Jack H. Bloom, "The Rabbi As Symbolic Exemplar" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972), 1.

[2] Jack H. Bloom, "The Rabbi's Family" a speech adapted from Keynote Address at the Central Conference of American Rabbis 1976 Convention; San Francisco, California, 1.

[3] E.J. Kessler, "Shortage of Rabbis Leaves Pulpits Going Begging," *Forward Newspaper*. I received this article without a complete citation. It is included in the Appendix for reference.

[4] These comments are paraphrased from a dialogue that took place with Rabbi Kroloff at the GLOVARR Rabbinical Conference on 24 January 2000.

[5] These observations were gleaned from an interview with Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph on 30 December, 1999. He is professor of education at HUC-JIR and a member of the Clinical Education Advisory Committee.

[6] Taken from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion "Clinical Education Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes" from Monday, July 25, 1999.

[7] Observations gleaned from conversation with Rabbi Norman Cohen, Provost of the Hebrew Union College, December, 1999.

[8] Sidney Schwarz, "The Rabbi As Spiritual Leader," *The Reconstructionist* 64, no. 1 (Fall 1999): 31.

[9] Pirke Avot 1:12. Translation from, Jacob Neusner, *Torah From Our Sages: Pirke Avot* (Dallas Texas: Rossel Books, 1984), 43.

Appendix: Interviews

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
Rabbi Debbie Prinz
10/4/99
6:30pm est

1) Ordained in 1978. The fourth female rabbi ordained, was ahead of her classmates by a few minutes.
2) Now serving as Senior (only rabbi) at a 660 family congregation in San Diego, CA. She has been there 12 years and this is her third pulpit. Started at Central Synagogue, NY, then small solo pulpit in Teaneck, NJ.
3) **What functions are you performing on a regular basis**? Currently the congregation is without an educator so she is also managing the school and doing school related tasks like lesson plans etc. Officiates at funerals, B'nai Mitzvah, Shabbat services (both Friday night and Saturday am – even without B'nai Mitzvah). **Do you do much counseling**? Not a lot of counseling, there is some around problematic issues, esp. with B'nai Mitzvah families. Does a preliminary interview, troubleshoots and then refers. **What about Outreach, Interfaith**? Is doing a significant amount of interfaith and outreach work. The congregation has 1/3 mixed married families and consequently has a substantial program. Also does work with conversion. With regard to community, does a good amount of interfaith work. Helped to bring Stepping Stones to San Diego, now called "Pathways". Also brought "Taste of Judaism" to the area, now a federation program. She is no longer on committee for each, but is still involved. Serves on a clergy council in San Diego. There was an incident with graffiti at her congregation and she and the other clergy in the area got together and responded to the situation, as well as did a follow up program.
4) **Do you feel there is a difference between your functions and those of your male colleagues?** Don't know. Might be more open to including the Brit part of naming ceremony. Has changed the reading of the liturgy to make it gender sensitive, although now that is done by many male rabbis as well. **What about Sisterhood involvement?** Is at every sisterhood meeting. Is invited to all of their lunches, and because they are held at the building during office hours she usually attends most for at least a small amount of time. Doesn't go to every little group meeting. With regards to the Brotherhood, she just "pops" in to their meetings and is not invited to most programs. Perhaps there is a subtle difference in role with regards to most. They (Brotherhood) just went on a river rafting trip and didn't invite her because she would have been the only woman on the trip.

6) **Has your rabbinate changed as a result of marriage?** Is married with children, also married to an HUC ordained rabbi. Has 2 children , a daughter - 16 ½ and son - 13, just Bar Mitzvah'ed last summer. She took a leave of

absence (maternity leave) for just a few months when her children were born. In Teaneck, they were very concerned with pregnancy and asked about it specifically in her interview. In her contract they stipulated that if she became pregnant, she would be responsible for providing proper coverage. She shared that with Malcolm Stern (CCAR placement) and the CCAR, and as a result there is now a new policy with time off for parenting. She would have liked to have taken more time off, but it was impossible with her need to find coverage. **Where there changes in your work as a result of pregnancy and children?** Possibly, but she still worked full-time and completed responsibilities. As the kids grew, she juggled schedules if they got sick. Nothing is neglected at work. Though she wouldn't use neglect, it is possible that the kids could have been neglected through her involvement at Temple. For example, she is gone to meetings 3-4 nights a week. When there are funerals or other things that happen she can't get home for dinner. The kids didn't have much "mommy" time. However, because of flexibility in her schedule, if something happened at school she could be there. Doesn't think that she has missed more than 1 or 2 events or plays that have happened at school. It is definitely a conflict for her. Her kids are good kids and are in good shape. It helps that her husband does not have his own congregation (just a monthly) so that he is home. It is important to them that their kids are member of just 1 congregation and that congregation is their home. Her husband has given up a piece of his rabbinate so that their children have that continuity at home. Is ambivalent and torn at times.

7) **Do you feel you are treated differently as a rabbi because of gender?** Earlier on there was a maternity issue. There are also salary issues. Though she hasn't seen the latest breakdowns, she is median now, but that has taken a while. There was a issue when they were thinking of bringing on a woman president. They already have a female cantor and a female rabbi. Congregants were concerned that if they added a female president that others in the community might begin to see them as "lesbian" congregation. (They now have female president and she has been doing really well for years.) They sometimes talk about what it means to have another woman on the Bimah. They just brought on a male part time asst. rabbi, and they also have a male cantorial soloist. People liked his deep tenor voice, but they also liked that he was a male. These are "kishka" issues for people. There are some reservations despite the confidence and ability of the person, it's still a gut reaction. She had a pre-school mom come up to her and say, 'I wish that you could find a male educator, wouldn't it be nice to get a male role-model around here.'
8) **Did you choose/able to enter a congregation immediately upon ordination?** Was hired right away at Central Synagogue. Primarily due to Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman's commitment to have a woman. (She thinks he is great by the way.)
9) **Have you experienced a difference in women rabbis since ordination**? She has become more comfortable. She is not fighting the women's battle anymore. At the beginning she (and a number of others) were constantly

trying to make sure things went well so that other women would get ordained. There was a burden that came with being ordained then. Though no one told her so, she just felt it. She says that we have moved ahead in so many fields. Younger woman don't carry the burden with them so they are more comfortable with the option, the choice, the reality. **Did you apply to HUC right out of college?** Did one year of the education program at HUC-LA. She looked around and saw the men studying rabbinics and realized that she would rather be doing that so she switched programs. She suspected that there would be something that would make it difficult as a woman.

Time of conversation: 24 minute

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
Rabbi Rosalind Gold
10/5/99
11:00am EST

1) Ordained in 1978 in NY. In her class were women rabbis #4,5,6,7 – She was #7.
2) Has been at her congregation for 18 years, 420 member units. Her first pulpit was in Rochester, NY as asst. for 3 years.
3) **What specific functions do you find yourself performing on a regular basis?** Teaching, lead services (Friday Pm and Sat. Am), meet with conversion students, meet with B'nai Mitzvah students and their parents, conduct staff meetings, leads Minyan group on Sunday mornings (prayer and discussion). Hospital visits – but not weekly. Monthly: Committee meetings, board meetings, contact with president, both purposefully as well as just to check in. Sick calls, help to arrange if someone has died (food and minyan, and work with the caring committee), funerals, baby-namings, unveilings, conversion. **What about Outreach work?** Not too much right now because she is pursuing a personal degree (D-min). There is a monthly local clergy group for which she used to be convener. Also does the standard speaking to local churches.

4) **Do you feel a difference between yourself and your male colleagues?** Don't do different things, but do things differently. For example, in baby-namings she is more apt to hold and play with the baby and interact with them. People tell her that it's nice to see a woman with the baby and watch them interact. Because of gender, her interactions may be different. It's hard to put into words, but it's because women are socialized different from men and do things differently. It's also hard to generalize on this because she has not been on male rabbi's sessions. In general, she is not so quick to make huge distinctions between men and women, she thinks that they just tend to be different. Women tend to be more open about themselves and share on a more personal level, perhaps more than men. R. Gold is pretty demonstrative within appropriate boundaries in counseling and personal interactions. When she is in her office, or with the sick, she tends to use touch, often shares a hug before they leave the office. On the other hand, on the Bimah, she is careful about not being "typically female" When Uncle Jake comes up for an Aliyah she gives him a warm smile, or quickly extends her hand for a handshake. She does not want people to make the assumption that because she is a woman that she is "touchy-feely."

Another subject that she finds interesting is the difference between women and men are the differences in dealing with problems. As a whole, she has found women to be more destructive than men. It may have to do with the way that men and women fight. With a man, she can have a good argument, talk, and work through things. With women, they tend to talk about it in the grocery store and in the Temple parking lot, and tend to be more covert in their anger. Her nemeses have personally all been women, and on a personal level does better

with men in professional settings. She is also a "women's women" though. She is very active in the WRN, and has many, if not most of her closest friends who are women. Professionally, women can be more destructive.

6) **Do you feel that your rabbinate has changed as a result of marriage and children?** Is married, with two grown step-children. When she married their dad they were 11 and 16. Her rabbinate definitely has changed. It has made her more pressured to be at home. When she was single, she resented some of the time demands, but now that she is married she has to deal with the dirty looks from her husband, who is also affected by the time demands. There is a balancing of needs and desires. It has also affected the length of time that she has been at her pulpit. Perhaps one of the reasons that she has stayed at this congregation for so long is because her husband has a full-time job and would have difficulty transferring. It has eliminated some of the wanderlust in searching for other pulpits that might have been different had she not been married. She has also learned about children, and the court system, and alcohol abuse as a result of having kids. All experiences that she would have preferred not to learn. When you go through things on a personal basis you tend to bring that to work with you. Her work has been enriched because of her personal interactions. Suffering has built character.
7) **Do you feel that you were treated differently because you were a woman?** Yes and no. To her congregants she is simply the rabbi. There were more differences in the earlier years. When negotiating contracts her husband was brought up. It was intimated to her... well it's not as important for you to earn more money because your husband will take care of you. In the early years during one of her interviews (as Asst.) she was brought back to the pulpit for a second interview. The house where she was supposed to stay fell through because the host had such a problem with her as a woman rabbi that she wasn't allowed to stay there and they had to find alternative housing for her. Has been treated different in negative ways. The only issue that she has with congregants viewing her differently is with visiting families. Sometimes the families feel that they have to prepare their family for a woman rabbi. In the beginning, it was new for women rabbis. The year she took a solo pulpit was the first time that women took solo pulpits, it was an issue for the congregations.
8) **Did you choose, were you able to enter pulpit upon ordination?** She went immediately as an Asst. and then onto solo pulpit. When she first started at HUC, she wanted to be a Hillel rabbi. Wasn't even sure she wanted to be a rabbi, really just wanted to be at HUC for the education. Felt that she was an ignorant Jew and wanted to gain the knowledge. She took a year off during HUC and went to San Francisco as an intern, it was that experience that cemented her desire to do pulpit work.
9) **Have you experienced a difference in women rabbis since ordination?** They all seem so young now. They look like babies. For a while it seemed to her that those who went through earlier were kicking and screaming and demanding. Later, it seemed that women were taking it for granted and

stopped screaming. It seems that later women wanted to be like men and didn't think about equality issues. One of the most important contributions that women have brought to the rabbinate is the issue of personal care and taking care of time and balancing personal and professional stuff. If there weren't women rabbis in the world, she feels this wouldn't have happened. There used to be the mentality with men that you did what you needed to do to move up the ladder. Women brought out the notion that bigger isn't always better. That maybe working in Hillel with more weekend time is a good trade off after all. Even Charles Kroloff (CCAR President) said that self care and nurturing are important. These issues would not have been on anyone's plate without women. In terms of balancing, women struggle more than men, it is more of a concern for women.

When she first started in the rabbinate, people just wanted to look at her. It wouldn't matter what she did, she could have done pirouettes. Some people felt that she must be a genius, etc, to have made it through five years of HUC. Others felt that she must be a product of the program which had to fill a quota, i.e., a certain number of female rabbis a year. There were people with either one of these two attitudes. It was also strange that as a single woman, her congregants were not jumping to fix her up. She had heard all kinds of stories about male rabbis who were constantly being given their nieces, etc.., phone numbers. With her, people were afraid to fix her up because people didn't know what to make of her. Once she got married, people began to think differently, and thought that she was normal with a husband and kids.

Perhaps for her, being a woman made her more hesitant to deal with feminist concerns from the Bimah. During the time of women's rights, she made a conscious decisions to stay away from women's issues.

Thesis Interview
Done in person
Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfuss
10/5/99
1:00pm EST

1) Ordained in 1979, was the 11th woman ordained.
2) Her congregation is a merged congregation, has been the rabbi for one year with the two together. She was at Beth Shalom for 11 years before the merger. She holds the distinction of being the first rabbi ever ordained pregnant. She chose not to take a full-time pulpit because she was pregnant. It was not a popular opinion. While she was a student she worked in the Dean's office in New York and continued to work there after ordination. The next year she worked part time as a hospital chaplain for 1½ years in NY. "She turned in her cape, she could not do it all, was not superwoman." She decided that she could not work full time and be a mom. When she was ordained, a part-time rabbinate was unheard of. She heard two streams of responses: Males - "Of course you'll stay home" very condescending and paternalistic. Females - Real hostility. "You'll brand us as unreliable." At the time, N.Y. was a different environment, not sure what Cinci. would be like. When her husband finished Med. School they moved to Ann Arbor and she worked as a full-time mommy. She led High Holiday services at Hillel and taught a course. The next year she did a part-time internship with Rabbi Lane Steinger in Detroit - education. In 1983 the family moved to Homewood, IL and she was not able to find work. There were congregations that were looking for rabbis but would not give interviews. There was another situation where there was an assistantship open in city. When she applied, they told her that they were looking for someone in the city. She said that if the job was right, that her husband would commute. They said to her, "Look at the snow, you'll have a crabby husband if he commutes." When she formally applied she was sent a letter telling her that they were looking for someone with experience. They were interviewing students right out of HUC. She complained and was granted an interview, on Shabbat - after services. She was interviewed by a committee with 12 men. They asked her if she was planning on having more children. "No plans at this time" Was unlawful for them to have asked the question. The next year she worked part time in Kankakee, where there was an opening in a nominally conservative congregation. The Reform rabbi was the only one who kept Kosher and they used Gates of Prayer. She worked part-time for 2 years. Led Friday night services, ran and taught the religious school for 20 students, was there 2 x week for Hebrew school, did B'nai Mitzvah training. At the end of her second year was pregnant with child #3, the congregation was 40 miles away etc., left at the end of the year. Did manage to time her pregnancy around the Congregation and the Bar Mitzvah. After she left they brought in a 66 year old rabbi who wanted to retire there. He said, "I may not be as attractive as your rabbi, but I won't get pregnant and leave you." After baby #3 she

thought about taking the year off, but Leo Wolkow of B'nai Yehuda went on sabbatical from After Pesach to August. Then Beth Shalom went to her with the offer of a part-time pulpit. She started as their rabbi in Sept. of 1987. She was part-time to begin and it gradually went to full-time. At some point she felt like she was donating part of her salary. It was part-time for about 4 years then full time.

3) **What specific functions do you perform on a regular basis?** Conduct services (Friday and Sat am) with a cantor. Does life cycle events... more funerals than one could ever want. B'nai Mitzvah, Weddings, Baby namings, conversion (with Mikveh and ceremony), teach confirmation class, adult-ed, work with B'nai Mitzvah students, work with conversion candidates. On some years there is adult B'nai Mitzvah. Does assemblies with religious school classes, school board meetings, Temple board, ritual committee meetings, co-op Jewish council (3 synagogues and JCC). Ministerial meeting, Chicago Board of Rabbis, Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis, tons of meetings, counseling, makes hospital visits, shut-ins, sick people at home, talk on phone (people call her at home excessively).
4) **Do you feel a difference between yourself and male colleagues?** No difference. Sometimes certain women come to her saying, "I can talk to you, but I can't talk to men. At Beth Shalom she sometimes (rarely) gets women from the other congregations because they don't feel like they can go to male rabbis.
5) **Do you feel that as a rabbi you perform functions specific to gender?** Empathetic listening. People view this as feminine - bull. There are sensitive men and insensitive women. In some ways, it is who she is as rabbi. She goes to Men's club breakfasts, Sisterhood asks her to speak (Men's club hasn't yet). Bakes for any bake sales because she is a mom in community.

7) **Do you feel you are treated differently because you are a woman?** Hasn't tried it any other way, and she doesn't know it any other way. Once you are in a congregation being a women doesn't get affect things. In hospital chaplaincy there was an incident when an Orthodox man asked her not to see his wife. Another incident when a Hasidic women asked her a question as *Mara D'atra*. They were moving her husband to another floor and she wanted to know if she could ride the elevator on Shabbat. She treated her as a rabbi and as an authority figure. Her congregants treat her with respect, and authority.

Another story when she was at her congregation in Kankakee. She wore a Talit and not a *Kepah*. The president said that "Rabbi Dreyfus must have been so nervous she forgot her *Kepah*." The president said that, "all men wear them." The *Kepah* was considered as prayer garb and it was important to them that she wear it. The rabbi, whether male or female, needed to wear a *Kepah*.

9) **Have you experienced a difference in woman rabbis since your ordination and today?** They are much younger now. And there are lots of them. It's weird to think that she doesn't know them all. She feels like an old-

timer. Some of the young women don't have a sense of history now, and don't think about how hard it was. They tend to be overly optimistic, confident, think that the gender-bias period is over. Want to disband GROW, object to women's only *minyan* and WRN. We need each other for support, an environment where we can say what we need to say.

Any other comments? I love what I do, at times she thought about pitching it all, and times when the juggling seemed impossible. Her father-in-law (Stanley Dreyfuss) said that she couldn't give it up, "this is what you were created for". It is an extraordinary privilege to do what we do. She loves her work.
Her kids don't seem to be damaged, they are active, interested Jews, active in camp and Hillel.

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
Rabbi Laura Geller
10/6/99
6:00pm EST

Questions 1 and 2) Ordained in 1976 in NY. She is the Sr. Rabbi in Beverly Hills. The first woman to be called to serve an "E" size congregation. Has been there for 6 years, 1000 families. 1 Associate Rabbi and 1 Emeritus. Day school 300 children, Religious School 300 children, Early Childhood Center.

3) **What Specific functions do you find yourself performing?** Funerals, wedding, baby-naming, Friday and Saturday services (including alternative Sat. am 3x month and meditation), teach confirmation class, teach 7th graders who leave the day school, teach adult ed – 3 classes a semester. Mentor B'nai Mitzvah students, counseling, fundraising, teach teachers 1x month, lead services in Religious School, work with converts, fair amount of work in community, i.e. upcoming, "Teach for America", speaking at JCC.
4) **Do you feel a difference in functions between you and your male colleagues?** Not any more. Won't officiate at a *Hatafat Dam Brit* ceremony, will take women into the Mikveh, does lots of life-cycle work (but that has been her interest for a long time, it preceded her congregational work).

6) **Has your rabbinate changed as a result of marriage and children?** Married with 2 children, daughter- 11 and son - 17. Had kids early. Was working at Hillel at USC when she had children so they haven't been raised in the congregation from birth. They came to the congregation during her son's Bar Mitzvah year so he was Bar Mitzvah'ed at their previous congregation with his friends and community. Always feels pressure being mom and rabbi. For example, she does a lot of work with B'nai Mitzvah children and they can only work during the afternoon. Therefore, she is never home when her kids get home from school, and she can not usually get home to have relaxed dinners with them. She works most Shabbatot and that also limits her free time with her children. However, she takes Mondays off and spends it with her daughter. She has no doubt that it is an intense commitment. It is also tough on the marriage. A lot of times her husband is simply her escort. Though she doesn't go to wedding and B'nai Mitzvah receptions there are many occasions when they have to be social. For example, on the day we spoke there was a community dinner (Hollywood sort) honoring a congregant by an organization for which she is on the board. Her husband will go with and will be there as her husband.
7) **Do you feel you are treated differently because you are a woman?** Difficult to answer that question. She has a very collaborative style of leadership. She is a different kind of leader then men. She believes that the rabbinate has changed because men have studied with women. They have a different sense of what is expected. Her management style is different than

most. She is interested in experiences, is open to feedback. There are also differences in boundaries, part invited, part gender. She came to her pulpit as a 44 year old woman. After her first High Holiday experience she called Lennie Thal (regional rabbi) and asked him for examples of feedback surveys because she wanted to send one out to the congregation. He asked her if she was crazy. She did it anyway and got a lot of good feedback. Not a lot of male colleagues would have done it, they believe that they determine the religious life of a congregation. But she wants feedback and experience. Accordingly, since she asked for it, she really gets it. It's hard to tell if it's gender or her. Another example, one woman came to her and said that she was excited to have a woman rabbi, but she didn't want her to do her son's Bar Mitzvah. Over time she has become a fan. R. Geller didn't take it personally and felt that the woman had the right to her feelings. Also, she realized that it had nothing to do with her. With multiple clergy congregations she can encourage congregants to go to the clergy with whom they feel most comfortable.

8) **Did you choose to go to a congregation immediately upon ordination?** Always knew that she wanted to be a Hillel rabbi. She was the first HUC student to get credit for a non-congregational internship. She was adamantly opposed to having a congregation (look where she is now) and pursued Hillel. This was a different path because there used to exist the clear assumption that there was only one path to get to the "E" size congregations. She worked in Hillel from the age of 26-40, American Jewish Congress 40-44 and then went to congregation. After she was married with children, she tried to find a congregation that fit her needs. She realized that instead of complaining she should do something different so she chose a congregation. She is happy to have waited. She speaks of the importance of having good boundaries and knowing who you are. When she went to this congregation, already lived in LA, had a home, friends. She didn't need anything from the congregation except a place to build an interesting congregation. It is like a big laboratory where you can try things out. She doesn't need her congregation to be her community.

9) **Have you experienced a difference in women rabbis since your ordination?** The rabbinate is so much more normal now for a woman. Back then there was a sense that they were doing something that raised eyebrows. Also, younger colleagues don't have the history of how hard it was. There was a sense of entitlement that younger generation doesn't have. Great, that means that they belong. They are more mainstream. She wouldn't have stood up at a CCAR meeting because it was an all boys network. Today women are fully colleagues as they weren't in the beginning. There weren't women teachers, not enough bathrooms in the school. We (younger rabbis) have no idea what impact women teachers, or their absence of, has had. Also, she believes that being a rabbi is a clearly feminist issue. It is hard to imagine that women rabbis wouldn't be feminists. What we are doing has EVERYTHING to do with feminism.

Questions I didn't ask her but she wanted to add: Reference to the Janet Marder article: Balance and empowerment and intimacy. Women are looking and choosing not to be in large congregations. There is still a great deal of opposition to women in leadership. There are still issues out there. Some are in the minds of congregants. Some are in maternity issues, many, many, surround sexual harassment. Many women have had assistantship experiences that were horrible and would now never be a Sr. Rabbi as a result. She brings no baggage with her from being brutalized in apprenticeships.

There are also issues around boundary violations with women, some initiated by congregants. Sometimes with women they go the other way (congregant initiated). Gave the example of the evening meeting with a male congregant because of his and her work schedule. He brought a bottle of wine to the meeting because he had no sense of what was expected. It is also part of the package of why we make choices.

There is also a wage discrepancy. Charles Kroloff (CCAR President) is now advocating that we deal with quality of life issues. He learned that from his female colleagues. It is really hard to be a person and have life and do the work we do. She still wants to have friends, exercise, be in a loving relationship. It is not gender related, it just took women to say it's off balance. Have to ask the question: How are the institutions going to change balance, intimacy, and empowerment.
(See her Gender and Judaism article)

It is fun work. For example, her day on 10/6/99 - stayed home to write a eulogy, did a funeral, did a de-briefing meeting from the holidays, work with a B'nai Mitzvah mentee, taught the 7th grade class and is going to a big Hollywood event in the evening. It is wonderful teaching, imagining a fantasy congregation and finding people to share that vision.

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
10/13/99
Rabbi Amy Schwartzman
10:00am

1) Was ordained in 1990.
2) Is currently the Sr. Rabbi at congregation near DC. 1100 members in congregation. She has been there for 10 years. Started as Asst. then went to Associate and then Sr. Has an Asst. (Marcus Burstein) and Cantor.
3) **What specific functions do you find yourself performing on a regular basis?** Teach adults, teach confirmation class, serve on congregational boards and committees, (every staff member has committees) lead lunch time discussions (meets monthly in offices in DC- i.e., bringing religious values into the workplace, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, conversion candidates, wedding couples, staff meetings, Bar and Bat Mitzvah rehearsal, nursery school participation, shiva minyans, community meetings (i.e., MC Clain clergy, Washington Board of Rabbis), today is doing an invocation for the Enterprise Corp., Fri and Sat. services (they had 96 B'nai Mitzvah last year and 72 this year), Sunday School, other responsibilities to kids in religious school. **What about Outreach**? Is active with committee, does a lot in the Temple, not too much outside. Does other Temple events, i.e., Social Action, Outreach functions. **Do you attend Bar and Bat Mitzvah or wedding parties?** NO! She has a rule that if it is the Temple she will attend for 20 minutes, if outside the Temple not at all. Also, if it's a board member she will go for the entire thing.
4) **Do you feel a difference between functions you perform and those of your male colleagues**? The style is different between her and her Asst., but it is a reflection of age not gender. Marcus is more like her in the way he does his work than her Emeritus. The style has more to do with generation, the way she does things from her male predecessors is different.
5) **Do you feel like you perform functions specific to your gender?** She doesn't work more with Sisterhood. They try to be aware of expected gender trends in congregations and push the stereotype away.
6) **Has your rabbinate changed as a result of marriage and children?** She is married with a 6th month old. Her rabbinate has changed because the rabbinate has changed in the last decade because of the demands. Her Emeritus rabbi had a completely different rabbinate than she. Her time frame is different now that she is married. When she was single, liked to schedule meetings until 7:00pm, because she preferred to work until going out and meeting her friends after work. Larry Berkowitz (preceded her) used to go home at 5 and come back at 8 to do more work. Now she is closer to his schedule than her old habits. The baby has certainly changed things. It is more significant the way the rabbi balances time. It has changed because men and women have a different perspective on jobs and family.

7) **Do you feel you were treated different as a rabbi because you are a woman?** At times, yes, for sure! Less within the congregation because she has been there for a while. She feels that there are boundaries between females in society and boundaries are slurred in society. For example - amount of women's commercials for female products like tampons, etc. and few for male things like jock-itch creme. In the same way that society feels they can talk openly, they do the same for her. She heard a lot of, "When am I going to get pregnant?" "Are you going to nurse?" People talk publicly. They also did a lot of treating her like a daughter and granddaughter. Might also do that for a male. There are lots of issues of changing dimensions in the rabbinate. They got rid of the receiving line because there was too much kissing, it was yucky and inappropriate. **Did you have many hands on your stomach when you were pregnant?** Not too many hands, more from women than men. Lots of advice, and people did like to talk about it. Might be similar to a female lawyer in a firm who is pregnant.
8) **Did you choose to enter a congregation immediately upon ordination?** She chose to go right in. She had lots of job offers. It was mostly men looking for women. She is not the only person from her class to be a Sr. Rabbi. It was primarily male Srs. looking for female assistants because they thought it was healthy and neat to have a woman assistant.
9) **Have you experienced a difference in older ordained rabbis with your work as co-coordinator of WRN?** The older woman battles that were a lot harder. The scars are healed but are still there. Many are prepared to be more defensive. They have paved a road that has made it easier for women rabbis. There is an ongoing debate in the WRN of how exclusive it should be. Should spouses and partners be included? Some feel that they should, esp. the younger rabbis.
10) **Anything extra to add?** There is a big issue in regard to contributions, because women are expected to carry out the dual role of mother and rabbi. We have worked harder to create a rabbinate that is more sensitive to family life because women are expected to be both. We have had to work out more creative ways to balance jobs and lives in the rabbinate. Consequently, are better at issues of limits. For example, she thinks that every rabbi should have at least one Friday off a month to be with the family. The Emeritus would never have thought that. Women create a dynamic that allows for others to come through when they can't. Women are always looking for ways to streamline time. Very much has been moved by women. **Do you spend less time at Temple after having your baby?** The main amount of work is the same. Things she might have "stopped by" for she is doing less. Says "no" to more non-Temple things. The most important thing women have brought is a re-definition of what the daily life on the job is like. Congregant's expectations are different, they are beginning to realize that rabbis can't and shouldn't do everything.

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
10/13/99
Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner
1:15pm

1) **How long have you been at JTSA?** Has been teaching there for 30 years. She was there during the debates over women rabbis. Is not a rabbi herself. Is chair of the department of Jewish Literature and is also the chair of the Women's Studies Dept. (new in the last 3-5 years).

2) There are two ways to look at the issue of women rabbis. Debate as to what the rabbi does, and what does a rabbi do that a woman can't. A lot of women in the conservative rabbinate have problems with *Eidut* - particularly with matters of divorce and conversion. Some are struggling personally, some colleagues don't accept them as rabbis. Women are performing some of rabbinical functions. The hardest two are *Eidut* and *Shaliach Tzibur*. The issue with *Shaliach Tzibur* is, can a women release a man from his obligation? With *Shaliach Tzibur*, among those who accept women rabbis there is not too much questioning. However, there is still some issue with *Eidut*. Some women are still struggling themselves. Even if they think they do the right thing, do they still think it's O.K.? (Meaning that if they sign a *get*, it might be invalid and the wife will not be released.) Less of an issue with *Mesaderet Kiddushin*.

3) **Do you seen a difference between male and female rabbis?** There is a difference in terms of being a rabbi. It seems that women tend to be more willing to settle for small congregations. With most JTS students they go for smaller congregations rather than assistantships. She was privy to a conversation with a student who was ordained last year in her son's rabbinic class. She said to her, "I know that I am not in your son's league, for the large congregations, or top jobs."

Though, women have opened new areas in the rabbinate. All of the rabbis in residence at the Solomon Shechter schools are women, women are going into that area. Some ask, is it because the women they can't be principals of schools? Or, is it because they have realized how important it is to take the lesser paying jobs as rabbi in residence. Women are more likely to let things slide. Meaning that from last year's class there are women who are not yet placed. Or they go to a specific part of the country and then figure out what to do. They also do chaplaincy work. (More and more, chaplaincy is becoming popular with males as well, but still is primarily female) There are always extremes. Women are more flexible, more interested in chaplaincy and tend to be interested in education.

4) **What are the functions you see women performing**? Hard to characterize. There are still under 150 women in the Rabbinical Assembly.

Is there much animosity? Certainly was up to 2 or 3 years ago. There is a divide on the issue. They have tried to rectify the situation. Dr. Lapidus Lerner teaches a freshman seminar where she heard the following quote from a male student to a female: "We don't think you should be here in rabbinical school."

There is an issue of the percentage of women in pulpits and what that means. Women were as likely as men to be in pulpit. There is an almost universal percentage of lower women than men. They go more to small pulpits. What causes this is that women don't want big jobs. Others say that from time to time they enter small pulpits or education became they are conditioned not to do this. She doesn't have an answer to why there are fewer females in pulpits. It would bother her more if it was an external factor. If it's because women are not being treated as well in interviews, or because they are not deemed hirable by congregations. There are some that go in to JTS thinking of themselves as pulpit rabbis and leave as educators.

What about the feel of congregants and rabbis? Because it's a *halakhic* debate, they are entitled to their opinion. She understands that it is a deep seeded issue. Assuming that they are really *halakhic* in nature then they are entitled to their opinion. There was an example of a congregant who was opposed to having a women rabbi because of the *halakhic* issue. That's fine, but after *shul* he was seen going to get a haircut on Shabbat. What *halakhic* authority will condone this but condemn women rabbis?

5) **What about the rabbis as wife and mother?** Another set of issues. There are more problems being a single woman rabbi. The whole dating situation is a real issue. What does one do in these situations, how to handle oneself in dating. She cited the example of a woman that has been in the rabbinate for 10 years with a 10 or 11 year old child. She said that the real crunch time with children and the rabbinate is when the child is closer to the age of 10 or so. This is when kids need more parental time than custodial. The leisure time of the child is the same as the work time of the rabbi and it makes it difficult. This women left the pulpit, and there are other rabbis who do the same.

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
10/14/99
12:45pm
Dr. Ellen Umansky

*** It is important to note that this conversation quickly drifted away from the original questions in order to take advantage of Dr. Umansky's expertise in women's studies. The conversation lasted for an hour, only a few points were able to be quoted verbatim to include in an interview. The remainder of the interview turned personal and is superfluous for this chapter.

1) **In your work with women's studies and women rabbis, have you noticed a difference in the functions that male and female rabbis are performing?** Theoretically, the functions are the same. There are some women rabbis who have different approaches to functions. For example, there are women who have initiated Rosh Chodesh groups, women's only breakfasts, women's study groups, women's retreats.

She cited Shira Milgram as an example of a woman rabbi who has taken her rabbinate in different directions. She and her Co-rabbi (Tom Weiner) have created two equal rabbis in their congregation. They split responsibilities equally so that they both have time to spend with friends and family on Shabbat and other times. They even designed the offices so that they mirror one another and are equal. This is a great role model for children to see rabbinic partnership where a man and woman are equal, and have time to spend with others.

She also cited Edie Mencher as a woman rabbi who is working with a male senior rabbi and a male cantor. She says that women come to see her because she's a mother and she'll understand the pull of work and home.

2) **How do men and women rabbis differ?** There is a sense of responsibility among many women rabbis. They have been phenomenally successful. You can't hide the fact that we're women, women are role models. It's difficult to characterize functions.

Dr. Umansky suggested other areas to explore: Jewish Women's Resource Center - Housed at the American Jewish Committee. NCJW in Manhattan. Brandeis - Jewish Women's Project (history and research). Dr. Sylvia Barack Fishman (A Breath of Life). Rabbi Janet Marder's article in Reform Judaism Magazine on Worship that Works (explains Shira Milgram's shared pulpit)

Also suggested that I think about the contributions of women rabbis in other ritual areas. For example, Conservative rabbis are more involved in *Mikveh* than Reform. Are there other celebrations to reclaim? Women's *Mikveh* celebration has the potential to be reclaimed if you have a *Mikveh* available. (See Karen Fox ceremony).

Thesis Interview
Via Telephone
Rabbi Sandy Eisenbeg Sasso
12/29/99
12:00pm

R. Sasso is recognized as being the first woman Reconstructionist rabbi. Was ordained in 1975. Since ordination has shared a pulpit with her husband Dennis in Indianapolis.

1) **How do you split your responsibilities?**

Never defined who was doing what. Did it based on interests. They both share the pulpit, both deliver D'vrei Torah, both do pastoral work, both lead services. She does more education responsibilities as she serves as the supervisor of the religious school (they have a full time educator, but she supervises). She does more storytelling because that is an aspect of her rabbinate that she has developed. They are always both there. Both at every Shabbat service. She might tell the story at a family service and he might do the liturgy. They don't want to be separated at different services. The kids grew up at the congregation and have a home there.

She started part-time at the congregation, she knew that it was a large congregation and the demands would be great. She already had one son and wanted to have a daughter as well so she didn't always want to be on call. When both children went to school full time she went back to the congregation full-time. In fact, at that point she said she was already putting in full-time hours, just needed to re-negotiate her contract to reflect that.

How did you make it part-time? In the beginning there were days she just didn't go in. She didn't have child-care help at home on those days so she couldn't leave the kids and couldn't make it in to Temple. She still came for every Shabbat.

Now they are both there every day. Neither one has an official day off. They do have a flexible schedule. They can either take a morning or afternoon off.

2) **Do congregants come to you for different things?** In some cases yes, in others no. There are certain issues that depend on whether the person is more comfortable with one person over the other. She can't pinpoint those issues. They both have requests for counseling, and it isn't like only the women come to her.

What about Life cycle events? Depends on who is there when the person makes an appointment at the Synagogue. Who is available at different times is a large factor with who officiates. It's not like an assistant when the person asks specifically for the senior rabbi.

She asked herself if there might be issues related to marriage that would vary? It is not the case, people develop different relationships. May have more to do with personality, who might have a better take on the situation. For example, they do most of the weddings together at the request of the couple. For two reasons, one, it makes a statement about mutuality and relationship. Two, they have both been at the congregation for a very long time, they have a relationship with the people they are marrying and they both want to be there. They also frequently go to parties and it would be odd to go to a wedding as a rabbi and not officiate. If they share the wedding, one does the interview and writes the address, the other does the liturgy.
If she was sharing a pulpit with someone other than her husband, they wouldn't do the wedding together. They are two separate people and have two separate contracts with the congregation.

The congregation reflects who they are, and that they have different styles. They do share a common philosophy.

Other divisions: He does not train the B'nai Mitzvah kids, she does. She conducts seminars and gives all the B'nai Mitzvah addresses. He runs the rehearsal. He has primarily taught the conversion classes so he gives the charges at conversions. She teaches women's study classes. Adult Education is divided on interest. They have both been at the congregation so long that Adult Education and other things depend on getting to know people in different ways. Their interests dictate what they teach.
For High Holy Days, it is pretty structured that they each speak at different times, but it might switch depending on when there sermon might fit better. They work on the themes together, work on the sermons independently, then share sermons at the end.
For services, he does D'vrei Torah and she does B'nai Mitzvah charges.

3) **Problems associated with sharing a pulpit?** One major problem is that they hardly ever leave the congregation. You take it home with you. There is little boundary difference between the congregation and outside life. On the other hand, it is nice that they can go out to lunch together and have it be a business lunch because they discuss congregational issues, yet, have lunch with spouse. They get to see each other a lot. There are some days where she couldn't tell you where he is. They each do work in the community, and take a different part of the community. They separate with regard to community service. For example, he was chair of a task force on race relations. She is on a committee collecting urban stories. She is also more involved with publication of her books and women's issues. He does community and interfaith work. She is also more involved with education, although they both teach outside the congregation. They are at Christian Theological Seminary. She teaches classes on children and literature, he teaches a class on different aspects of Judaism. They have different community involvement. They write separate columns for the Indianapolis Star. It's a monthly column that they split so each month one person writes.

If it's an issue they both feel strongly about, they might write it together and sign both names to column.

More problems: Boundaries. Where does rabbinic work end and family time begin? Even when they are on vacation they might start discussing and idea for a new program. They are also more lax on intruding on time. She might walk in to his office while he is on the phone and say, "put them on hold I have to tell you something." He might do the same thing. It is not something they would do if they were not married. It can be frustrating at times.

They have also learned that people like to play one off of the other. They have to be really careful when it seems like it's an issue of someone having already spoken. They have to be careful not to give different directions and decisions. Might have to say, it's not my area, let me check with the other person. This comes as a result of experience working together.

There are also issues with pay. The congregation can say, "we don't have to give you both high salaries because we are paying the Sasso family." It's hard to negotiate two people in the same family, it's easy to look at them as one unit.

Another problem is Sabbatical. They have never taken one. Partly because of the children, partly because they couldn't agree on where to go, also because the congregation can't have both rabbis gone for a year. And can't have one leave and the other stay because that isn't good for their family. They might take an extended summer soon.
There is also an issue with vacation. They take their vacations together. Advantage of having two rabbis at congregation who create family environment, disadvantage is that they are both going to be gone at the same time. If they were to each take off separately and have one on and one off it would really be a vacation for either.

4) **Would you recommend this for other rabbinic couples?** It depends on the couple. Depends on the personality, letting one person take charge. It has been very good for their family, they have a strong sense of a Jewish congregational home. Everyone knows the kids. If they were separated in congregations that would be an issue for the family. It all depends on the personalities. And of course they have had problems.

This is the first conservative congregation to hire a woman rabbi (she was first Reconstructionist ordained rabbi)

Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
Congregation Beth-El Tzedek
600 W. 70th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46260

Thesis Interview
12/99
Rabbi Norman Cohen
Provost (HUC-JIR)
Via Telephone

R. Cohen was asked to share his thoughts on the progress of the curriculum committee currently meeting to analyze the current curriculum and suggestions for the future.

** This interview is not verbatim, rather, it highlights some important areas that R. Cohen covered during the conversation.

1. **How much practical rabbinics will be included in the new curriculum?** A lot. The difference is that it would be required to be 'hands on.' For example, rabbinic mentors, CPE, education, seeing synagogue as place of change. To ensure a high level, there would be trained mentors. Camp will also be an important piece.

2. The core curriculum will be dove-tailed. It won't specify courses or details. The issue is that rabbis need to be change agents who communicate meaning to Jews and are immersed in text.
3. The curricula of the past were routinized. Now it asks students to envision what they want the person to be and do, and what is the vision for their Jewish lives. It will give students the skills to create more vibrant communities. It will be "Integrative." The faculty will help students put the totality of their education together.

Clinical education: There are five areas where the skills need be concentrated.

A) Pastoral skills
B) Liturgical skills
C) Education/teaching
D) Communal/organization - both in the larger community and within the institution.
E) Spirituality - spiritual mentoring.

Thesis Interview
12/29/99
Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph
Professor of Education (HUC-JIR)
Cincinnati, OH.

** This conversation is not verbatim, rather, it was used to get a general sense of the progress of the curriculum committee.

1. There are two areas that are under discussion with the curriculum, clinical learning and Integrated core curriculum.

2. Overarching assumptions:
   A) Much more of a complex job to be a rabbi today than ever before.
   B) The nature of the rabbinate has changed - there is an explosion of information.
   C) How people relate to one another is different. The authoritarian leaders is probably a less successful model now.
   D)The sociology of the community is different, what people expect has changed.
   E)It is too simple of an issue to simply discuss the rabbi as priest or prophet.

Given all these assumptions, what does the college do?
Sam's personal bias: Should produce congregational rabbis to work in different roles and settings with in congregation.

There are 4 or 5 roles that rabbis play:
A) Liturgical
B) Educational
C) Pastoral Care
D) Communal Agency
E) Spiritual Role

Different settings:
A) Congregational
B) Classroom
C) Hospital
D) Camp
E) Hillel
F) Youth
G) Elderly
H) UAHC
I) Federation
J) Communal

There is a certain energy within the institution saying that we have to prepare our students as much as possible to learn skills in different settings.

3) Integrated Core Curriculum. Rabbis need to be able help Jews answer enduring questions. Such as theology - why to believe? The problem of evil? Why be Jewish?

Students have to have help integrating all the 'trees in the forest.'

It would require the faculty to know what everyone is teaching.

With the movement towards integration, ultimately to answer the questions the students have had to struggle themselves.

Copy of Regina Jonas
Ordination Certificate

Abschrift des
hebr. Rabbinatsdiploms

Dr. Max Dienemann
Rabbiner

Offenbach a. M. 27.12.1935
Domstraße 12
Fernsprecher 816 75

הבתולה ריזא המכונה רעגינא בת ר' אב יאנאס
למדה בבית מדרש לחכמת היהדות בברלין משנת
תרפ"ד עד שנת תר"ץ ואחרי כן נבחנה ככהנה בהקצועות
שנות לחכמת היהדות ועמדה בנסיון. ומו"ר ר' יחזקאל
באנעט זצ"ל צוה לה לחבר חיבור על הנושא. היכולה
אשה להפקד על משמרת הרבנות? והיא כתבה את
החיבור הזה ומו' הרב ר' יחזקאל באנעט זצ"ל נסה
אותו וכתב עליו שמצא אותו "טוב". והיא לא פסקה
ללמד והרב ר' יחזקאל זצ"ל הסכים לה שמצד
ההלכה יש להשיב שאשה יכולה להפקד
במשמרת הרבנות והתחיל לבחון אותה פנים אל
פנים אך קודם גמר הנסיון נקרא למרום
והלך לעולמו. והנה באתה אלי משעם
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בדבר הלכה ולהעמיד דין על שרשו
ואחר שהכרתי שלבה עם ה' ועם ישראל

ושהיא נתנה את נפשה על המשרה
שהתכוונה לה ושהיא יראת אלקים ומאחר
שעמדה בנסיון שנסיתי אותה בעניני הלכה
מעיד אני עליה שהיא יכולה להשיב
על שאלות בדבר הלכה ושהיא ראויה
להפקד על משמרת הרבנות

וה' יסעד ויתמך אותה ויהי' עמה בכל דרכיה
יום א' טבת תרצ"ו
מאיר דינעמאן
רב דק"ק אפפענבאך והגליל
L.S.

Richtigkeit der Abschrift wurd bescheinigt.

Berlin, den 6. Februar 1942

Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums
der Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland

Baeck

Copied from framed text at
Leo Baeck College, London
October 1999

Shortage of Rabbis Leaves Pulpits Going Begging

By E.J. KESSLER
FORWARD STAFF

NEW YORK — It's either the great American rabbi shortage of 1999 or a cyclical downturn in the number of individuals with a passion for the pulpit.

Whatever it is, the Reform movement is moving to address what it is calling an "exceedingly serious" shortage of rabbis, cantors and educators, a development that is also affecting the other denominations to varying degrees.

"A number of large congregations did not fill their assistant rabbi positions this year, and our smaller congregations are increasingly unable to find any rabbis at all," wrote the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, to Reform lay leaders and professionals last week. "In addition, cantors and Jewish educators are desperately needed in every part of North America."

The shortage reflects a number of recent changes in the rabbinical profession. With many rabbis moving into positions as hospital chaplains, Jewish day school educators or communal professionals, pulpits in many areas have gone begging, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jewish officials say. Many larger congregations are hiring two, three or even four rabbis to minister to various constituencies among their members, draining applicants from the pool that might go to small synagogues or those in far-flung places. The introduction of women in the rabbinate in the last two

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Rabbi Shortage Causes Concern

Continued from Page 1

decades has also led to changes. Many large congregations are still reluctant to engage women as senior rabbis; many female rabbis eschew congregational work for educational or pastoral positions. Then, too, many rabbis are shrinking from congregational work, particularly in large congregations, because of the heavy burden of time that entails, with rabbis typically on call nights and weekends for emergencies and life cycle events such as weddings and funerals.

Some observers of American Judaism say, however, that shortages of rabbis and cantors tend to be cyclical, occurring every 25 years or so. "It's worth remembering that most of our Christian colleagues would love to have our problems," a Brandeis University professor who studies the history of American Judaism, Jonathan Sarna, said. "There's no shortage like the Catholic shortage of priests or some Protestant denominations' shortage of ministers, which shows disaffection with those institutions....The supply [of rabbis] is carefully controlled. Because it is controlled, it is inevitable that some years there are concerns that there are too many rabbis and there won't be jobs for them; some years, jobs go begging....It's not like the market is determining numbers. It's more like a craft union."

For the president of the Washington, D.C.-based Ethics and Public Policy Center, Elliott Abrams, the rabbinate today lacks the cachet it once had. "The question is only partly to get more people," he said. "The other part is to get better people. If you go back 150 years, to the shtetls, the best thing that the smartest young men could do is to be a rabbi. Fifty years ago, it was to become a doctor or a lawyer. Nowadays, it's probably investment banking and the Internet. The rabbi doesn't have the respect he had 100 years ago."

Others blame rabbis' poor quality of life. "We...expect our rabbis to be 24-hours-a-day people, available every night and every weekend until the day they retire," Rabbi Yoffie wrote to the Reform leaders. "We expect them to preach the virtue of family life but never to spend time with their own families. We expect them to make personal sacrifices that even the most hard-working among us would never contemplate making. We may deny it, but it's true: Many young people immersed in Jewish life consider the rabbinate, because of all its satisfactions, but then turn away because it exacts too high a psychic and spiritual price."

"It's true there is a cyclical character to this [shortage], but in my view it is much more serious than that," Rabbi Yoffie told the Forward. "It would be a mistake to sit this one out. We haven't been vigorous in our recruiting methods.... We want to be in a situation where there's ample rabbis to meet the needs of a community that hungry for learning and spiritual direction."

"Once, the rabbi was a cultural integrator, a communal leader who exemplified the well-educated Jew and was a spokesman for special causes," Rabbi Yoffie said, while today congregations want rabbis to minister to them personally. "Rabbis say they can't be a spiritual guide for a congregation without a certain amount of time to create their own spiritual life," he said. "For the first time, we're finding that our largest pulpits are not the most attractive."

Rabbi Yoffie dismissed the idea that the rules of the placement commissions maintained by the movements, which allocate larger congregations to rabbis with more seniority and wed congregations to rabbis from their own denomination, were causing the shortage, calling that notion "ridiculous." Nor, he said, is lack of compensation an issue in a movement where senior rabbis can earn into the six figures. He said that his 870-congregation movement would create some 150 new rabbinical positions in the next decade. To raise the number of rabbinical, cantorial and education students in the Reform movement, Rabbi Yoffie is proposing that:

- In order to attract "second career students," Reform's Hebrew Union College eliminate its requirement of a year of study in Israel for rabbinical students with school-age children, substituting two summers of study
- because most Reform rabbis, cantors and educators come out of the UAHC summer camp system, congregations should "vigorously recruit for camp and provide appropriate scholarships"
- retired Reform rabbis should be encouraged to provide part-time service to congregations unable to fill full-time positions
- Hebrew Union College should create a graduate school of education at its New York campus
- Hebrew Union College should recruit more aggressively.

Hebrew Union College some months ago decided it would begin ordaining rabbis at its Los Angeles campus in order to attract more students living on the West Coast. Older applicants drawn to the rabbinate as part of a spiritual search are a "tremendous pool" that the Reform movement hopes to tap for recruits, Rabbi Yoffie said. "Now I think we have a potential to draw in large numbers of these people," he said. "We have to be very sure we can make a place for them without compromising standards."

The executive vice president of the Conservative movement's 1,500-member Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Joel Meyers, said that in the past several years the Conservatives' Jewish Theological Seminary has "practically doubled" its enrollment, but "jobs are going begging at the moment." He did not know whether the trend would continue. Rabbi Meyers said positions opening up in hospitals, hospices, day schools, federations and Jewish community centers were drawing rabbis who might have chosen congregational work. Of recent JTS classes, 30% have been female, but "senior women going for senior posts still meet psychological barriers" among Conservative congregations, Rabbi Meyers said, although "we work on that very strongly."

Still, he said, the Conservative movement's longtime pattern of 60% of its classes' members going to congregations and 40% going to academia and communal work is holding. "Rabbis themselves have changed how they measure success," Rabbi Meyers said. "Back a generation ago, they measured it by the size of their congregation. That's not so today. There's a greater sense success comes from being a success where you are." The Rabbinical Assembly admitted 60 new members last year. "Rabbis are asked to be a field force," he said. "Everyone's asked to be aggressive and look for qualified people."

The executive vice president of the centrist Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America, Rabbi Steven Dworken, said that Orthodox congregations are feeling a shortage of rabbis only in small towns and cities that do not have the amenities, such as strong day schools, that rabbis have come to expect. "Thirty years ago, there wasn't such a difference" between small cities and larger ones in respect to such amenities, but now, he said, "there's a glaring lack in some places." Orthodox congregations, which do not tend to pay as well as Reform or Conservative ones, also need to show their rabbis more respect and to give them more breathing room, he said. "It's a matter of convincing Jewish young adults and parents that a career in Jewish communal work should have respect, compensation and recognition," Rabbi Dworken said. "Many youngsters hear disparaging behavior toward rabbis. They can go into many different professions and have many opportunities."

The dean of the Conservative movement's Ziegler School of Rabbinical Studies at Los Angeles, Rabbi Bradley Artson, said that half of this year's graduating class of eight, the school's first, has chosen pulpit work. "Until recently, rabbis weren't asked to be involved in the larger Jewish world," he said. "We're seeing the recognition that rabbis are a key catalyst in Jewish life, and they're being placed across the board in Jewish institutions. To me, that looks like a good thing....The Jewish community is getting serious about real Jewish content. The way you spell real Jewish content is 'r-a-b-b-i.'"

Jews for Jesus Launches Unusually Holy Campaign

and they're also an affront to the

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