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COUNSELING: A RABBINIC MODEL

by

Jack A. Luxemburg

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination.

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
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Referee:
Prof. Norman Mirsky

DIGEST

As the number of rabbis reporting involvement in significant counseling relationships continues to increase, there is a growing awareness of the need for a systematic approach to rabbinic counseling. This thesis seeks to present a model approach and is meant to aid the rabbi who is preparing himself to engage in active counseling.

The rabbi must first consider how the counseling activity fits into the role-matrix of his rabbinate. The question of his legitimacy as a counselor must be answered satisfactorily in order to allow for competent and comfortable counseling. The rabbi also has to weigh the advantages and limitations which characterize the rabbi-counselor. Only after these elements are given adequate consideration can the rabbi answer the question: Is it desirable to counsel?

If the answer is "yes", then the next step is to develop a theory of rabbinic counseling. Such a theory serves as a framework which puts constructive limitations on the scope and depth of counseling; suggests a method by which to interpret behavior and events; and helps the counselor maintain a degree of consistency in the presentation of the essential "message" of counseling. It is within this theoretical framework that the rabbi can incorporate significant elements of Jewish philosophy and theology, thus giving his

counseling approach a uniquely Jewish tone. Finally, a theoretical framework helps to clarify the goals and priorities of rabbinic counseling.

A theory of rabbinic counseling also helps in the selection of counseling techniques. Because there is such a great variety of counseling methods, the rabbi needs to analyze each one in which he is interested. The technique must be tested in order to measure the degree of "congruence" with the theoretical commitments of the rabbi, the compatibility with the rabbi's individual "style", and the degree of comfort which the technique affords the rabbi within the counseling context. This careful, critical evaluation assures the rabbi of adopting technqiues which will maximize his skills and abilities as a counselor.

Finally, the rabbi must consider the unique qualities of the counseling relationship. By identifying the elements which characterize the dynamic and productive counseling relationship, he can create a personal and physical environment within the context of the counseling interview which will promote successful rabbinic counseling.

As a result of this process, the rabbi will find that counseling can be an effective and satisfying rabbinic activity. No other activity combines as many aspects of the rabbiniate as does counseling. And, if the rabbi employs significant Jewish material in the course of his counseling, success in this area serves to reinforce the rabbi's, as well as the client's commitment to Judaism as a relevant and vibrant system of belief.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In order to write about counseling, one must attempt to develop that skill within himself. He depends on others to provide training, guidance, supervision, and opportunities to serve as a counselor. I have been fortunate to benefit from all of these. Therefore, I would like to thank those who provided them.

Rabbi Norman Mirsky, who advised the writing of this thesis, and from whose insight and relational skills I have learned and benefited.

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And finally, all those individuals who have allowed me to enter into their lives as a counselor.

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PREFACE

The unique character of rabbinic counseling requires a certain concern for terminology. What words are appropriate to designate the particular relationships and qualities which are part of the rabbi's counseling activities? The most crucial question is how to designate the individual who seeks rabbinic counseling and enters into a counseling relationship with the rabbi. This thesis follows this guideline: An individual who is in the stage of pre-counseling is referred to as a "congregant", for that is his or her primary relationship with the rabbi. The individual who is actively involved in the counseling process is referred to as a "client". The use of this term is to indicate that the primary relationship between the individual and the rabbi has temporarily shifted to one which is immediately predicated on the rabbi's providing counseling services to the individual at that individual's request.

Though functional, this designation is not without short-comings. The rabbi still has obligations toward his "client" which reflect the individual's underlying "congregant" status. These have to do with the concerns of the individual as he seeks guidance within a context which is familiar, rather than in a more impersonal "professional" context. In the psychiatrist's office,

for example, a tearful client is an acceptable occurrence, often indicative of a productive session. The presence of a secretary, nurse, or other clients in the office is equally acceptable and usually does not provoke anxiety because of the anonymity of the situation.

However, in the case of rabbinic counseling, these may be active concerns. The client may not want to emerge from the rabbi's office with a tear-stained face for fear of meeting another congregant or of seeing the rabbi's secretary. The secretary may also be a source of anxiety in that she is aware of the rabbi's appointment schedule and is a potential "leak" of confidential material. In addition, the risk is high that the individual may meet other congregants in the Temple and be embarrassed by the confrontation. These types of considerations extend beyond the counselor-client relationship into the concern which characterizes the rabbi-congregant relationship. Therefore, "client" is used throughout this thesis, but not with the overtones of impersonalness. Instead, the term should be understood as connoting rabbinic, as well as clinical, concern. Consequently, the rabbi will have tissues for crying; he will try to arrange appointments so that there is no waiting room crowd; and he will otherwise exercise rabbinic compassion and concern for the "client" who is also his "congregant".

Because this thesis deals with rabbinic counseling, it touches on the subject of Jewish principles and values.

Therefore, it makes use of appropriate Hebrew terms. The rabbi will have little trouble recognizing and understanding these terms. However, they are used in a unique context which emphasizes irregular aspects of their significance. Consequently, it may be worthwhile to both the rabbi and the lay reader to consult the short glossary of Hebrew terms found at the end of this thesis, in order to understand and appreciate the application of these terms.

Also found at the end of this thesis is an appendix. Therein, the reader will find material which can be used in the course of counseling-preparation. These include skill exercises and case studies. A quick glance at the appendix prior to a reading of the thesis will alert the reader to the material which is particularly appropriate to the various discussions. The reader may want to co-ordinate the use of certain exercises or the familiarization with particular case studies with his or her reading of the text.

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For My Parents,

Milton and Bernice Luxemburg

"Hear, my son, the instruction
of your father,
and forsake not the teaching
of your mother."
(Prov. 1:8)

and

For My Wife

Barbara Etkind

"Who gets a wife gets the
choicest possession,
a help meet for him and a
pillar of support."
(Ben Sira 36:24)

"Each day with her is as good
as two."
(Rashi, on Yebamot 63b)

INTRODUCTION

Of all the roles of the rabbi, his role as 'counselor' is, perhaps, the most problematic. To be an educator, a teacher, a community organizer, a spiritual leader or a preacher, are tasks for which, to some degree, the rabbi is trained either in the classroom or in the field. These are among the classic responsibilities of the rabbinate and it is not surprising that the rabbi approaches them with reasonable self-confidence. However, in the past thirty years, the rabbi has emerged as a counselor, a mental health para-professional. As he approaches this role, questions and challenges arise, and self-confidence decreases.

There is good reason for the emergence of this new role and the problems it creates. Once the traditional role of rabbi-as-halachic-expert was diminished, the rabbi was left without an important area of direct, personal influence in which he touched the lives of his congregants on the day-to-day level of Jewish living. He could no longer exhibit his learned compassion for his congregants' struggle to relate the demands of halachic Judaism to their daily lives. Similarly, emancipated congregants no longer wanted to be in a position where they needed such guidance.

Reform Judaism strengthened and even encouraged their sense of freedom from the strictures of Jewish legalism. They were on their own, struggling to synthesize the values of Judaism and the mores of modern society.

In the inevitable, 150-year long clash which followed, the rabbi found a new area in which to exercise his compassion and humanity. The conflict of Jewish and general cultural values, the problems of assimilation, the pressures of modern living, and the lapse of social morality all gave rise to a broad spectrum of individual emotional, social, and ethical crises. Many troubled Jews turned to their rabbis for guidance. Once again, the rabbi was in a position to aid the individual in his quest for a meaningful existence while bringing to bear the uniquely Jewish values which he represented. However, the technical skills and knowledge necessary to serve this function were not part of his professional background.

The traditional rabbinate was no longer a viable model through which to meet this modern challenge. The general society offered a model and the rabbi seized it. Living close beside him was the epitome of personal 'pastoral' care--the Protestant clergyman. As the role of the Reform rabbi approached, and, in some ways, imitated that of his Protestant counterpart, it became inevitable that the rabbinate would choose this model for confronting the new responsibility of individual counseling. After all, these other clergymen had nearly two thousand years of experience

in giving sustaining guidance out of a non-halachic religious system. Furthermore, it was a system whose emphasis on the individual paralleled the new pressure on the rabbi to provide guidance and assistance to members of his congregation experiencing social or emotional conflict.

For years the rabbi struggled to acquire the necessary skills to meet this new challenge. At the same time, he was attempting to define the border which separated him from the new medical man--the psychotherapist. In light of the emergence of psychiatry, and its continued acceptance in his community, the rabbi was placed in a difficult position. On one hand, he was acutely aware of the complexity of this new discipline, psychiatry, and aware, as well, of his relative ignorance in the field of intrapsychic dynamics. On the other hand, the acceptance of psychiatry within his community encouraged troubled congregants to pursue this avenue of relief. As a result, they soon came to expect that the Reform rabbi, who embodied both traditional Jewish values and modern intellectual commitments, would bring the fundamentals of psychiatry to bear in his relationship with individuals who sought his guidance rather than that of the psychiatrist. So the rabbi, aware of his limitations in this field, nonetheless became the object of an expectation which, normally, he could not adequately meet. Only in rare instances could a rabbi become a trained and practicing psychiatrist and still fulfill the more immediate responsibilities of the rabbinate. At best, his counseling

continued to be an application of the wisdom of his tradition, tempered with an understanding of psychology gained through his familiarity with psycho-analytic theory in its various forms.

Neither the rabbinate nor psychiatry remained fixed in this relationship. At the same time that the rabbi was becoming more and more adept at secular tasks associated with his position, psychiatry was undergoing a parallel transition. In the post-Freudian era, humanist psychologies began to place new emphasis on personal relations, and the dynamics of social behavior and interaction. This new orientation and its concern with personal growth and the realization of human potential struck a resonant chord in the rabbinate. These new psychologies set their sights on goals long associated with liberal religious expression, i.e., the realization of positive human potential and the creation of supportive, nurturing communities. Furthermore, these psychologies emphasized the nature and the quality of relationship between counselor and client, over the minute aspects of psycho-dynamics and analytic methodology.

This new development attracted much attention. Clearly, the emphasis on behavior and personal growth was compatible with the Reform rabbinate's emphasis on ethics and unlimited human potential. Further, in the counseling situation, the rabbi could realize the liberal theological notion of the individual as personal "mitsaveh"*--the aim of counseling would be for the congregant to establish productive and

meaningful guidelines (mitzvoth)* for himself, by which to resolve conflict and realize personal growth potential. In addition, the rabbi, like many other clergy who became adherents of this new psychology, recognized that his position was uniquely suited for relationship-oriented counseling. He saw his potential clients in many settings and was familiar with entire family units as well as with domestic and social situations. The traditional attitudes of trust in the rabbi and the recognition of the rabbi as teacher and "guide", served to enhance the rabbi's ability to use the new approaches of humanist psychology in his counseling activity.

Equipped with this new tool, the rabbi is still in a difficult position vis-a-vis counseling. He is not the only one to recognize the advantages of the new psychology. An entire lattice of professions--social work, guidance counseling, vocational counseling, marriage counseling, family counseling--has developed, and all entail a specialized application of the counseling skill. Though the rabbi may encounter cases in all these fields, as well as in the areas of bereavement, illness, inter-marriage and religious dilemma, he is still the least well-equipped when compared to other counselors in his community. After all, he receives no definitive training in this area in order to assume his professional position. Unlike the other counselors, he has no accreditation as a result of his professional training. He is constantly reminded of this. He is also reminded of the

fact that even the new "client-oriented" counseling requires some degree of technical skill and some degree of familiarity with the fundamentals of psychology.

The average rabbi has neither the time nor the financial resources necessary to obtain the formal education and accreditation which would be desirable. However, a significant amount can be accomplished through a process of "preparation" done individually, in professional groups, or under the supervision of a competent mental health professional. This process would prepare the rabbi for counseling situations which might arise, and contribute to his professional growth in this area. Such a process would entail the following considerations: First, a systematic reading of basic material in the fields of psychology and personality development. Second, the individual rabbi should consider the scope of his counseling ability and commitment in light of his personality, his desire, his competence and his evaluation of counseling in relation to his other rabbinic activities. Third, it is necessary to evaluate the role of Judaism and Jewish values in the formulation of a counseling 'philosophy', or theory of rabbinic counseling, and to consider the role of these values in the context of a counseling relationship. Finally, there must be an ongoing process through which the rabbi can gain a growing sense of self-awareness of his personality and its influence over his role as counselor.

It is to this process that the following chapters address themselves. The aim of this work is to suggest a

framework for counseling preparation, and to serve as a guide to those who would embark on such a project. To that end, this work is not conceived of as definitive or final. Each individual must find his unique counseling position. Hopefully, the contents and process of this thesis will be of assistance. Each reader will take from it that which he feels is particularly relevant to him. The process of self-examination and self-improvement is nothing, if not a personal experience. Therefore, what follows can be no more than a guide through which the process of counseling preparation can be fruitfully pursued.

CHAPTER I

THE RABBI AS COUNSELOR

The Ambiguity and Legitimacy of the Role

"No other professional in human relations is the object of so many diverse expectations from such a variety of individuals."[1] To support this contention, Dr. Robert Katz lists fourteen functions, or roles, which the rabbi is called upon to fulfill.[2] Among them, is the role of "counselor". This activity, rabbinic counseling, "has been one of the most neglected areas of concern in the American Rabbinate".[3] However, in light of the increasing number of rabbis who report their involvement in counseling, this era of neglect may be past.[4] More attention is being paid to the rabbi's role as counselor, and, as a result, serious questions are being raised. Among them are the basic queries: Is the rabbi in a position to do counseling? If he is, should he counsel at all?

These two questions arise out of the pervasive ambiguity of the rabbi's role as counselor and the dubious legitimacy of the rabbi as a counselor. For, despite current interest and activity in this realm, "counseling for the rabbi remains a somewhat ambiguous role. It is not formally structured or

defined as is the case with other professionals. There are no commonly accepted procedures to guide the rabbi in his meetings with laymen."[5]

This ambiguity stems from the very multiplicty of rabbinic roles alluded to above, for each role intimates a different type of relationship between rabbi and congregant. As Katz continues to point out, "Some laymen want authoritative answers. Others want...a companion to them in their search. For some he (the rabbi) symbolizes charismatic power...the indulgence of a mother or the conscience of the father...he is viewed as the representative of God. Those who profess no faith feel they are entitled to call upon him for help in personal and ethical dilemmas".[6] This diversity of relationships leads to an inevitable clash of role expectations. The congregant has a set of expectations of the rabbi--often rapidly shifting--and the rabbi has a set of expectations concerning himself as a rabbi, as well as having a set of expectations concerning his congregant's relationship to him. In addition to this, "the contemporary rabbi does not have the support and sanction of a stabalized image of the American Reform Rabbinate."[7] Thus, there is no authority which can clarify this confusion. Nonetheless, in the midst of this tangle of role expectations, the rabbi strives to define or emphasize a number of particular roles in order to give his rabbinate a degree of definition to which both he and his congregants can relate comfortably.

It is possible that "counselor" is one such role. It may well be suggested that a number of rabbis have reached

this conclusion, and thus the current popularity of the subject. What, then, is the place of counseling in the role-matrix of the rabbi? There is some concern that counseling distracts the rabbi from his other responsibilities. The time spent on both the activity, itself, and on the necessary training or self-study, it is felt, means that the rabbi neglects those other roles which involve a greater number of people, or satisfy a greater number of expectations. This view sees counseling not only as a role for which the rabbi is poorly prepared, but also as an endeavor which subverts other rabbinic activity and erodes the image of the rabbi to the degree that he exchanges Judaism for psychology.[8]

If this were the case, then the rabbinate would be in poor condition. Could it be that dedicated men voluntarily diminish the effectiveness of their rabbinate? The only reasonable conclusion is that they do not feel that counseling is an eroding element in the role-matrix of the rabbi. More likely, they feel it is just the opposite. They would contend that counseling is a focused application of all the rabbi's skills; a focused sharing of all his roles with one person or with a small group. In addition, counseling allows the rabbi to bring to bear his most important resources--Judaism and his own self--in a way which can strengthen the congregant's association with Judaism, the Jewish community and its spiritual leader.[9] Finally, counseling allows the rabbi and the congregant

to share themselves in a manner which is unique and satisfying; in a way which serves to enhance the other roles of the rabbi rather than diminish them.

Assuming that counseling can be a positive element in the rabbi's role-matrix, and that the initial ambiguity of its place is dispelled by viewing it as a focus, or synthesis of a number of established roles, still the legitimacy of rabbinic counseling can be questioned. Is the rabbi a counselor? The question relates not so much to counseling as a function of his training, but rather as a function of his position.

In an early article on rabbinic counseling, Julian Fiebelman stresses that the classic image of the rabbi "has never been one of disinterestedness nor indifference to his people".[10] Yet, the traditional rabbi did not provide care for individual congregants. Rather, the synagogue provided structures through which people cared for one another.[11] The rabbi's chief function was to render decisions, and in general, to assume the role of a learned authority on law and tradition. Grollman points out, however, that "counseling played an important role in the Jewish tradition".[12] The development of this component of tradition can be seen in the activities of the Chassidic masters "who were accepted as spiritual directors in quite personal matters".[13]

The personal guidance of the Tzaddik* was the result of a synthesis of three classic functions of the rabbi--

teacher, spiritual leader, and m'sader*-organizer of ritual events and arbitor/attributor of sanctity. The Tzaddik was able to personalize his teaching and spirituality, and bring them to bear on the problems of daily living. Thereby, he provided a link between the mundane and the religious life of his followers which, ultimately, drew the two so close together as to become indistinguishable. The modern rabbi rarely renders a legal decision and is no longer part of a community bound by the authority of religious law. Nonetheless, the focus of the same elements of rabbinic function--teacher, spiritual leader and m'sader--lend a legitimacy to his personal guidance, or counseling, in a manner analagous to that of the Tzaddik.

The Reform rabbi is still very much a teacher. Teaching about Judaism may well be his main task. As spiritual leader, the Reform rabbi is even busier than his rabbinic forefathers. He is not only the symbolic focus of religious life, he is also a leader of religious activity in the "priestly" sense.[14] As a consequence, he is an even greater m'sader. His ritual function lends sanctity to services, observances and life-cycle events, and he is responsible for structuring these "ritual interactions". In light of these ongoing responsibilities, coupled with the shift from traditional practice to a spiritual emphasis "more concerned with attitudes and personal choices in the broader area of ethics, belief and family life",[15] the modern rabbi is more accessable and more intimate with his congregants. He is

able to bring the focus of these concerns under the label "Judaizer"--one who works with the spirit and substance of Judaism and its application to modern living. It is only reasonable to expect that this activity would express itself in terms of interactions with individuals as well as in the public contexts of teaching or preaching.

Just as the legitimacy of the Tzaddik's guidance flowed naturally from his position and religious context, so rabbinic counseling, in the modern sense, grows organically out of the rabbi's central function as 'Judaizer'.[16] His teaching and spiritual leadership brings Judaism into a contemporary focus which enables congregants to employ its values and insights in order to improve the quality of their living. As m'sader, he not only structures 'ritual interaction' in the sense of sanctifying religious observances or life-cycle events, but also in the social sense as described by Erving Goffman.[17] Like the Tzaddik, the rabbi helps his congregants participate in a transcendent sense of sanctity, and also uses Judaism to introduce a sense of sacredness into daily living. Goffman uses the term 'ritual' in the second context because he views social interaction as having a symbolic element which expresses the individual's sense of self-respect as well as his respect for others. The social skills and awareness required to maintain this attitude are complex and difficult. Therefore, they are often ritualized. When an individual is unable to support himself in this elaborate scheme, he looks for

guidance and encouragement. The rabbi is in a unique position to assist the individual rediscover the daily ritual of 'sacred' social living, an element so crucial to meaningful human existence that it participates in the transcendent sacredness of human life.

Clearly, this type of supportive, guiding activity is a legitimate extension of the rabbi's role. After all, Judaism has never been divorced from daily living.

One question still remains: Is this "Judaizing" really counseling? To answer this, consider the following tasks of the counselor as listed by Felix P. Biestek.

1. To help the client see his problem clearly and with perspective.
2. To acquaint the client with pertinent resources in the community.
3. To introduce stimuli that will activate the client's own dormant resources.
4. Create a relationship environment in which the client can grow and work out his own problems.[18]

The first task is one which combines sensitivity and objectivity. The rabbi's familiarity with the client, plus the useful distance of his role, enables the rabbi to balance his position in a manner conducive to achieving this first goal. The second task is strictly informative. Every rabbi should be aware of the resources of both the general and the Jewish community. The third and fourth tasks are the counseling skill tasks. Even so, the rabbi as 'Judaizer' and guide in both the areas of religious and social "interaction ritual" does both of them. He brings

to bear the values and commitments of Judaism, either directly or indirectly, so as to stimulate the client to make a decision or plan a course of action for himself, guided by a consideration of the rabbi's Jewish input. Similarly, it is assumed that the rabbi strives to create an environment in his community in which Judaism promotes personal growth and satisfying living. That he would strive for this in terms of one-to-one relationships is seemingly a matter of course.

The rabbi, then, can be a counselor. In many respects, he is, even if he chooses not to be, for his activity as 'Judaizer' necessarily contains a component of guidance. Therefore, rabbinic counseling is not an ambiguous activity, but is a focus or synthesis of roles. As such, it is a legitimate extension of the rabbi's position in the community. How the rabbi will counsel, if he chooses to affirm this role, is a matter of choice. It is contingent on an honest assessment of his counseling ability and commitment in light of his personality, his desire, his competence and his evaluation of counseling in relation to other rabbinic activities.

Limitations and Advantages

In all endeavors, the rabbi confronts the elements of his personal and professional identity which either inhibit or enhance his ability. In doing so honestly, he helps himself establish realistic goals and avoids the trap of overextending himself in areas where his skills are

limited. Conversely, a reasonable assessment of ability helps identify those strengths which the rabbi can mobilize in order to increase his effectiveness. The counseling endeavor requires taking such an inventory. Each rabbi needs to make a private accounting of those personal qualities and characteristics which aid or inhibit his role as counselor. In the meantime, the present discussion will proceed to enumerate some components in the constitution of the modern rabbinate, itself, which hinder or enhance the counseling role of the rabbi. First, some limiting factors:

Time

In most instances the rabbi is a general practitioner. As a result, he continually invests his energies and time in a multitude of areas which are fundamental to his total role of rabbi. Ritual matters, religious education, organizational responsibilities, preparation of sermons, life-cycle events, and many other activities fill his calendar. All this activity inevitably limits his role as a counselor. It mitigates against the opportunity for the rabbi to do depth counseling which requires many interviews, each of significant duration, in order to achieve adequate analytic insight. Further, it makes it difficult for the rabbi to find the necessary "quiet time" in which he can give his undivided attention to a client without a feeling that he is needed somewhere else. Consequently, the rabbi should concentrate on developing skill in short-term counseling which deals

with events on the conscious, reality level, as well as the ability to make constructive referrals when necessary.[19]

Lack of Formal Training

Of all the skills the rabbi must master, counseling is the one in which he receives the least preparation during his course of professional training. Since the average rabbi is not a trained therapist and has, at best, a lay knowledge of psychology, he is limited in the scope of his counseling. Cases which entail episodes of significant emotional unrest are essentially beyond his skill. Such clients are best served by a competent referral to another professional. But even for this limited counseling, Henry E. Kagan stipulates that the rabbi needs to "acquaint himself with dynamic psychology, the techniques for personal communication, and have as clear an awareness of himself as possible".[20]

Multiplicty of Roles

When the client and the rabbi sit across from each other, two parallel thought processes are in action. The congregant thinks, "Do I speak to the rabbi as a friend, or as my old religious school teacher; do I speak to him with the reverence due his pulpit personality...How do I relate to this person who is so many things at once". Similarly, the rabbi wonders, "How should I respond to this person--candidly and openly like a friend; as an instructor or teacher; as a priest?" The variety of roles that the rabbi assumes can be a hindrance

in the counseling situation. It may confuse communication when the rabbi feels comfortable with one appraoch, and his client needs or demands to be met on another plane of relationship. Therefore, the rabbi needs to discover that counseling position which is most generally consistent with the role expectations of his congregants and is, at the same time, personally comfortable and authentic. As a result, the rabbi may discover that certain types of situations or certain types of individuals will not comply with these criteria. In that event, he may do best to avoid such cases since they demand a fundamental compromise on his part which will ultimately undermine the effectiveness of his counseling.[21]

Rabbi's Public Position

Unlike the psychotherapist whose professional position affords privacy and protection, the rabbi is a public person, and vulnerable to certain negative consequences of the counseling activity. The rabbi may find himself in the uncomfortable position of receiving hostile reactions from mental health professionals in his community, or even from members of his own congregation. Despite the practice of counseling, the modern synagogue member has not been conditioned by Jewish tradition and history to view the rabbi as essentially a counselor of individuals. Other professionals may feel that the rabbi is overstepping his bounds, while congregants may resent the rabbi's great expenditure of time and effort in counseling a small number of people. Further,

the rabbi, unlike other mental health professionals, continues to see many of his clients in other contexts--services, board meetings, educational programs, Sisterhood, etc. He may find himself unable to be assertive with these same individuals because of his empathic involvement with them. Thus, his leadership abilities may be undermined.[22] An even more serious consideration is the possibility of the rabbi being subjected to the phenomenon of "negative transference"[23] or other types of hostility reactions which commonly arise at some point in the counseling encounter.[24] This hostility, though often a healthy and necessary part of some types of counseling, can be detrimental to the rabbi if the client acts out his negative feelings in the context of the congregation. Therefore, the rabbi may choose to avoid the protracted counseling relationships which are likely to give rise to these problems and emphasize referral, which may be in the best interests of both parties.

These considerations would give any rabbi, even the most skillful, reason to pause and re-evaluate his counseling activity. Well they should. For only after the rabbi appreciates the complexity and consequences of the preceeding points, can he weigh them against the following list of advantages which the rabbi brings to the role of counselor.

Unique Personal Qualities

Each rabbi, as part of his personal inventory, can discover in himself some qualities which will enhance his

counseling. He may be a good listener or an astute observer of body language. He may have an ability to easily establish a comfortable rapport with a client. He may be a calm personality which radiates reassurance and sensibility. He may be good at putting the feelings of others into words. He may be any or all of these things, as well as some others. Whatever the case, each rabbi has some set of personality characteristics which he can emphasize in order to establish a positive relationship with a client and then proceed to use these qualities as constructive tools in his counseling.

Established Relationships

The rabbi normally has some degree of ongoing, established relationship with his congregants who are potential counselees. This provides a solid foundation for counseling which allows for progress to be made in much less time than would be required if the counselor were to "start from scratch".[25] This personal knowledge often extends beyond the individual to encompass his or her entire family as well as other social situations in which the client may be involved. Thus, the rabbi, as counselor, has immediate access to his client's family and social context from which individual problems may be derived. This can be taken another step further by realizing that the rabbi's "effectiveness and relevance as a counselor are reinforced because he serves, simultaneously as teacher, preacher and solemnizer at ceremonies which deeply touch the life of the congregant/client and his family."[26]

Availability

Despite the rabbi's busy schedule, or perhaps, because of it, he in generally available to his congregant without the waiting period associated with other professionals. The rabbi may be approached over the phone, after a religious service, during a reception, before a class or while he walks through the halls of his Temple. The rabbi's presence in all these situations makes it possible "for persons who would be too embarrassed to make an appointment for counseling, to get help by coming to him, ostensibly for less threatening reasons."[27] Assuming that the rabbi is sensitive enough to detect a personal message in such a situation, he would be able to provide assistance immediately, if by no other means than communicating an understanding and interest. He might even help the congregant set up an appointment to meet at a more appropriate time. In the same vein, the rabbi's availability makes him easier to approach for individuals who recognize their need for guidance, but for whom psychiatrists or social agencies are an anathema.[28]

Trust

Just as it is impossible to measure, it is equally impossible to overestimate the trust factor which is part of the interaction between congregant and rabbi. On the most basic level, the congregant expects, and has the right to expect, that "the rabbi will preserve the sanctity of his confession."[29] This conviction can facilitate quick

and easy progress into meaningful dialogue which would otherwise require more time with a professional whom the client may initially mistrust. Further, the congregant who seeks out the rabbi for guidance assumes that the rabbi will understand his existential dilemma. He trusts that the rabbi will not reject him or belittle him. The congregant may well feel that in a time of crisis, the rabbi is the only one who can understand a troubled Jew. Trust in the rabbi's continued good will can be the factor which motivates a client to follow through on the decisions reached during a counseling episode. The congregant's trust in the rabbi's ongoing personal support, encourages the client to make those first difficult steps towards a successful solution of his problem.[30]

Resources

The greatest advantage that the rabbi has as a counselor is the tradition and cultural heritage which he shares with his congregant. "His (the rabbi's) knowledge of Jewish tradition, combined with thoughtful response to the experiences of life go a long way toward equipping him to help people who come to his study."[31] Because of this, he is able to speak a language of understanding in those particular terms which touch the congregant on a deep level. In this uniquely Jewish context, which both client and rabbi share, the rabbi emerges as a very special personage. First, he is a specialist in values. He has the guidelines of Jewish ethics available

with which to assist the client in making difficult decisions. Second, the rabbi is in a position to promote self-acceptance by emphasizing certain Jewish convictions concerning the transcendent value of the individual. In addition, "By his own presence, the rabbi communicates the themes of the prayerbook and the ceremonies of Judaism which exault life, evoke courage, and awaken conscience".[32] Third, the rabbi may be a focus of identification. In this context, he represents a set of loyalties and life-style elements which can become central in the client's process of identity organization and value clarification. These avenues of personal resources which are available to the rabbi are supplemented by a similar set of institutional resources. The rabbi may be able to use the Temple and its auxiliary organizations in the broad context of his counseling. He may encourage attendance at religious services to be followed by personal discussions in order to help an individual clarify some religious conflict. He can help integrate a lonely congregant into the activities and social milieu of Sisterhood, PTA, or other Temple organizations. In addition, he can promote programs dealing with the issues most often seen in counseling. These might be called "preventive counseling". When conducted by competent professionals, such programs can eliminate some problem situations. They can also attract and aid persons not willing to seek counseling or unaware of a problem which the rabbi senses developing. He can even invite these individuals to participate. The

"Jewish" context of the activity makes acceptance and participation comfortable. Finally, the rabbi who is fortunate, has available to him the resources of local Jewish agencies. The cooperation between rabbi and agency can bring help to those people who would otherwise reject it, but for the unique continuity of the Jewish context. This is of great importance in making effective referrals.

Is it Desirable to Counsel?

After all the analysis and evaluation of roles, expectations, advantages and limitations, there remains the crucial question: Is counseling a desirable rabbinic role? If it is not, then best the discussion end here. For the rabbi who feels unqualified, uninterested, or reluctant to take time from other pursuits to improve his counseling skills, there are alternatives to active counseling. "Alternative roles would call for the offering of reassurance in a priestly-fatherly way, the recommending of specific books and articles in the manner of the helpful scholar-spiritualist, or the referring of the congregant to someone more qualified to counsel. A further alternative would be the busy rabbi who is reluctant to take time from his responsibilities in Temple administration, education, or scholarship to encourage people to speak with him about personal matters...."[33]

These are possible alternatives, and for some, they may be the best path to pursue. Others, however, will recognize the fact that some counseling contacts are unavoidable. The

availability of the rabbi in different contexts makes him safe to approach without acknowledging that one seeks help. Further, the rabbi, by his nature, "signals a helping figure who is accessable without distinction to those he meets".[34] Therefore, the incidence of informal counseling contacts is high, and can occur in almost any situation. "Often the professional and social elements merge so that the rabbi is not conscious of distinctions between the teaching and the counseling encounter or between a casual social engagement and a more personal helping relationship."[35] It is possible to view these initial contacts in terms of "pre-counseling". They are veiled exchanges which take place in non-threatening contexts in order that the potential counselee can assess the rabbi's openness, sensitivity and willingness to engage in a dialogue which may eventually become a counseling relationship. Only if the rabbi is aware of the strong personal or emotional component of a question or statement directed to him can he respond in a way which indicates that he has received the message. How the rabbi proceeds from there, is a matter of personal style. But, clearly, the ability to identify such messages is an advantage, if only to enforce the rabbi's role as a sympathetic, and understanding individual. Therefore, it is desirable that some counseling preparation be undertaken for the purpose of sensitizing oneself to the variety of subtle signals and emotional currents which characterize the rabbi's manifold personal contacts.

Beyond gaining an important awareness and augmenting certain sensitivities, the rabbi who counsels also finds opportunities to give both Judaism and his role as 'Judaizer' unique focus. In the counseling intervention, the rabbi brings to bear all his skills and training; all his tradition and heritage. At various phases in his counseling, he is teacher, guide, spiritual leader, preacher, moralizer and confessor. Counseling represents a unique synthesis of rabbinic roles, concentrated into a one-to-one relationship. More important, however, is the fact that when the rabbi counsels, he gives relevance to the faith and values he represents. He is able to demonstrate by his interaction, and by his very person, that Judaism has something important to say about the problems of daily living. As a counselor, the rabbi "demonstrates the use of Judaism, the entire heritage of being a Jew and participating in the value systems and institutions identified with Judaism, as an asset....in growth and living."[36]

Counseling, then, is an activity which is "almost co-extensive with his (the rabbi's) other roles.[37] As such, he can hardly hope to avoid the counseling activity. It is impossible to shirk the counseling responsibilities that surround such events as marriage, illness, death or conversion. All require some degree of counseling skill. Inasmuch as this is true, it seems desirable for the rabbi to extend his counseling into other relevant areas by equipping himself to deal with a broader range of situations. He need not seek

out counseling opportunities, but there is much to gain by being prepared and by being available to those congregants who would seek the rabbi's counsel concerning problems in their daily lives.

This, then, is the counseling role. It is, in essence, being rabbi, in the most significant sense, to one individual in the moment of his or her need. In this way, the rabbi is "helping or teaching through sympathetic and, if possible, empathetic sharing of particular problems with persons who seek the rabbi's help or instruction."[38] Though this activity needs to be founded on a base of psychological knowledge and insight, as well as technical skill, it should not be perceived as "psychiatry by amateurs for individuals who are or should be patients. It is personal teaching for congregants who are 'normal' and who are capable of mobilizing their own resources with the stimulus of the rabbi's sympathetic understanding."[39]

CHAPTER II

TOWARD A THEORY OF RABBINIC COUNSELING

The Purpose of a Theory

A common criterion for effective rabbinic counseling is "compatibility with the teachings of Judaism".[1] One is tempted to dismiss this idea as being painfully obvious. However, it is exactly this quality which makes rabbinic counseling "rabbinic". If the counseling approach which the rabbi develops is incompatible with the notions of "what is Jewish", he may confuse his client and miss an opportunity to create a relevant relationship between the client and the insights and values of Judaism. How the rabbi chooses to apply these values and insights in his counseling is a matter of personal preference. It should be emphasized, however, that one of the functions of the rabbinic counselor is "to help the individual find meaning in his confrontation with Judaism."[2]

There is no escaping the fact that the rabbi is "a public figure who stands for a particular value system".[3] Furthermore, "there are sure to be instances in which it is desirable for the rabbi to give direct advice or present a definite code of behavior derived, primarily, from Jewish

law".[4] In these cases, the rabbi will choose different ethical guidelines according to the needs of the situation. In the course of his counseling, they will become clear and explicit. However, there are some elements which remain constant, no matter what the nature of the counseling situation. They form the implicit content of rabbinic counseling--a set of unspoken assumptions which guide the rabbi's approach to counseling, and affect his understanding of the counseling process, his choice of counseling techniques, and the nature of his relationship to clients. In a sense, this is the theoretical framework out of which the rabbi counsels, and there is a need to be aware of exactly what it is. "If he does not follow the guidelines of an explicit theory, the principles determining his view will be hidden in implicit assumptions and attitudes of which he is unaware."[5] Thus, the need for a theory of rabbinic counseling.

The function of such a theory is simple: it prevents the rabbi from being dazzled by the full-blown complexity of the situations in which he is involved. "The theory is a set of blinders, and it tells its wearer that it is unnecessary for him to worry about all of the aspects of the event he is studying".[6] The rabbi who counsels soon discovers that each case presents countless facets for consideration. Some are significant, others are merely intriguing. A useful theory will, necessarily, limit the lines of investigation and emphasize the kinds of information required for effective counseling. This is of particular importance to the rabbi. Since his time is limited, he must be disciplined in his

approach, and avoid random exploration of personal material which is neither relevant nor within his counseling ability to handle. To this end, a theory "specifies to the user a limited number of more or less definite dimensions, variables or parameters which are of crucial importance".[7]

In addition to the constructive limitations which a theory of rabbinic counseling provides, it should also provide a basis for understanding human behavior. This cannot be achieved without first arriving at some conclusions about human nature, personality, and human growth potential. Such conclusions are highly practical in their orientation. They form the basis from which the counselor interprets and evaluates his client's behavior, and then plans an appropriate counseling strategy. This functional relationship has "remained evident throughout the development of psychology".[8] For the rabbi, these considerations constitute a highly complex component of his counseling, which straddles the fence between psychology and religion. Who can say at what point a discussion of "the nature of man", for instance, ceases to be a question of psychology and becomes a question of theology. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that insofar as they are psychological questions, the content of a theory of rabbinic counseling centers on psychological considerations; but insofar as they are questions of theology, the content of such a theory must center about theological concerns. Thus, a theory of rabbinic counseling must be informed by relevant elements of Jewish thought.[9]

Lastly, but not to be ignored, is the function of consistency which a personal theory of counseling lends to the activity. This does not mean that every case is handled in the same manner or that the rabbi employs the same counseling techniques in every situation. It is obvious that the diversity of situations, the individuality of each client and the multiplicity of variables present in every case, require that "the rabbi should not aspire to any one method of counseling".[10] Rather, he should strive for technical diversity in light of the variety of cases he will confront. However, there is a philosophic/theological motif which should evidence itself in the various counseling approaches the rabbi employs. This motif is the essential message of the counseling activity, and as such, must remain consistent. The particular theory of rabbinic counseling to which the rabbi subscribes establishes these motifs, and helps to maintain their consistent presentation.

A Consideration of Primary Assumptions

Before formulating a theory which will serve the functions of limitation, interpretation, and consistency, one must discover the assumptions on which such a theory is to be founded. For example, the rabbi who does counseling makes some crucial assumptions concerning its nature and efficacy simply by engaging in the activity. What does the activity, itself, imply? It implies a belief on the part of the practitioner that:

1. Human behavior can be systematically interpreted and understood;

2. That this behavior, when deemed undesirable, or an undesirable element in one's personal environment, can be improved or ameliorated by a conscious effort.

3. The activity of 'counseling' is a process through which the above-mentioned goals can be effectively realized.

It is within this locus of primary assumptions that Judaism plays a crucial role. Different lines of Jewish theological and philosophical thought can provide the rabbi with concepts and ideas which support the assumptions so vital to the construction of a functional theory of rabbinic counseling. At the same time, this "Jewish input" becomes part of the rabbi's counseling orientation, and is communicated to the client in an indirect, "medium-is-the-message" manner. In other words, the axioms of a counseling theory are the basic beliefs to which the counselor subscribes, and by which he is known to his client. In this case, the counselor is a rabbi. It is reasonable, then, to suggest that the axioms of rabbinic counseling be informed by appropriate Jewish concepts. In this way, the client can recognize that Judaism is an active component--a motif--of the rabbi's approach to personal problem solving.

There are many elements of Jewish philosophy and theology which can be used as a foundation for a theory of rabbinic counseling. As in other stages of counseling-preparation, each rabbi, in making his counseling a personal and authentic

activity, will choose those elements which he holds to be true and relevant. The choice, of course, will be tempered by his personal experiences. Thus, theories will differ, somewhat, from rabbi to rabbi. Even so, it is worthwhile to consider briefly a few concepts from the vast wisdom of Judaism which support the three assumptions listed above, and which may serve as springboards for further development.

1. Human behavior can be systematically interpreted and understood.

This contention should not be misconstrued. It does not mean to imply that the ageless controversies over the nature of man--his motivations, his appetites, his emotions and his fate--are subject to an ultimate and absolute resolution. Rather, this assumption means to indicate that it is possible to postulate a descriptive framework--a metaphor--which allows for small behaviors to be analyzed in light of the disposition of the greater issues of human nature. Of course, the major questions of human nature can be answered in any number of ways. This is clear in light of the many conflicting philosophies, religions, and psychologies evident to even the most casual student. Consequently, there are a corresponding number of personality theories, each very sensible and consistent within itself; each capable of making some sense out of the complexities of human behavior.

Out of the variety of personality theories available, the rabbi must choose one, or create for himself a synthesis of several, in order to establish his own theory of rabbinic

counseling. By engaging in the counseling activity, the rabbi already indicates his assumption that certain behaviors and emotions can, indeed, be analyzed, and causal relationships established between them. This cannot remain a haphazard system. It is important to develop an explicit, well formulated approach which can be communicated during a counseling episode. The counseling process is most effective when the counselor and his client agree on an understanding of personality and human behavior. If the counselor has no understanding of his own, then he is certainly in no position to promote understanding of the part of his client. Further, the intellectual commitments of the rabbi in this area are a key in establishing a supportive and encouraging rapport with the client. Fluctuations on the part of the rabbi lead to confusion on the part of the client and result in erratic success in counseling.

How, and what, the rabbi should choose from the extant theories of personality cannot be dictated. This is an area in which each rabbi must make his personal decisions. Even so, there are a number of Jewish concepts which are relevant to this crucial choice. It is not that a theory of personality should be developed solely on the basis of these concepts (though it may be possible to do so). Rather, these concepts contribute a particular perspective, and they have distinct consequences for the rabbi who would choose to incorporate them into the process of formulating a theory of rabbinic counseling. Though by no means an exhaustive discussion

of these concepts, the following is indicative of their possible contribution.

> A Jew should always carry with him two purses, so that he may reach into the one or the other according to his needs: one with "I am but dust and ashes", and another with "for my sake was the world created".[11]

> R. Tifdai said in the name of R. Aha: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: If I create him of the celestial (elements), he will live and not die; (if I create him) of the terrestial (elements), he will die and not live (i.e. afterlife). Therefore, I will create him from both. If he will sin, he will die, and if not, he will live. (Genesis Rabbah 14:3)

> R. Jeremiah b. Elazar said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, He created him androgynos (i.e. bisexual), for it is said: Male and female He created them and called their name Adam. (Gen. R. 8:1 on Gen 5:2)

From these three separate sources, one clear conclusion can be drawn. The literature of Jewish tradition views man as having a composite nature. He is both sacred and mundane; heavenly and terrestrial; male and female. One could go on and identify a number of additional "composites" which would be equally apt. For example, an individual can be said to be both adult and childish; physically old and spiritually young (or vice versa); serious and silly, etc. In fact, it is possible to find within the make-up of any one individual a great many pairs of opposing characteristics. In other words, each person embodies a potential for any or all of the possible human behaviors. The Rabbis of the Talmud

generalized this observation in terms of "inclinations". They identified the fundamental "composite" of human behavior: "The Rabbis generally hold that God endowed man from the very beginning with two inclinations, one good and one bad."[12] These inclinations are known to the rabbis as yetser harah*, the inclination to do evil, and yetser hatov*, the inclination to do good.

On the basis of this observation, the Rabbis of old were able to analyze human behavior in terms of the dominance of either inclination. For example, in Avot de R. Nathan (Perek 30, Nusha Bet), the erratic behavior of adolescence is attributed to the Evil Inclination. In the same text (Perek 16, Nusha Aleph), the responsible behavior of an older child is attributed to the ascendance of the Good Inclination. In Midrash Tehillim (9:1), the rabbis make a surprisingly sophisticated observation that some socially acceptable activities are sublimations of the Evil Inclination: "...were it not for the Evil Inclination, a man would not marry a woman, nor would he beget children with her, nor would the world endure." Perhaps the best summation of this concept of inclinations is found in Ecclesiastes Rabbah (4:13):

> "Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king". "Better is a poor and wise child"--this is the Good Inclination. And why is it called "child"? Because it joins itself to man only from the age of thirteen and onward. And why is it called "poor"? For not all listen to it. And why is it called "wise"? Because it teaches men the proper way. "--than an old and foolish

> king"--this is the Evil Inclination. Why does he call it "king"? Because everyone listens to it. And why does he call it "old"? Because it joins itself to him from his youth to his old age. Any why does he call it "foolish"? Because it teaches man the way of evil.

From these sources, it can be inferred that man is not only complex in nature, but there also exists tension between the conflicting aspects of his nature. As the preceding quote implies, these inclinations exist side by side, exerting pressures which lead a man to behave one way or another. This is more clearly exemplified in Ecclesiastes Rabbati (4:1) which tells of a certain Abba Tahna. This man could not decide whether or not to aid a friend in distress. At first he delayed, and the Rabbis attribute this to the sway of the Evil Inclination. Finally, Abba Tahna overcame his hesitancy and helped his friend. This, claim the Rabbis, is the result of the Good Inclination asserting itself over the Evil Inclination.

The Rabbis present a set of precedents, if not a consistent theory of their own, from which the modern rabbi can draw while establishing his own theoretical counseling basis. The Rabbis evidence an appreciation of the complexity of human nature; an understanding of the conflict between the disparate elements of personality which result in various behaviors; and an encouraging notion that the Good Inclination, or the more desirable elements of personality, can overcome the Evil Inclination, or undesirable elements of personality.

These brief observations can give some direction to the process of formulating a theory of rabbinic counseling. First, the complexity of human nature described by the Rabbis gives support to the numerous personality theories based on similar observations. They range from the Freudian superego-ego-id formula to the currently popular Transactional Analysis formula of Parent-Adult-Child. These two theories, and the many which fall between them, all vary to some degree. However, they all acknowledge the composite structure of human nature, and are, thereby, in partial agreement with the observations of the sages.

As mentioned above, the Rabbis felt that the individual was a self-contained battleground. He struggled with his Evil Inclination and Good Inclination to determine a desirable character and a responsible pattern of behavior. Further, the Rabbis felt that one could sense, or even observe this struggle and the tensions it produced. Here, perhaps, is the most significant contribution of the Rabbis. They did not view human nature or personality as a fixed or pre-determined set of "drives" or "instincts". Rather, they saw the individual as the focus of tensions--tensions which at once oppose and complement each other as in the Taoist concept of Ying and Yang.

The Rabbis categorize these tensions as inclinations toward Good or toward Evil. Even when taken out of this moral context, the individual remains the focus of tensions. There are the little tensions: where one is now and where

one must be in an hour, the work one did yesterday and the work one is to do tomorrow, the object of one's desire and the limits of one's means. There are any number of these situations, and each exerts a certain tension in the mind. Of course, there are the great tensions: What one is and what one feels one ought to be; one's personal need or desires and the demands or rules of society. Great or small, these tensions have a way of expressing themselves in terms of personality traits and behavior patterns. Based on this insight, a metaphor can be suggested. Personality is like a web, "for it consists of lines of tension between an infinitely large number of points, the tensions and the points of attachment being continually subject to change".[13]

Perhaps the Rabbis might have been more inclined to use a metaphor based on a tug-of-war--the two inclinations opposing each other, pulling the individual first one way and then another. However, the secular, amoral perspective of psychology allows for an appreciation of all the subtle influences which are tension-provoking. Thus, the image of the web may be more comprehensive. Either way, it is clear from this brief analysis that there exists in Jewish sources a surprisingly sophisticated literature on the nature of personality.[14] This literature, especially that dealing with the concept of the inclinations, is capable of yielding a framework for the understanding and interpretation of behavior. Therefore, the contemporary rabbi has a solid basis for seeking out a systematic theory of personality on which to build his counseling theory.

2. Behavior, when deemed undesirable, or an undesirable element in one's personal environment, can be improved or ameliorated by a conscious effort.

This assumption must be seen as having two components: (a) personal freedom: the individual has the freedom to choose a new, more successful style of living over an old, habitual and unsuccessful style; and (b) effective agency: the individual is capable of translating this new choice into action or behavior which will be effective in producing the desired change in his physical, emotional or spiritual environment.

"From the psychological point of view, it is essential to believe in freedom in order to have an adequate picture of personality on which to do effective counseling".[15] It allows for the possibility of change and growth within the counseling experience. If personal freedom is negated, the result is a deterministic interpretation of personality. Counseling would then be "simply a scheme of cause and effect: blocked instinctual urge equals repression equals psychic complex equals neurosis. And the cure consists, theoretically, of merely reversing the process: observe the neurotic system, trace down the complex, remove the repression, and then assist the individual to a more satisfactory expression of his instinctual urges".[16] This scenario may sound familiar. It is the consequence of strict Freudian, psycho-analytic thought which is the most vivid and persuasive presentation of the deterministic picture of personality.[17] A counseling theory could be designed based on a

determinist psychology. However, rabbinic counseling is best served by the assumption of personal freedom which Judaism affirms.

A notion of personal freedom can be developed from the oft quoted verses: "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil" (Deut. 30:15), and "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life that you may live, you and your seed." (Deut. 30:19) Both of these formulae make explicit the notion that each individual must select a style of living for himself. By choosing how he will live, the individual exercises his personal freedom. The Rabbis recognized this implication and were even able to reconcile it with the belief in an omniscient God. "Everything is foreseen, and freedom of choice is given." (Avot 3:19): "All is in God's hands, save the fear of God, itself" (Berakot 33b). Yet they also understood that choices tend to become habits, or patterns of behavior, in which personal freedom seems to diminish. In Talmudic discussions (Makkot 10b and Shabbat 104a), the Rabbis observe that God leads a man in the way which the man chooses for himself. Thus, they could explain why behaviors, constructive or destructive, tend to reinforce themselves and become patterned along with their consequences (Avot 4:2).

The assumption of personal freedom in the form of the "ability to choose" has a crucial corollary for the Rabbis,

"responsibility for choice". In other words, freedom necessarily implies responsibility. The texts cited above clearly assert that an individual must assume the responsibility for the consequences of his actions. There is no room for the determinist joke of the thief who said, "My hunger stole the apple, not me!" The burden of responsibility rests on the individual (Mishna Baba Kamma 2:6). In consideration of this, Judaism exhorts the individual to make responsible choices as he exercises his personal freedom.

Judaism understands "responsible choice" as that behavior which promotes "life and good". However, it is not always clear which of the many options a person confronts in life will lead to this goal. One may well ask, "What constitutes responsible behavior"? The classic Jewish response would be: "Observance of the Mitzvoth". For, indeed, the commandments in the Torah are a guide to responsible, Jewish behavior, both social and spiritual. Though at first glance, this answer may not serve the needs of the reform rabbi, a second consideration will show that the idea of mitzvoth is very functional in the framework of rabbinic counseling. "Responsible behavior", as a desirable goal in living, can be defined as "the ability to fulfill one's needs and do so in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs".[18] This definition implies the achievement of a goal in the context of certain restrictions or limits. "Responsible choices", then, are

those decisions which lead to meaningful, satisfying living within a framework of values and morals which considers the needs and prerogatives of others. Could not the concept of mitzvah be similarly described? After all, the mitzvoth are a framework for personal and communal living which promises the satisfaction of leading a meaningful life in relation to God's will, as understood by Torah and Tradition.

In today's liberal Judaism, the individual is perceived as being able to choose for himself which ritual mitzvoth he will observe in order to lead a meaningful religious life within the context of his chosen community. Similarly, he can be understood as choosing certain "behavioral mitzvoth" in order to create a framework for satisfying living within the spheres of community, family and friends. These "behavioral mitzvoth" are the individual's guide to responsible living; his guide to the responsible exercise of his personal freedom. As such, this concept is in direct relationship to the classic concept of mitzvah. Both assert the need for a framework of belief, values, and behavior in which the individual can exercise his personal freedom in the responsible pursuit of meaningful and satisfying existence.

To summarize this point, it can be said that Judaism provides the rabbi with a line of thought which upholds the type of "personal freedom" which is so crucial to the counseling endeavor. This assumption affirms the individual's ability to choose amoung different life styles. However, Judaism also affirms the limitation of such freedom

by asserting that it must be tempered by a sense of responsibility. And further, this responsibility is described in terms of the concept of mitzvoth. In the counseling context, these assumptions translate into theoretical elements which assert that the individual is free to resolve problems by choosing new and more constructive patterns of behavior. These behaviors, in turn, are evaluated in terms of their degree of responsibility, and in terms of how they reflect attitudes and insights gained through counseling. These new criteria for living are, in essence, "behavioral mitzvoth" which the client establishes for himself, freely accepts, and responsibly fulfills.

If "personal freedom" is one theoretical pillar which supports the counseling process, then the other is "effective agency": the ability of the individual to change or enhance his spiritual, emotional or physical environment through an act of volition. Such an act reflects the client's decision to pursue the new attitudes or behaviors developed in the course of the counseling dialogue. It is said that the proof of decision is action. In the counseling situation, the rabbi becomes increasingly aware of the two-sided nature of this important observation. On one hand, the problems which the client brings, often reflect the fact that he is acting out poor decisions. Similarly, the rabbi can assess the effectiveness of the counseling episode only in terms of how the decisions made in the course of counseling are reflected in the client's subsequent behavior. Until the client can

make a new decision and follow through with the necessary actions, he has neglected his freedom to choose a more successful style of living, and has failed to accept responsibility for himself.[19]

This observation assumes that "effective agency" is, in fact, within the scope of human possibilities. It is based, not only on the foregone conclusion of personal freedom, but also on the ability of human beings to affect their environment by their actions. Here, too, there exist lines of Jewish thought which support this observation. Moreover, there is support for an emphasis on behavior and action in counseling: "...not theory, but practice is the essential thing" (Avot 1:17). In other words, there is a limit to the usefulness of dialogue and psychologic investigation. In the end, it is the client's new behaviors, his actions, his "practice" of even the most limited insights gained in counseling, which matter in the enhancement of his living situation.

That such action is effective and within the scope of human ability is neatly stated by Nahman Bratzlav, "Everyone can raise himself, but only by his own actions".[20] In Masechet Shabbat (151b), Simeon b. Eleazer admonishes, on the assumption of the validity of this point: "Act while you can: while you have the chance, the means and the strength". Here is a clear indication that the nature of human existence provides the prerequisites for "effective agency". That it is within the individual's power to affect personal change is reflected in Tanhuma (Tazria, 7):

"Tinnius Rufus asked, 'Why did not God make man exactly as He wants him to be?' Akiba replied, 'For the very reason that man's duty is to perfect himself'". Obviously, Akiba understood that mankind is endowed with the potential for personal growth and change. Otherwise, he could hardly maintain that it is mankind's duty.

From these few references, it is possible to go on to develop a basis for the notion of "effective agency". Each individual not only has the freedom to "choose life" in the abstract, but also has the ability to direct his actions so as to promote the life he chooses. In order to achieve this goal as part of the counseling process, the rabbi must communicate that the client is capable of making decisions and capable of implementing them in an effective manner. This often entails encouraging the client to use the insight generated through dialogue as the basis for personal decisions which lead to action. However, the rabbi should be aware of the fact that a change in attitude or insight on the part of the client, will not always suffice to solve the immediate problem. Only a constructive change in behavior or environment, which promotes more effective living, will give the client the type of satisfaction he seeks. Insight, without action, soon fades--"...he whose wisdom exceeds his deeds, his wisdom will not endure". However, a small degree of insight coupled with an appropriate pattern of constructive behavior, or with an appropriate plan of action, will give the client a sense of direction and immediate satisfaction, new confidence

in himself and in the ability of the counselor, and encouragement to struggle with other personal dissatisfactions in order to achieve significant enhancement of his living situation. "He whose deeds exceed his wisdom, his wisdom shall endure"(Avot 3:12).

3. Counseling is an effective process which promotes the exercise of "personal freedom" and "effective agency" towards the goals of problem solving, successful living, and personal growth.

It has been asserted that personality and behavior can be understood and interpreted. The concept of "inclinations" indicates that Jewish thought supports such an assertion and gives an example of one possible interpretive framework. Second, it has been asserted that it is possible to enhance one's personal environment through the exercise of "personal freedom" and "effective agency". Both of these concepts have support within the broad scope of Jewish wisdom. Now, it must be asked: How are these elements to be combined into a process which actualizes their potential for improving the life-situation of the counseling client?

Judaism provides a paradigm for the effective combination of these potentialities into a significant and effective process. The model for personal actualization, growth, and behavioral revision which is an integral part of the Jewish religious experience is Tshuva*. Tshuva is a process through which the individual recognizes that, in terms of his personal criteria, certain behavior is unacceptable, and accepts responsibility not only for the consequences, but

also the responsibility to rectify this "wrong". This process goes beyond the stage of ceasing to do "evil" (Isa. 33:15, Ps. 15; 24:4) and the positive stage of doing "good" (Isa. 1:17; 58:5f, Jer. 7:3; 26:13). It entails a procedure which calls for evaluation of past behaviors, redefinition of values and responsibilities, and a commitment to new and more constructive patterns of living.

It is not the immediate purpose to analyze the intricate theological implications of Tshuva. Of greater import is a consideration of the implications of this concept in relation to the theoretical foundations of rabbinic counseling. The primary implication is that the process, itself, is effective.

> And Cain went out (Gen 4:16). On his way, Cain met Adam, who said to him: "What has happened as regards the judgment passed on you?" Cain replied: "I have repented, and I am pardoned". When Adam heard that, he smote his face and said, "Is the power of Tshuva as great as that? I did not know it was so". (Lev. R. 10:5)
>
> If your sins are high as heaven, even unto the seventh heaven, and even to the throne of glory, and you do Tshuva, I will receive you. (Pes. R. 185a)

From here it can be concluded that "personal freedom" and "effective agency" can be combined in a successful process which promotes the abandonment of unsatisfactory behaviors in favor of more responsible and satisfying behaviors. It is within the ability of the individual, then, to participate in such a process with the justifiable

hope of improving himself and his environment. This is the essence of Tshuva.

The concept, itself, is derived from the Hebrew verb shuv--to return. "This root combines in itself both requisites of repentance: to turn from evil and turn to the good. The motion implies that sin is not an ineradicable stain, but a straying from the right path, and that by the effort of turning, a power God has given to all men, the sinner can redirect his destiny".[21] Since this process is adequate to the task in the moral context, it is fair to consider how it might speak to the goal of behavioral or social redirection which is a crucial concern of counseling.

When considered from the counseling perspective, Tshuva implies the individual's ability to seek and pursue new options in living. Human existence is a series of decision making situations. Each juncture provides many options to pursue, and the individual exercises his freedom by choosing that path which seems most desirable. Making choices, as opposed to indecision and paralysis, is a key factor in effective living. However, it may turn out that a given choice was not a good one, and, as a result, the individual endures the consequences. Some may feel that the consequences are incontrovertible. They pursue the painful path, making disappointment and dissatisfaction part of their unsuccessful life-styles, while seeking satisfaction of frustrated needs in irresponsible and

destructive ways. Judaism, in contrast, encourages the individual to abandon such a situation and renounce the choice which precipitated it. He is encouraged to do Tshuva, to return, to back-track down that path, learning in the process, exactly why it led to dissatisfaction and pain. By making the necessary effort, the individual can return all the way to the juncture where the path he has followed originates among other paths. Here, he is free to choose again. On the basis of the lessons learned and the insight gained, he can choose anew, and actively pursue a different path--one which leads to greater satisfaction, new challenges and more decisions.

It is clear how Tshuva, as a concept, can aid in the formulation of a theory of rabbinic counseling. It indicates that the process of counseling begins with a recognition of "where one is at" in terms of the client's position on the painful path. Tshuva also implies a "pulling back", or a retreat to an emotionally neutral personal position, which promotes the type of objective analysis through which the client can identify the undesirable aspects of his situation. The rabbi can then encourage the client to make new decisions and to choose new courses of action which are consistent with the understandings, values, or insights which may have emerged in the course of counseling. On the other hand, the rabbi may encourage immediate changes in behavior which, in themselves, will lead to the types of insights that result in lasting satisfaction. In such an instance, Tshuva

implies a "backing out". Like a car backing out of a rut and on to firmer, more negotiable terrain, the client "backs out" of a situation, or out of a "behavioral rut", in order to establish himself on more solid personal ground. From this new position he can steer a new course, and once his personal momentum is re-established, he can look back and learn from his experience. To some degree, then, rabbinic counseling is a relationship between rabbi and congregant which promotes Tshuva in its broadest sense--a turning from dissatisfaction to enrichment; a returning from empty, unrewarding habit to the exercise of new options for creative and fulfilling living.

A Theory For Consideration

In the preceding pages, fundamental assumptions of counseling have been discussed. Each, in turn, has been briefly analyzed in terms of Jewish thought, and the results have been considered for their possible contributions to a theory of rabbinic counseling. It is appropriate, now, to attempt a synthesis of this material and outline a theory of rabbinic counseling. Since each rabbi must establish his own counseling approach and an appropriate theoretical foundation, the following is given as an example only. It is presented in an outline form so that it might best serve its purpose: to be a framework for discussion and to give direction to further investigation. It is up to the reader to evaluate and revise the following theory according to his or her own needs.

A. Every person, by virtue of human nature:

1. embodies a complex combination of characteristics or tendencies;

2. has the personal freedom to cultivate certain characteristics, or tendencies, over others, and thus establish a life-style of his choice;

3. has the innate ability, active or dormant, to be an effective agent in improving his own character or environment;

4. is ultimately responsible, by virtue of his freedom, for his decisions, his actions, and their consequences.

On the basis of this theoretical perspective, the individual is understood to be a complex of feelings, attitudes, characteristics and tendencies. The counseling process is directed toward identifying them and clarifying how they affect the client. The rabbi stimulates and gently guides this process of self-discovery. However, the rabbi does not assume the responsibility of solving problems or changing the personal environment of the client. This is the client's unique responsibility, and it is an achievement in counseling to have the client recognize this fact and mobilize his strengths to meet the challenge. The rabbi must remember that the counselor cannot change the client, the client must change himself.[22] Consequently, the rabbi needs to cultivate these attitudes, and, at the same time, needs to be careful not to undermine his own efforts or the efforts of his client. One example of this

danger is the inadvertent enforcement of the client's initial sense of helplessness or impotency. The rabbi may do this when, out of good intention and concern, he tries to "do" for the client instead of helping the client "do" for himself. Another eroding tendency is not to hold the client responsible for his actions. The rabbi may do this by making excuses for his client's behavior in an attempt to appear understanding, or in an effort to keep the client in counseling. This only enforces a lack of responsibility on the part of the client, for it indicates that the rabbi expects, and accepts, irresponsible behavior. Therefore, it is crucial that the rabbi be firm in his commitment to his counseling theory, and conduct his counseling accordingly. With these considerations in mind, it appears that rabbinic counseling is, in part, a process which is sensitive to the complexity of human nature, but still strives to emphasize and mobilize the positive elements of human nature, as identified by Judaism, that are present in every individual.

B. The dynamics of Personality
   1. The individual is the focus of opposing characteristics, or tendencies, which produce a tension.
   2. The psychic interplay of these tensions are expressed in the public attitudes and behaviors which constitute "personality".
   3. The maladjustment of these tensions can lead to undesirable behavior, personal dissatisfaction, or emotional unrest.

4. It is possible to adjust internal tensions or alleviate tension-provoking situations in order to reach a dynamic equilibrium which is comfortable, constructive, and satisfying.

This theoretical approach to personality is compatible with the Rabbinic concept of "inclinations", and refers to them as "tensions". Just as the Rabbis stressed the ability of the individual to master his "evil inclination", this theoretical construct emphasizes the individual's ability to adjust the tensions which exist within himself, or to alter situations outside himself which are tension-provoking. "Each of us has experienced this process of adjustment of tensions within his own personality. It is something dynamic, creative, going on at all times....Every time one experiences a feeling that one 'ought' to do this or that, or a feeling of inferiority, or of triumph or despair, one's personality tensions are being re-adjusted."[23]

When adopting this approach, the rabbi must be careful not to assume that personality tensions can be fixed once and for all. It is a mistake "to speak of personality without tensions--to imply, for example, that the healthy mental condition is a blissful absence of tensions".[24] One cannot escape personality tension. What is desirable is healthy, creative adjustment of tensions, not an unhealthy denial of them. The rabbi should help his client to understand this approach to personality, if he chooses

to counsel on the basis of it. A theory of rabbinic counseling based on these elements would stress that personality tensions are a necessary consequence of the complexity of human nature and the difficulties of social living. The client needs to accept this and then work toward creating an effective adjustment of tensions so that his personality can express itself most satisfactorily.

C. The goals of rabbinic counseling are:

1. to create an atmosphere and relationship in which the client feels free and secure;

2. to aid the client toward an objective analysis of his situation;

3. to identify problems, tensions, or dissatisfactions;

4. to help the client develop an understanding of his situation which aids in confronting and solving immediate problems;

5. to promote the recognition of the client's inherent ability to adjust his own situation;

6. to encourage the client toward the responsible exercise of his freedom and agency as part of the problem-solving process;

7. to develop, with the client, guidelines for effectively confronting similar problems in the future.

These goals are a direct reflection of the theoretical elements considered above. Clearly, they are client-centered. In terms of the counseling process, this means

that the goal of counseling is to help the client maximize his own situation by dealing directly with him and his problem rather than wrestling with a set of "psychological symptoms". Further, the emphasis is on developing the client's ability to fend for himself. The emphasis is not on the expertise and insight of the counselor. To this end, the client must take from the counseling situation not only the solution of an immediate problem, but also, an increased sense of being able to deal with new problems and to make new decisions on his own. "Successful counseling does not mean changing a specific conflict, but developing such insight in the person that he is able to cope in a more mature manner with his life-style and its problems as they will continue to confront him day by day."[25]

Though client-centered, this type of counseling is also "rabbi-enhancing". There is little doubt that the rabbi gains certain benefits from his counseling relationships, and these should not be overlooked. Successful counseling helps the rabbi improve his total relationship with the client. It also improves the rabbi's image in relation to his clients, his congregation at large, and in relation to his own rabbinic ideal. No other activity combines as many aspects of the rabbinate as does counseling, and, consequently, nothing enforces the rabbi's sense of overall ability more than a successful counseling episode. And, if the counseling approach of the rabbi does utilize significant Jewish elements, it stands to reason that success

in this area serves to reinforce and refresh the rabbi's own commitment to Judaism as a relevant and vibrant system of belief.

D. To achieve these goals, the rabbinic counselor:

1. limits the depth of his counseling to the conscious, reality level;

2. emphasizes supportive, drawing-out, and educative techniques over probing, introspective methods;

3. emphasizes improving behaviors and relationships over intra-psychic changes;

4. stresses the abilities and responsibilities of the client;

5. maximizes and utilizes positive personality resources while striving to reduce negative elements;

6. helps the client cope with the immediate situation and plan for the future, rather than probing deeply into the past;

7. encourages the client to make direct efforts to increase constructive, responsible behavior, along with understanding attitudes and feelings;

8. deals directly with questions of values and meaning, as well as with physical and psychological interaction.[26]

As noted previously the rabbi employs every skill he has when he counsels. And at the same time that he confronts a client, he also confronts himself and his role. Therefore, the approaches and priorities of rabbinic

counseling must reflect a knowledge of abilities and limitations, both personal and professional. In addition, the counseling approach must be consistent with its theoretical and Jewish bases. In keeping with the present framework, such an approach would require the rabbi to work on a relational, rather than psycho-analytic, basis. In the context of the counseling relationship, the rabbi would help the client objectify his current problem, using supportive techniques rather than probing for insight. The elements of "personal freedom" and "effective agency" would be promoted in terms of the client's ability to solve his own problem by mobilizing his strengths and asserting his positive personality characteristics. The rabbi would, also, encourage the client to assume greater responsibility for structuring a personal environment conducive to satisfying living which "consists not in a life without problems, but a life with a unified purpose and a basic self-confidence which gives satisfaction in the continued attack upon problems."[27]

It is in this area of purpose and direction that rabbinic counseling needs to address the greater issues of personal values and the meaning of human life. The rabbi is uniquely equipped to help the client develop an effective set of values and beliefs around which to organize a more successful life-style. This is where Judaism--as a system of values, beliefs, and practices--and rabbinic counseling--as a unique type of counseling relationship--can have their greatest impact. "Religion can make a positive contribution

to mental health in the broader area of the individual's search for a center of personal organization, a center which will provide him with resources enabling him to accept and integrate his personality, to deal constructively with his environment, and to perceive meaning, purpose and satisfactory fulfillment in the pursuits of his life."[28]

CHAPTER III

TWO TECHNIQUES: REALITY AND REASON

About Choosing Techniques

After making the necessary personal and professional inventories; after formulating a workable theory of rabbinic counseling; the rabbi may be emotionally and intellectually prepared to counsel. However, there arises at this point, the question of technique. How should the rabbi counsel? What approaches should he use? These are crucial questions. As mentioned previously, a great deal of communication in counseling is indirect and unspoken. The very technique which the rabbi chooses to employ speaks clearly of his relationship to the goals and motifs of counseling as discussed in the previous chapter. Choice of technique also colors the nature of the counselor-client relationship. Some techniques require that the counselor maintain a distance between himself and the client. Other approaches stress the need for the counselor to be directly and actively involved with the client. The type of relationship which the rabbi deems desirable is reflected in the techniques he adopts.

The priorities of counseling are also reflected by the choice of technique. Insight and analysis of past behaviors are high priorities in many counseling methodologies. There are still others which stress the here-and-now with an emphasis on modifying current behaviors and attitudes. The rabbi must choose between these alternatives, or find some comfortable middle ground which is reflected in his choice of counseling techniques. Of course, the rabbi cannot limit himself to a single method of counseling. The well-prepared rabbi will have a few techniques with which he feels comfortable. Just the same, when he chooses from among them, the rabbi must consider all the aforementioned aspects. Moreover, this is a very sensitive choice in its own right. The selection of a particular technique for a particular situation reflects the rabbi's opinion of the client which, though unspoken, is still communicated.

The rabbi, then, must have a set of criteria by which to choose among the variety of counseling techniques. Clearly, he needs to be aware of his theoretical commitments, his counseling priorities and goals, the nature of his counseling load (the types of situations he most regularly encounters), and his natural skills. With these guidelines in mind, he can pick techniques which are compatible and consistent with his personal approach to rabbinic counseling. Though of great importance, these intellectual and practical criteria should not overshadow the important personal needs of the rabbi. In other words, counseling techniques should

also be evaluated in terms of the role which they attribute to the counselor. The rabbi should pick counseling methods which cast him in roles which are comfortable. This comfort can be evaluated personally, emotionally, or intellectually, and in terms of the counseling role's compatibility with the overriding role of "rabbi".

This entire lattice of concerns can be grouped together under an umbrella of awareness. This awareness is an appreciation for the quality of "congruence" in counseling.[1] As opposed to a rigidly consistent compliance with conclusions, directions, and techniques, "congruence" means "that whatever feeling or attitude I am experiencing would be matched by my awareness of that attitude."[2] In counseling preparation, this awareness allows the previously mentioned attitudes and technical concerns to come to the fore, and to be confronted. As a result, the rabbi can wisely choose a counseling technique, or techniques, which is "congruent" with his theoretical basis, his personal qualities, and his rabbinic self-image. In counseling, itself, this "congruence" helps the rabbi to be himself, to be comfortable as a counselor, and to be aware of both his own feelings and the feelings of his client.

Another direct result of "congruence" is a high level of trustworthiness in the counseling relationship. When the client perceives that the rabbi is "congruent", that he is honest, open, and comfortable with his own counseling personality and is not "putting on an act" or posturing himself as something, or someone, he is not, the client will

register this as a dependable experience of the counselor in a one-to-one relationship. It is on the basis of this recognition that the rabbi becomes a trustworthy counselor. When the rabbi presents himself honestly, "congruent" in every sense, then the client will feel safe to confide in the rabbi, and feel safe to trust in the techniques which the rabbi will employ during the counseling relationship.[3]

Consequently, the rabbi should choose counseling techniques which promote "congruence". Each rabbi needs to establish for himself the criteria for "congruence" by which he will evaluate the many and varied counseling techniques available. As an example of this process, two counseling approaches are presented in the following pages: "Reality Therapy", developed by Dr. William Glasser, and "Rational-Emotive Therapy", developed by Dr. Albert Ellis. The term "therapy" does not imply that the rabbinic counselor who employs these techniques is a therapist. Though these approaches were developed for use in extensive therapeutic situations, they are adaptable to the limited needs of the rabbinic counselor. It is for exactly this reason that these techniques are appropriate for analysis and evaluation as possible aids for effective rabbinic counseling.

Reality Therapy: Solving problems through responsible living[4]

Premise

A primary assumption of Reality Therapy is "that regardless of how he expresses his problem, everyone who needs psychiatric treatment suffers from one basic inadequacy: he

is unable to fulfill his needs." (p. 5) The problem behavior of the client reflects the degree of this inability. The counselor must remember, however, that "no matter how irrational or inadequate his behavior may seem...it has meaning and validity to him." (p. 6) This is true in light of the fact that the client's behavior is an attempt to compensate for his unique variety of the fundamental inability to satisfy his own needs.

Glasser identifies two basic needs: the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others. (p. 9) By "the need to love and be loved", Glasser means to identify love in all its forms.

> In all its forms, ranging from friendship through mother love, family love, and conjugal love, this need drives us to continuous activity in search of satisfaction. From birth to old age we need to love and be loved. Throughout our lives, our health and our happiness will depend upon our ability to do so. To either love or to allow ourselves to be loved is not enough; we must do both. When we cannot satisfy our total need for love, we will without fail suffer and react with many familiar psychological symptoms, from mild discomfort through anxiety and depression to complete withdrawal from the world around us. (p. 10)

Of equal importance is "the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and to others."

> Although the two needs are separate, a person who loves and is loved will usually feel that he is a worthwhile person, and one who is worthwhile is usually someone who is loved and who can give love in return. While this is usually the case, it is not

> always so. For example, although an overindulged child may receive an abundance of love, the parents do not make the critical distinction between loving him and accepting his behavior, good or bad. Certainly the child should be loved, but love need not mean a blanket approval of everything he does. The child knows the difference between right and wrong behavior and is frustrated because receiving love for behavior that he knows is wrong does not allow him to feel worthwhile. In this situation, he reacts in all the familiar spoiled-child patterns in an effort to get his parents to enforce some behaviorial limits and some achievement standards along with their love. When the parents do so, the child's behavior improves. A beautiful and capable woman often finds herself in a similarly uncomfortable position when she is recognized only for her beauty. Therefore, an important part of fulfilling our need to be worthwhile depends upon the ability to see that being the object of someone's love does not in itself give us worth. (p. 10)

The individual who cannot fulfill either or both of these needs endures a certain amount of emotional or physical discomfort. To alleviate this pain, he seeks alternative ways of satisfying his needs, most of which ignore the reality of his situation.

> In their unsuccessful effort to fulfill their needs, no matter what behavior they choose, all patients have a common characteristic; <u>they all deny the reality of the world around them</u>. Some break the law, denying the rules of society; some claim their neighbors are plotting against them, denying the improbability of such behavior.... Millions drink to blot out the inadequacy they feel but that need not exist if they could learn to be different; and far too many people choose suicide rather than face the reality that they could solve their problems by more responsible behavior....

> The denial of some or all of reality is common to all patients. Therapy will be successful when they are able to give up denying the world and recognize that reality not only exists but that they must fulfill their needs within its framework. (p. 6)

Hence, "Reality Therapy". In this context, "reality" can be understood in the following terms:

> Literally everything that happens is reality. Therefore, some special principle or dimension is needed to make the distinction between 'reality' and 'irreality' fully meaningful. In short-run perspective, there is something "realistic" and "good"--in the sense of pleasurable--about all perverse, criminal, or defensive behavior. Otherwise, it simply would not occur. But more precisely speaking, action can be called realistic or unrealistic only when its remote as well as immediate consequences are taken into consideration and compared, weighed. If the evil, pain, suffering which ultimately occur as a result of a given action exceed the immediate satisfaction which it produced, that action may be termed unrealistic; whereas, if the satisfaction which ultimately occurs as a result of an action is greater than the immediate effort or sacrifice associated with it, such an action can be called realistic. (xiv)

In brief, the basic premise of Reality Therapy is that each individual has two basic needs, relatedness and respect. When these needs cannot be fulfilled by the individual, he exhibits behaviors which indicate a denial of the reality of his unsatisfying situation.

Goals and Priorities

The obvious goal of Reality Therapy is to help the client "to give up denying the world and recognize that

reality not only exists but that he must fulfill his needs within its framework." This goal is to be attained by emphasizing the client's responsibility for his own situation.

From this perspective, the client is considered "irresponsible" when he denies the reality of his situation and exhibits behaviors which are unsuccessful in fulfilling his needs. The client is considered "responsible" when his behavior fulfills his needs "in a way that does not deprive others of the ability to fulfill their needs." (p. 14)

> To illustrate, a responsible person can give and receive love. If a girl, for example, falls in love with a responsible man, we would expect him either to return her love or to let her know in a considerate way that he appreciates her affection but that he does not share her feelings. If he takes advantage of her love to gain some material or sexual end, we would not consider him responsible.
>
> A responsible person also does that which gives him a feeling of self-worth and a feeling that he is worthwhile to others. He is motivated to strive and perhaps endure privation to attain self-worth. When a responsible man says that he will perform a job for us, he will try to accomplish what was asked, both for us and so that he may gain a measure of self-worth for himself. An irresponsible person may or may not do what he says depending upon how he feels, the effort he has to make, and what is in it for him. He gains neither our respect nor his own, and in time he will suffer or cause others to suffer. (p. 13)

"Acquiring responsibility is a complicated, lifelong problem. Although we are given unchanging needs from birth to death, needs which, if left unsatisfied, cause us or others to suffer, we are not naturally endowed with the ability to

fulfill them." (p. 14) Consequently, learning "responsibility" is a primary goal of Reality Therapy. In order to achieve this, behavior is emphasized over attitudes so that the client learns by doing.

> In Reality Therapy we are much more concerned with behavior than with attitudes. Once we are involved with the patient, we begin to point out to him the unrealistic aspects of his irresponsible behavior. If the patient wishes to argue that his conception of reality is correct, we must be willing to discuss his opinions, but must not fail to emphasize that our main interest is his behaviour rather than his attitude. (p. 28)

> In Reality Therapy emotions and happiness are never divorced from behavior. Gaining insight into the unconscious thinking which accompanies aberrant behavior is not an objective; excuses for deviant behavior are not accepted and one's history is not made more important than one's present life. (p. 32)

The goal of Reality Therapy is to help the client gain an ability to fulfill his own needs. This is achieved by aiding the client to recognize his irresponsiblity, and to confront the reality of his situation. Having done this, the counselor can help the client develop a greater sense of responsibility, and establish a pattern of more successful behaviors.

The Image of the Client

An important characteristic of Reality Therapy is that it views the client in terms of responsible/irresponsible, rather than in terms of more conventional psychiatric categories.

> In consonance with our emphasis on responsibility and irresponsiblity, we who practice Reality Therapy advocate dispensing with the common psychiatric labels, such as neurosis and psychosis, which tend to categorize and stereotype people. Limiting our descriptions to the behavior which the patient manifests, we would, for example, describe a man who believes that he is President Johnson as irresponsible, followed by a brief description of his unrealistic behavior and thinking. Calling him psychotic or schizophrenic immediately places him in a mental illness category which separates him from most of us, the label thereby serving to compound his problem....The description irresponsible is much more precise, indicating that our job is to help him to become more responsible so that he will be able to satisfy his needs as himself....We hope that the reader will try to substitute responsible for mental health and irresponsible for mental illness and its many subcategories. Accepting this change in terminology will, in itself, help us approach those we treat...as people who need to become involved with us to fulfill their needs and thereby improve the behavior which brings them to our attention. (p. 15)

The Role of the Counselor

The "Reality counselor" is best described as a teacher.

> Therapy is special kind of teaching or training which attempts to accomplish in a relatively short, intense period what should have been established during normal growing up. The more irresponsible the person, the more he has to learn about acceptable realistic behavior in order to fulfill his needs. (p. 20)

> In Reality Therapy....we take every opportunity to teach patients better ways to fulfill their needs. We spend much time painstakingly examining the patient's daily activity and suggesting better ways for him to behave. We answer the many questions that patients ask and suggest ways to solve problems and approach people. Patients who have not been able to fulfill

> their needs must learn both how to approach people so that they can become more involved and how to accomplish enough so that they can gain an increased feeling of self-worth. (p. 60)

The primary characteristic of this "teacher" is his involvement with the client.

> Unless the requisite involvement exists between the necessarily responsible therapist and the irresponsible patient, there can be no therapy. The guiding principles of Reality Therapy are directed toward achieving the proper involvement, a completely honest, human relationship in which the patient, for perhaps the first time in his life, realizes that someone cares enough about him not only to accept him but to help him fulfill his needs in the real world. (p. 21)

The nature of this involvement is difficult to describe. One may come to understand it better by considering the qualities which Glasser feels are necessary to the counselor who would use this approach.

1. The therapist must be a very responsible person--tough, interested, human, and sensitive. He must be able to fulfill his own needs and must be willing to discuss some of his own struggles so that the patient can see that acting responsible is possible, though sometimes difficult.

2. The therapist must always be strong, never expedient. He must withstand the patient's requests for sympathy,... for justification of his actions no matter how the patient pleads or threatens.

3. The therapist must have knowledge and understanding about the person who is isolated or different because he cannot properly fulfill his needs. The

> therapist must accept him as he is at first....He must never be frightened or rebuffed by the patient's behavior no matter how aberrant it is. One way patients test the therapist is by acting irrationally. The therapist must remain steady in the face of unusual behavior....The patient, recognizing a man who accepts, understands, and is not frightened, moves rapidly toward involvement.
>
> 4. Finally, the therapist must be able to become emotionally involved with each patient. To some extent he must be affected by the patient and his problems and even suffer with him. The therapist who can work with seriously irresponsible people and not be affected by their suffering will never become sufficiently involved to do successful therapy. (pp. 22-24)

Technique

The technique of Reality Therapy is dictated by its internal process: involvement, rejection of unrealistic behavior, teaching new and better ways to fulfill basic needs. (p. 21) More than anything else, it is characterized by the relationship which exists between counselor and client. It is within the context of this involvement that the counselor can lead the client to confront his total behavior.

> People come to therapy suffering because they behave in ways that do not fulfill their needs, and they ask if their behavior is wrong. Our job is to face this question, confront them with their total behavior, and get them to judge the quality of what they are doing. We have found that unless they judge their own behavior, they will not change. (p. 56)

It is here that the question of morality and values comes into play.

> If we do not evaluate our own behavior, or having evaluated it, we do not act to improve our conduct where it is below our standards, we will not fulfill our need to be worthwhile and we will suffer as acutely as when we fail to love or be loved. Morals, standards, values, or right and wrong behavior are all intimately related to the fulfillment of our need for self-worth and...a necessary part of Reality Therapy. (p. 10)

> We do not claim that we have discovered the key to universal right or that we are experts in ethics. We do believe, however, that to the best of our ability as responsible human beings, we must help our patients arrive at some decision concerning the moral quality of their behavior. (p. 56)

In the context of the counseling relationship, behavior can be evaluated and rejected if it does not meet the needs of the client. It is then the counselor's task to help the client develop new behaviors. This is a crucial stage in counseling which is likely to see setbacks before successes. However, the strength of the involvement between counselor and client helps encourage the client to maintain his efforts. The involvement should be so deep that the counselor's approval becomes the client's motivation.

This discussion of technique actually describes the process of Reality Therapy. This is because many different techniques can be used during that unique counseling relationship which is generally described as Reality Therapy. Glasser, himself, indicates that the "technique" of Reality Therapy is so elusive that even he finds it hard to describe.

> Although people familiar with psycho-therapy will have little difficulty understanding Reality Therapy...other readers might not see clearly what we do....Even observing

> a series of sessions through a concealed window would reveal little because the involvement, the relationship which develops between therapist and patient, can only be viewed as a whole...primary importance must be given to the whole process, during which the patient gradually changes his behavior from irresponsible to responsible. Although patients recognize this change, they are rarely able to pinpoint exactly when it began or what caused it. (p. 33)

Compatibility with Rabbinic Counseling

This technique may be interesting to some rabbis and useless to others. Nonetheless, it is worth considering some major agreements between Reality Therapy and rabbinic counseling. First, the emphasis on responsibility and behavioral standards places this approach firmly in the context of the parallel concerns of rabbinic counseling. Reality Therapy is obviously "congruent" with the notions of effective agency, responsibility and "behavioral mitzvoth" as discussed in the preceding chapter.

Second, the teaching role of the counselor is eminently compatible with the general rabbinic role. It allows the rabbi to assert the importance of values, to instruct the client in the ways of responsible living, and to guide him through the process of learning to fulfill his own needs. Further, to do this in a conversational atmosphere plays directly into the nature of normal rabbi-congregant relationships. It de-emphasizes the counseling characteristics of the involvement in favor of less threatening, instructional aspects. In this vein, the involvement of the rabbi with the client, "sticking it out" through the ups and downs of

the counseling process, confirms the rabbi, and the faith he represents, as reliable and trustworthy.

Third, Reality Therapy's emphasis on behavior and planning new life-strategies relieves the rabbi of any obligation to venture into overly introspective counseling situations. The scope of Reality Therapy is obviously on the conscious, reality level which was described earlier as a reliable limit for the depth of rabbinic counseling.

Pitfalls

There may be a number of shortcomings in Reality Therapy which outweigh its advantages in the eyes of some rabbinic counselors. There are, however, three which stand out and demand consideration by even those rabbis who are avid proponents of the technique.

The rabbi must consider that Reality Counseling may entail a considerable length of time. Although the necessary involvement may pre-exist between the rabbi and some clients, generally, considerable time and effort need to be expended in order to establish the type of relationship which Glasser feels is absolutely necessary to successful counseling. Part of this relationship is the responsible character of the counselor. This means regular availability, keeping appointments, etc. The rabbi, however, often finds himself re-arranging his schedule at the last minute. These types of interruptions, over a period of time, may undermine the process of involvement so crucial to Reality Therapy.

Even more problematic is the apparent danger of moralizing inherent in this technique. It is necessary that the client

judge his own behaviors. However, there is a danger that the rabbi, himself, will become overly judgmental. This may happen as a function of the rabbi's personality, or because the client "seduces" the rabbi into making authoritative moral judgments--which clients are often quick to reject. This tendency which develops out of the moral implications of the rabbinic role can jeopardize the fragile beginnings of the counseling relationship.

Finally, the very lack of definition which characterizes this technique is reason for concern. In a sense, Glasser is implying that only a skilled counselor can make use of his technique, because it is the skilled counselor who can naturally fill in the blanks which characterize Reality Therapy technique. If this is true, then this approach cannot become a major tool in most cases of rabbinic counseling. There is too much guess work involved for the beginner. Only the more skilled and more experienced rabbinic counselor can seriously consider adapting this technique to the needs of rabbinic counseling.

Rational-Emotive Therapy: The way to relief is reason[5]

Premise

The fundamental assumption of Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET) is that emotional or physical discomfort is not caused by difficulties in social interaction or by irritating aspects of one's personal environment. Instead, this theory postulates that the ensuing discomfort is the result of disturbing ideas which these situations promote in the mind.

> ...people become disturbed when they believe senseless, alarming, and disturbing ideas. These ideas are internalized, silent, conscious or unconscious comments that the person is making to himself. It is these ideas or beliefs that cause the disturbance rather than the event or other person connected with the ideas. (p. 25)

This premise is illustrated by Ellis' "ABC Theory of Emotions".

> An emotion is a physical reaction to a mental stimulus. If we have angry thoughts, we feel angry. If we have alarming thoughts, we feel tense. If we blame ourselves, the result is depression. In every case the thought, whether known to the subject or not, precedes the feeling....A is any event outside ourselves. B is our attitude, opinion, belief--in short, our thinking about A. And C is the emotional reaction we have as a response--not to A, the event, but to B, the opinion about it. (p. 25)

In other words, the individual reacts not to an event as much as to his own attitudes and beliefs concerning that event. When these ideas are "irrational", that is when they have no logical connection to the event which triggered them, then the individual experiences some degree of emotional or physical discomfort. He may also exhibit a problematic or inappropriate pattern of behavior prompted by his disconnected pattern of ideas.

Goals and Priorities

RET has three distinct goals: 1. The irrational idea or ideas must be identified; 2. These ideas must be challenged until disbelieved; 3. New habit patterns must be attempted.

This approach boils down to removing from the ABC Theory, the B, the irrational beliefs and attitudes which result in C, the undesirable behaviors or emotions. After this is accomplished, the counselor helps the client to adopt new, more useful, more "rational" beliefs which will lead to more successful and more appropriate behaviors. To aid this process, Ellis identified eleven basic "irrational ideas";[6]

1. The idea that it is a dire necessity for an adult human being to be loved or approved by virtually every significant other person in his community.

2. The idea that one should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects if one is to consider oneself worthwhile.

3. The idea that certain people are bad, wicked, or villainous and that they should be severely blamed and punished for their villainy.

4. The idea that it is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them to be.

5. The idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and that people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances.

6. The idea that if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of its occuring.

7. The idea that it is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.

8. The idea that one should be dependent on others and need someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.

9. The idea that one's past history is an all-important determiner of one's present behavior and that because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.

10. The idea that one should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances.

11. The idea that there is invariably a right, precise, and perfect solution to human problems and that it is catastrophic if this perfect solution is not found.

A twelfth "irrational idea" has been suggested by Rational-Emotive therapist, Paul A. Hauck.

12. The idea that beliefs held by respected authorities or society must be correct and should not be questioned. (p. 47)

In counseling, the attempt is made to approach the client's problems with a high degree of rationality. To identify the "irrational idea", a great deal of testing is done--ideas are tested for their appropriateness. It is a goal of this approach to make similar rational analysis part of the client's regular problem solving technique.

The Image of the Client

Very clearly, the client is viewed as owning certain beliefs or attitudes which are irrational. To this degree, he triggers his own emotional discomfort by reacting in an "irrational manner" to events which occur around him. At the same time, the client is understood to be capable of "rational" thought and action. To achieve this, the client can unlearn his "irrational" attitudes and replace them with

ideas which are more appropriate, more functional, more "rational".

The Role of the Counselor

In keeping with the "learning" and "unlearning" motif, the RET counselor is very much a teacher.

> The newer view of emotional distress regards it not as a disease, but as faulty learning. In place of the concept of "cured" we must substitute...."corrected", or "learned". Instead of thinking of himself as a doctor or therapist, the counselor will regard himself as an educator and teacher. (p. 22)

Beyond simple teaching, the counselor is also an authority. It is on his recommendation that the client begins to consider the "irrationality" of a certain long-held idea. It is on the basis of the counselor's challenge that the client is motivated to reject this idea to the point of disbelief.

> The counselor is not God. This does not, however, forbid or rule out his right and duty to speak from authority when his training and experience convince him he is correct. If an issue arises with which he cannot agree, he ought to speak out against it clearly and forcefully. If the result is a discussion over the issue, this is fine. No one is converted to a belief until he has raised all possible objections to it.
>
> Most therapies have advised a soft approach to this matter of changing another person's opinions. If by soft and gentle we mean tactful, considerate, and undictatorial, I approve. If by a soft approach we mean to persuade by disagreeing slightly with the other person's philosophy...I cannot agree... the voice of authority needs to be loud to be heard at all. (p. 62)

Like other teachers, the RET counselor is a model. Because of this unique perspective he advocates, it is often necessary for the counselor to illustrate its relevance with an incident from his own life.

> During counseling of the RET variety the client is confronted with a number of strange and almost outlandish notions that he simply cannot accept without serious doubt....If he can be persuaded to employ rational principles and then has a measure of success, the client will soon enough see how right the counselor has been. The next best proof, however, is to see how these principles of emotional control work for the counselor....When the client asks how to handle this or that problem, the counselor ought to give personal testimony from his own life if he has a satisfactory experience to offer as an example. (p. 67)

Technique

There is no unique technique associated with this approach other than the unusual explanation of the connection between ideas, emotions, and behavior. A reconsideration of the goals and priorities listed previously will suffice to indicate that RET is an insight-oriented technique, albeit one of limited depth. The major characteristic of RET is intense discussion of problem situations with the intent of identifying "irrational ideas".

> Sometimes a client realizes immediately that he has been talking nonsense to himself....Often, however, the client will insist that he did not have any thoughts that he was telling himself. This must be vigorously refuted. It must be pointed out to him that thinking is going on continually, even during sleep, and that he had to have been thinking something before he felt tense....In most cases when the client

> continues to be unable to identify his thoughts, the counselor can suggest what was probably going on in his mind at the time. Common sense and knowledge of the irrational ideas are excellent guides in enabling the counselor to guess the nature of these thoughts. (p. 81)

Once identified, it is the task of the counselor to convince the client that the "irrational idea" is, indeed, irrational. This may entail considerable debate. The counselor tries to make the client realize that a belief or attitude is not only unreasonable, but that this particular idea is the source of the client's discomfort. Obviously, this type of convincing requires a great deal of dialogue between counselor and client. It can best be thought of as a teaching situation in which the counselor instructs the client in a new framework which challenges old ideas and replaces them with more functional attitudes and beliefs.

The final stage of counseling deals with developing new habit patterns based on the insights gained in the earlier sessions. "The irrational idea has been found. The client has been shown that it is irrational. Now this knowledge must find practical application in everyday life." (p. 87) The counselor helps the client to challenge both the irrational attitude and the behavior it precipitates. He does this by encouraging the client to stop and consider his thoughts and actions each time he begins to manifest the problem behavior. This constant self-challange clarifies the causal relationship between thought, feelings and actions.

It also allows the client to apply the insight gained in counseling in order to break the cycle of old habits.

To this end, RET emphasizes the use of counseling "homework". In this way, the counselor can control the step by step process of behavioral change by giving the client clear directions as to what he should do between visits. He can set reasonable limits which can be easily achieved by the client, thus helping to create a "success syndrome" which helps build the client's confidence. On the other hand, the counselor also can use this technique to coax the client into taking the first difficult steps toward applying new insight to the course of daily events. (p 79)

Compatibility with Rabbinic Counseling

Among the other areas of agreement which may be identified, one clear parallel with rabbinic counseling is RET's emphasis on the teaching role of the counselor. The rabbinic counselor would therefore be cast in a role which is natural and comfortable. In addition, the rabbi is in a good position to discuss freely the validity of attitudes and beliefs. He can bring much information and experience to bear while challanging beliefs, and he has a wealth of Jewish material available with which to help the client formulate more "rational" beliefs.

This element is very significant. "Irrational" ideas are not only rejected. They must be replaced with more functional beliefs and attitudes. In the same way that old

ideas must be undermined, the new ones must be buttressed. It is in this context that the rabbi can bring to bear the wisdom of Judaism. As an important component in the formulation of new ideas, Judaism can be appealed to in order to facilitate the acceptance and practice of new attitudes.

RET's "ABC of Emotions" gives a causal illustration and an effective metaphor of the concept of tensions or "inclinations". In this particular approach, counseling is a process which adjusts the tensions within the client by stressing that events, in and of themselves, are not sources of tension. Rather, internal ideas and attitudes which the client has about events cause him to experience discomfort or to behave in an undesirable manner. It is then the "irrational" idea which must be confronted and adjusted in order to alleviate the client's psychic tensions.

Pitfalls

One obvious area of difficulty in RET is its degree of depth and emphasis on attitudinal change. The counselor must be able to make certain analytical decisions concerning the nature and degree of the client's "irrational" thinking before challanging the client to disown certain beliefs. Often, these attitudes are related to past experiences or relationships. Therefore, the counselor may find himself having to deal with the client's past in depth. As a result, his challenges may be interpreted by the client as attacks on people or events which the client holds dear. Unless this stage of RET is handled carefully and gently, it may

be the cause of a breakdown in the counseling relationship.

The use of authority in RET can be equally problematic. The client needs to be pushed towards a confrontation with his "irrational" thought process. However, becoming heavy-handed or absolutist in the eyes of the client is a danger constantly threatening the counseling relationship. The counselor must be aware of this and be prepared to evaluate his tendency to abuse the authoritative role in which he finds himself. This is clearly a concern for the rabbi, who is in a position of questionable authority in this sphere from the start. Therefore, he is particularly vulnerable to charges of exceeding his authority, or of being excessively manipulative.

These two brief analyses introduce the process of evaluating counseling techniques. When in search of counseling methods, the rabbi must be aware of whether he is confronting a total counseling system complete with a personality theory, as in the case of Reality Therapy, or a limited technical tool like Rational-Emotive Therapy. In either case, the rabbi must test the technique to discover the degree of "congruence" between it and his own theory of rabbinic counseling. Such considerations as basic premises, goals and priorities, techniques, the image of the client, and the role of the counselor should be part of any evaluation.

Rarely will a particular technique be totally satisfactory. A complete psychology like Reality Therapy can be

accepted in its entirety, but additional counseling tools are required for use within that total framework. Limited techniques, such as Rational-Emotive Therapy, generally have both positive and negative aspects which must be carefully weighed. Often, it will be necessary to use the technique a few times before reaching a final decision concerning its applicability. Nonetheless, a preliminary analysis of the technique's assets and liabilities will serve as a necessary caution to the rabbi, preventing him from commiting himself too quickly to a counseling approach which may be attractive on paper, but a disaster in practice.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNSELING RELATIONSHIP: QUALITY AND CONTEXT

The Significance of the Counseling Relationship

The counseling relationship is unique. It combines elements of other relationships which the rabbi may have with the client--teacher, moralist, spiritual leader, friend, etc.--while, at the same time, retaining a particularity despite these similarities. No other interaction which the rabbi is likely to have with a congregant will be quite as intimate, as concentrated, as emotional, as volatile, or as satisfying as a productive counseling relationship. At the same time, the relationship which is established in the course of counseling is, itself, a fundamental goal of the process. Until a sense of relatedness can be developed between rabbi and client, there can be no significant movement towards effective counseling.

> The relationship...is the medium through which the knowledge of human nature and of the individual is used; knowledge alone, without skill in relationship is inadequate. The relationship is also the channel of the entire...process; through it flow the mobilization of the capacities of the individual and the mobilization of community resources; through it also flow the skills in interviewing, study, diagnosis, and treatment.[1]

This relationship is the medium through which counseling becomes possible. Therefore, it is created purposefully, with the ultimate goals of rabbinic counseling in mind. The general purpose of the counseling relationship is to reach a rapport which allows the rabbi and client to work together on the task of solving psychosocial needs and problems. The more immediate purpose of the relationship is to provide a comfortable atmosphere in which the client feels safe to confront his problem. Equally important is the relationship's function of helping the client to maintain his sense of dignity and self-worth during a trying period of his life. In most cases, the relationship fills more than one purpose. In exceptionally complex situations, the relationship, itself, can be the entirety of the counseling strategy.[2]

A relationship requires the involvement of both rabbi and client. Often, it is the rabbi who must do the "work" in order to lay the relational foundation for his counseling. This responsibility and hard work often lead to an attitude on the part of the rabbi that he is a "helper" and the client "needs help". This may be true. However, to establish a counseling relationship on the basis of strong-helper-rabbi and weak-helpless-client roles often leads to resentment and anger. This attitude ascribes a lesser role to the client when what he needs most is an experience which enforces his dignity and ability to assist himself. The client does not need a counseling relationship which belittles him. He

needs a relationship which encourages and supports him. Further, this type of helper-helped relationship is at odds with the purposes of the rabbinic counseling relationship.

It is the professed goal of rabbinic counseling to stimulate the client into active participation in the process of solving his own problems. Therefore, the relationship which promotes this goal must assume the client's ability to achieve it, and provide opportunities for him to develop a sense of his own strengths. Ideally, both rabbi and client are working toward this same goal. They are, in a sense, a team, and the participation of both are crucial to the team's success. Therefore, the counseling relationship requires a mutuality and equality of participation which satisfies the purposes of the relationship and enhances the prospects of achieving the goals of the counseling process. "Thus, the working model...consists of two people who are equal but who have different tasks. One of them supplies the subjectivity, the other the objectivity, and this stance of relative equality can always be reintroduced as the base of the relationship if the client loses sight of his goals."[3]

It is certain that relatedness is a necessary element in the counseling process. The nature of the counseling relationship is equally important. What qualities should be inherent in this unique interaction? How is this relationship established? These two questions are closely related. To answer the latter first, the counseling relationship

begins to develop with the first contact between rabbi and client in which the client feels some response to his needs. Therefore, to answer the first question, it is clear that the counseling relationship should incorporate qualities which reflect an understanding and sensitivity to the needs of the client. However, it is not the particular need of the client, his unique problem, which is of importance at the initial contact. Rather, it is the need which the client has as a result of his having sought out the rabbi's guidance.

It is important to remember that the problem which prompted the client to seek counseling is not the only source of the client's anxiety. The very act of seeking help, the act of confronting the rabbi in a moment of weakness and confusion, generates considerable discomfort by itself. It is this discomfort which the rabbi must remove in order to deal with the real problem. It is this set of needs to which the counseling relationship must respond immediately. The general needs of those individuals who seek counseling may be considered as follows:

1. The need to be dealt with as an individual rather than as a case, a type, or a category.

2. The need to express feelings both negative and positive. The feelings may be of fear, insecurity, resentment, hatred, injustice, and so on, or of their opposites.

3. The need to be accepted as a person of worth, a person with innate dignity, regardless of the person's dependency, weakness, faults, or failures.

4. The need for a sympathetic understanding of and response to the feelings expressed.

5. The need to be neither judged nor condemned for the difficulty in which the client finds himself.

6. The need to make one's own choices and decisions concerning one's own life. The client does not want to be pushed around, "bossed", or told what to do. He wants to be helped, not commanded.

7. The need to keep confidential information about oneself as secret as possible. The client does not want his neighbors and world at large to know about his problems. He does not want to exchange his reputation for the help he will receive....[4]

These needs must be satisfied in order to establish the necessary counseling relationship. At the initial stages of counseling, the rabbi lays the foundation for the relationship by responding to these often unspoken needs; by communicating to the client that the rabbi is sensitive to the client's interests and concerns. In the later stages of counseling, these needs are generalized as characteristics of the counseling process and the ongoing relationship between rabbi and client should be of such a quality that they are met almost automatically.

The Seven Elements

When the rabbi is sensitive to the immediate needs of the client, he can begin to react to them at the first contact. This does not mean that the rabbi assumes that each client will clearly manifest these attitudes. Rather, it indicates a need on the part of the rabbi to be sensitive

to the cues or hints which the client may give, thus indicating that he or she does, indeed, experience discomfort related to some, or all, of the seven needs outlined above. By responding in an appropriate manner to such a cue, thereby displaying an immediate degree of empathy and acceptance, the rabbi begins to establish the necessary dynamics of interaction.

In order to establish a counseling pattern which responds, innately, to the immediate needs of the client, the rabbi should adopt a set of principles or qualities which will characterize his counseling relationships. The goal of these principles should be to demonstrate clearly a sensitivity to the client's situation and a willingness to respond to his needs. It is possible to describe these principles in a number of ways. Here, they will be referred to as "The Seven Elements" of the counseling relationship. In particular, they are: 1. Individualization, 2. Purposeful expression of feelings, 3. Controlled emotional involvement, 4. Acceptance, 5. Non-judgmental attitude, 6. Client self-determination, and 7. Confidentiality. Each of the elements will be discussed individually. However, it is important to understand that, in practice, they are inseparable. "A defect in any one of them indicates a defect in the entire relationship; the absence of any one of them signifies the absence of a good relationship."[5]

Individualization

As indicated previously, rabbinic counseling is client-centered. It focuses on the individual client and his unique

problem. In the overall course of counseling, the rabbi uses his understanding of the common attributes of human nature and common patterns of human behavior in order to analyze situations and plan solutions. He does this, however, on a case by case basis and is aware of the particular variables of each situation. Furthermore, much rabbinic counseling takes place in one-to-one encounters. Therefore, rabbinic counseling, by its nature, asserts that each client is to be treated as a unique individual; that each problem is special in and of itself; and that the counseling approach of the rabbi is to be based on the particular circumstances of a particular situation.

The essential principle of individualization can be stated as:

> Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in assisting each toward a better adjustment. Individualization is based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated not just as a human being but as this human being with his personal differences.[6]

The rabbi can promote the element of individualization by following these guidelines.

1. Avoid bias and prejudice: The client needs to tell his own story. Often the rabbi will have some foreknowledge of the client's situation which triggers certain attitudes or assumptions. Therefore, he must be careful not to rely on preconceived notions when analyzing the cause and effect patterns of the client's problem. The client must be comfortable

in knowing that the rabbi is open and receptive to the description of the situation as the client perceives and experiences it.

2. Listen and Observe: "Hearing and seeing are the principal avenues of learning the individual."[7] The client needs to talk, and the rabbi needs not only to listen, but to hear. As the client talks, the rabbi learns more about the problem situation from the client's perspective, and the client's feelings about it. But the rabbi must hear what the client is saying not only directly, but what is being said indirectly as well. He must hear what is said and what is not said. In addition, the client cannot always verbalize everything he feels. Therefore, the rabbi must pay attention to the physical expressions of emotion which the client manifests. These include gestures, mannerisms, facial expressions, and overall posture.

3. Move at the client's pace: The rabbi must begin each counseling episode where the client "is", and then proceed at the client's pace. This does not mean that there is no room for coaxing or gentle prodding to help the client "over the hump" of a particular problem. However, it is important to move at a pace which allows the client to participate fully in the various phases of the counseling process. Otherwise, the process will stall when the client feels that the rabbi is "taking over". "Correct pacing is the secret to the timing of every stage of the...process; from the appointment for the intake interview to the terminating interview; it guides the fact gathering, the analysis and interpretation, the determination of the treatment goals, and the use of resources. Pacing is the guide and the test of individualization."[8]

4. Enter into feelings: Problems produce different feelings in different people. In this respect, the client's feelings are his most individual characteristics. Individualization requires a sensitivity to these feelings. "To be useful to another who is trying to change himself and his attitude....He (the counselor) must be willing to enter into the feeling experience

> of the client, willing to listen to his view of his problem and of his experience, willing to go patiently along with his struggles for a solution."[9]

Purposeful Expression of Feelings

A pertinent dynamic of the counseling relationship is the client's need to share his experience and express his feelings concerning it.

> Since we deal with people in time of trouble when they are "in the midst of emotions that come from the major catastrophes in life", it is important that we help them as they talk to us to express their emotions and that we try to understand the meaning which their problems have for them with a twofold purpose: First, that as they give expression to their feelings they may be relieved of pressures and tensions which have made the problem deeply disturbing. Thus, as they experience some change in feeling they may be enabled better to bear the problem and cope with it more resourcefully and realistically. Second, through understanding the peron's feeling we....may through thus sharing his problem afford each individual a relationship which strengthens him.[10]

This element of the counseling relationship can be described as follows:

> Purposeful expression of feelings is the recognition of the client's need to express his feelings freely, especially his negative feelings. The counselor listens purposefully, neither discouraging nor condemning the expression of these feelings, sometimes even actively stimulating and encouraging them when they are useful as a part of the counseling process.[11]

The expression of feelings is purposeful as long as it contributes to the counseling process. There is, of course,

a value in simply "letting off steam". Nonetheless, the rabbi should have some purpose in mind when encouraging the client to express his feelings. Some possible purposes are:

1. To relieve tension and pressures, thereby helping the client to gain an objective view of his situation.

2. To gain a greater degree of understanding about the client as a person, or about his problem.

3. To appreciate what the problem means to the client. The significance of the problem is often reflected by the intensity of the client's expressed feelings concerning it.

4. To lend an immediate form of psychological support to the client by sharing the burden of his problem.

5. To deepen the counseling relationship. The relationship "...must grow at an unforced pace, but its growth can be promoted by stimulating the expression of feelings that the client can comfortably and gradually express. The expression of feelings is a barometer of the depth of the relationship."[12]

Controlled Emotional Involvement

The main activity of counseling is communication. The rabbi, in order to promote communication between himself and the client, needs to be aware of the fact that certain types of communication require certain types of responses. The content of the communication generally indicates the response that is expected in return. This content can be broken down into three categories: ideas only, feelings

only, both ideas and feelings.[13] Clearly, an inappropriate response will stall any communication between rabbi and client. In counseling this is particularly crucial. Since most communication in counseling consists partially or entirely of feelings, the rabbi needs to respond appropriately to the client's feelings in order to maintain effective communication.

The element of the counseling relationship which promotes "appropriateness" is controlled emotional involvement on the part of the counselor.

> The controlled emotional involvement is the counselor's sensitivity to the client's feelings, an understanding of their meaning, and a purposeful, appropriate response to the client's feelings.[14]

This involvement has three components which are necessarily interrelated.

1. Sensitivity: The rabbi should try to sense the feelings of the client even if they are not directly stated. The manner of speaking, total bearing, and physical appearance can be indicators of feelings which the client cannot verbalize. Control, in this context, means that the rabbi manages his own train of thought, his own feelings or needs, in such a way that they do not blind or deafen him to the feelings of the client.

2. Understanding: In order to make appropriate responses, the rabbi must understand "the meaning of the feelings in relation to the client and his problem."[15] This is an area in which some knowledge of human behavior and of depth psychology is important and helpful.

3. Response: "Sensitivity and understanding are insufficient in themselves; they are means to the response."[16] The rabbi's response to the feelings of the client is the most important element in counseling. The response need not be verbal, but in any case it needs to indicate a true sharing of feelings; an understanding of the significance of those feelings, and a degree of purposefulness and selectivity in order to motivate the counseling interaction.

Acceptance

The congregant who voluntarily comes to the rabbi for counseling is generally unhappy with his environment, and senses a need for change. This same individual has ambivalent feelings about himself. On one hand, he is aware of his "failure", his inability to solve the problem on his own. On the other hand, he is aware of his own dignity and worth as a person. On top of this ambivalence, the congregant realizes that in order to be helped by the rabbi, he must reveal some of his short-comings. The cumulative result of these feelings is the client's anxiety that the rabbi will think less of him as a person.

This anxiety triggers defensive reactions which the client hopes will protect him from humiliation and disapproval. These defensive reactions are barriers which the rabbi and client must dismantle together in order to achieve a productive counseling relationship. One important way of accomplishing this goal is through the element of acceptance in counseling. If the rabbi can communicate acceptance to the client, then the client will be more comfortable, more communicative, and possibly more self-accepting. The

acceptance needs to be total and must assert the fundamental dignity of the client. This element of the counseling relationship may be described as follows:

> Acceptance is a principle of action wherein the counselor perceives and deals with the client as he really is, including his strengths and weaknesses, his congenial and uncongenial qualities, his positive and negative feelings, his constructive and destructive attitudes and behavior, maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth.
>
> Acceptance does not mean approval of deviant attitudes or behavior. The object of acceptance is not "the good" but "the real". The object of acceptance is pertinent reality.
>
> The purpose of acceptance is to aid the counselor in understanding the client as he really is, thus making counseling more effective; and to help the client free himself from undesirable defenses, so that he feels safe to reveal himself and look at himself as he really is, and thus to deal with his problem and himself in a more realistic way.[17]

This element of acceptance is difficult to establish. There are many impediments to the rabbi's acceptance of a client, and most of them stem from one source: the rabbi's lack of self-awareness in some area.[18] No counselor is perfectly accepting, so there is always some room for improvement. The following list of obstacles to acceptance, which deals primarily with issues of self-awareness, should help identify some of these difficulties.

1. Nonacceptance of something in self: The rabbi may perceive in the client some negative factor which is similar to an aspect of his own personality or situation. If the rabbi is suppressing his own unresolved conflict over this issue, denying

its reality, he will often be unable to accept it as a reality in the client's life. In other instances, the rabbi may respond to the problem as it affects himself rather than how it effects the client. In either case, the rabbi will find it difficult to accept the unique reality of the client's problem.

2. Bias and Prejudice: By definition, bias implies disregard for certain factors in favor of a predetermined opinion. Any reaction like this on the part of the rabbi, either gross or subtle, denies the importance of some aspect of the client's situation and prevents the establishment of a totally accepting relationship which considers all pertinent information about the client in an even-handed manner.

3. Excessive reassurances: The rabbi's reassurances of the client can be an important source of support. However, a glib or hasty "pat on the back" may be an escape on the part of the rabbi. To reassure a client about a fear, an event, or a problem without exploring it first, is really to refuse to discuss an item which may be pertinent to the counseling process. The quick reassurance does not indicate acceptance, it indicates a rebuff and a denial of a feeling or experience which the client considers important.

4. Confusing acceptance and approval: Acceptance is a technical term. It refers to dealing directly with the total reality of the client's situation. The rabbi, who does represent a moral and ethical code, may confuse this with "approval" and therefore, hold back on the amoral quality of acceptance. The rabbi need not approve of everything about the client. The client comes to the rabbi because the client, himself, is not totally self-approving. Nonetheless, the rabbi needs to be accepting; he needs to perceive and to deal with the client as he really is.

5. Loss of respect for the client: Acceptance is based on the assumption of the worth and dignity of each individual. The process of counseling often causes the client to question his self-worth. If the rabbi has no respect for him, the client may never re-discover his fundamental dignity. Therefore, the rabbi

> must maintain his respect for the client and communicate this respect by way of the accepting quality of the counseling relationship.

The Nonjudgmental Attitude

As has been mentioned, the individual seeking counseling from the rabbi approaches the relationship with a number of anxieties or fears.

> One of the feelings is a fear of being judged. The basis for the fear is that in his previous life experiences he has been judged and condemned for his mistakes and failures by people who neither understood him nor had the right to pass sentence upon him....He is afraid of being labeled a failure, an inadequate person, or a moral weakling.[19]

As long as the client fears this type of judgment, he will be unable to speak comfortably and freely with the rabbi. He will reveal no negative aspects of his situation or personality. Therefore, his sensitivity to even the most gentle, constructive criticism makes it impossible to make an objective analysis of his problem.

Judging may be positive, or praising, as well as negative, or condemning. If the client detects the rabbi's praise as the subtle form of judgment that it is, he may feel "conditionally" accepted. The client may feel grateful for this favorable judgment, and feel compelled to hide certain facts in order to remain in the rabbi's good graces. Therefore, blame and praise both have the effect of urging the client to hide a part of his personality or problem.

This self-protective hiding will diminish when the client experiences the rabbi as a person who is uninterested in praising or condemning him. This element of the counseling relationship is a nonjudgmental attitude, and can be described as follows:

> The nonjudgmental attitude is a quality of the counseling relationship; it is based on a conviction that the counseling process excludes assigning guilt or innocence, or degree of client responsibility for causation of the problem or needs, but does include making evaluative judgments about the attitudes, standards, or actions of the client; the attitude, which involves both thought and feeling elements, is transmitted to the client.[20]

It is clear that though nonjudgmental, the counseling relationship does not ignore values, attitudes, standards, or behaviors. The rabbi does not judge the client, but he does judge the actions of the client. Standards and values are not only compatible with the nonjudgmental attitude, but they are a necessary part of rabbinic counseling. The rabbi represents a code of values and morals which can be used to help the client establish guidelines for more responsible and satisfying living. Furthermore, the client will not be helped by a total indifference to the behavior or attitudes which have brought trouble to him. He needs the rabbi's help in order to reject past behavior--but he does not need the rabbi's personal rejection or verdict of "guilty". Finally, the rabbi must maintain his own integrity. He is an important model for the client. Consequently, the rabbi cannot remain indifferent to standards

contrary to his own. The rabbi must be willing to discuss his own sense of social, moral, and spiritual values, but must refrain from imposing his personal code on the client.

Client Self-Determination

Personal freedom, as a basic assumption of counseling, and the importance of activating the client's own abilities to solve problems have been discussed in depth. It is important, nonetheless, to combine these two principles into a fundamental element of the counseling relationship--client self-determination.

> The principle of client self-determination is the practical recognition of the right and need of clients to freedom in making their own choices and decisions in the counseling process. Counselors have a corresponding duty to respect that right, recognize that need, stimulate and help to activate that potential for self-direction by helping the client to see and use the available and appropriate resources of the community and of his own personality. The client's right to self-determination, however, is limited by the client's capacity for positive and constructive decision making, by the framework of civil and moral law....[21]

It is the role of the rabbi to promote the notions of "personal freedom" and "effective agency" within the counseling relationship in order to encourage the client to take steps to correct his own situation. The rabbi does this by following the four counseling tasks outlined in chapter one.

1. Help the client see his problem or need clearly and with perspective.

2. Acquaint the client with the pertinent resources in the community.

3. Introduce stimuli that will activate the client's own dormant resources.

4. Create a relationship environment in which the client can grow and work out his own problems.

However, the rabbi may negate these steps by falling prone to certain counseling tendencies which are in conflict with the element of client self-determination. Among these tendencies are:

1. To assume responsibility for solving the client's problems, allowing the client to have only a minor role in the process.

2. To insist on detailed exploration of the social and emotional life of each client, even when the request of the client does not require it. The implication in such a circumstance is that if the rabbi "knows all", he can "cure all". Thus, he sets himself up as omniscient and all powerful. Against this type of image, the client has no chance to assert himself.

3. To manipulate the client, directly or indirectly, into choosing modes of action in accordance with the rabbi's will, rather than in accordance with his own will.

4. To pursuade the client, under the guise of "presenting all the facts", to accept a decision which the rabbi has already made.

The principle of client self-determination does not restrict the rabbi's role in counseling. Instead, it encourages every facet of counseling which supports,

strengthens, and encourages the client so that he can make his own decisions and help himself.

Confidentiality

Counseling may be the most intimate relationship which a rabbi has with a congregant. In this context, the rabbi is in regular receipt of confidential information concerning the client, his family, his social contacts, or his business. This material must be shared in order to achieve an effective counseling relationship. From this perspective, confidentiality is an element of the counseling relationship, which assures the client that it is safe to confide the "secrets" which often lie at the heart of a problem. At the same time, confidentiality is also an aspect of the rabbi's code of professional ethics.

> Confidentiality is the preservation of secret information concerning the client which is disclosed in the professional relationship. Confidentiality is based upon a basic right of the client; it is an ethical obligation of the counselor and is necessary for effective counseling. The client's right, however, is not absolute. Moreover, the client's secret is often shared with other professional persons...; the obligation then binds all equally.[22]

When the client enters into counseling with the rabbi, he understands that some very personal information may have to be revealed. This may include "family skeletons" or episodes of behavior which might destroy relationships or reputations. He communicates this information only upon the recognition that the counseling relationship has, as

one of its inherent conditions, the element of confidentiality. The client understands that sharing this material will facilitate his receiving the total benefit of the rabbi's skills, but at the same time, he must feel safe in assuming that the information will not go beyond the rabbi's study. It is certain that no client will want to exchange his reputation for the rabbi's counseling. Therefore, it is necessary that confidentiality be an essential quality of the counseling relationship.

Even so, the rabbi may find himself in situations where the client's right to confidentiality is in conflict with other obligations, or with the rights of other individuals. These situations are some of the most difficult in counseling. Among them are:

1. Conflict within the client: The client may feel a tension between his right to keep material secret and some other right or duty. A solution would require weighing of the rights involved without exaggerating either side. However, the right to confidentiality outweighs others until evidence appears to the contrary.

2. Conflict with the rights of another person: Sometimes a client or his situation is so connected to another person that keeping a secret would constitute a serious injustice. Here again, rights must be weighed. For the rabbi, the rights of the client prevail until it is clear that to keep the secret would cause grave damage to the other person.

3. Conflict with the rights or obligations of the rabbi: It is possible that the confidentiality of the counseling relationship may, in extreme circumstances, come into conflict with the rights of the rabbi. An example of this would be the case in which

> a client exhibits great hostility to the rabbi as a result of the counseling process and proceeds to act out this hositility publicly. His actions may cause the rabbi considerable damage, unless the rabbi can explain the situation to the proper parties. Another case would be the situation described in the preceeding paragraph. The rabbi has an equal or greater obligation to prevent injury to an individual who might suffer as a consequence of confidential information known to the rabbi. If it is clear that the rabbi will undermine his position in the community, or suffer considerable damage to his reputation, he may share his confidence. The presumption is that no counselor would "conceivably have bound himself to secrecy...at such a prohibitive cost to himself."23

Fortunately, few clients have secrets which, when revealed in counseling, raise problems like those listed above. Just the same, all information exchanged within the counseling context is considered confidential by the client. The rabbi cannot expect the client to engage in the counseling process without first feeling sure that the rabbi will respect these confidences. The fact that confidentiality is an issue which arises early in the counseling process makes it all the more important that the confidential quality of the counseling relationship be communicated directly and convincingly.

Thoughts on the Counseling Interview

The Mechanical Elements

The rabbi who seeks to improve his relational skills must work to develop an awareness of himself so that he can be more aware of others. He must identify desirable

relational qualities and strive to incorporate them into his counseling approach. These steps, and many others which deal with the intangible aspects of counseling, are best pursued with the help of a mental health professional or with the aid of peer supervision. There are, however, some mechanical elements of counseling which may enhance the atmosphere in which counseling takes place.

In an informal setting--a social engagement, a classroom, a hallway, the library, etc.--it is the rabbi who must single-handedly communicate to the potential client the "Seven Elements" of the counseling relationship which will assuage some of the client's initial anxieties and promote the dynamic interaction basic to the counseling relationship. On the other hand, the formal counseling situation, i.e. the counseling interview which occurs at a time and place designated for that purpose, gives the rabbi an opportunity to utilize some of the mechanical facets of the interview in order to reassure the client and to indicate the nature of the counseling relationship. Among these mechanical elements are:

1. Attention to detail: This is an excellent indication of individuality in the counseling relationship. The rabbi can display an appreciation of the client's unique situation by suggesting appointment times which are not in conflict with the client's work schedule, child care needs, etc. This awareness communicates a quality of understanding and individualization to the client even before the initial interview.

2. Setting: The setting of the interview is an important cue to the client that his confidences will be respected. Therefore,

the rabbi should avoid the temptation to conduct counseling sessions in semi-private surroundings which may let the rabbi have some sense of other activity going on in the Temple, but which only serves to increase the anxiety of the client. Further, the place of the interview indicates the degree of attention which the client can expect. If the interview is to be held in a private, quiet office, free of distractions, the client will feel that he will receive the rabbi's full attention. In any other setting, the client will feel that he is competing for attention, and that the rabbi is not really interested in his problem.

3. Reliability: When the rabbi is prompt to keep an appointment, then the client can feel that the hour has, indeed, been set aside for him and him alone. Often the rabbi is subjected to pressures which make reliability a difficult goal to achieve. In the case of tardiness on the part of the rabbi, or an unavoidable delay of the interview, the rabbi should explain, in part, what occured so as to enforce the client's sense of the rabbi's interest in him.

4. Preparation: A good way to prepare for an interview is to take a few moments to review any notes or memory details concerning the client. This helps to put other concerns out of the rabbi's mind, and aids in planning a purposeful interview. The client will sense the rabbi's focus on him and his problem, and will appreciate the purposeful interview as a sign of the rabbi's concern and competence.

5. Client Involvement: The rabbi should take every opportunity to involve the client in the details of the counseling relationship. Such activities as setting appointments, filling out forms, and selecting goals gives the rabbi an opportunity to encourage the client to assert himself and to feel competent and worthwhile within the counseling relationship. Such involvement can assure the client of maintaining some control over the relationship and can serve to bolster self-confidence.

Details for Consideration

Of course, there are many other, more particular aspects of the counseling interview which are important to the overall success of the relationship. Some, the rabbi can use to advantage. Others cannot be used, per se, but must be considered for the difficulties or possibilities they may present. For example, the rabbi's dress may turn an interview sour. An older client may view informal or stylish clothing as an accentuation of the rabbi's youth, and therefore doubt his maturity and competence as a counselor. Though this may sound frivolous, it can be a concern for a rabbi who must deal with the elderly, or with a particularly opinionated individual. It is unfortunate, but occasionally the rabbi who counsels may have to consider this, or a similar issue, and compromise between personal taste and the attitudes of the client in order to establish a comfortable counseling environment.

Another "small" detail is the seating arrangement of the rabbi's office. Consider these two counseling episodes:

> Mr. Prince, age 37, entered treatment with a long history of inability to function at a job despite strong motivation for success in this area. Although he had expected a magical solution to his problem, he did make a commitment to work on his conflicts. This client, who was unmarried and had never been able to establish a close relationship with anyone, usually sat in the chair farthest removed from the counselor.
>
> Ms. O'Brien, who had a very close, symbiotic tie with her mother elected to sit in the chair closest to the counselor. The counselor understood this gesture as a function of her

> unconscious wishes to be close to the counselor in the same way that she felt close to her mother, from whom she had so much trouble separating.[24]

Where the client elects to sit may occasionally be of some significance to the rabbi. It may be an early indication of some basic personality traits, or an indication of the client's attitude toward the rabbi or toward the counseling process. However, an office with limited seating possibilities eliminates this opportunity.

The use of a desk is also worth consideration.

> In some situations the desk may be a barrier between the interviewer and the client, whereas in others it can be used effectively to add distance where closeness is part of the problem. Traditionally, counselors have positioned themselves behind a desk. This was a way for the counselor to keep some distance from the client in order to feel more professional. In fact, sitting behind a desk does not necessarily achieve distance or maintain professionalism. Nowadays, many counselors arrange their offices with the desk out of the way and with the seating more casual. As the counselor develops skills in interviewing techniques, he will feel more comfortable wherever he sits.[25]

In any event, the rabbi can enhance the client's sense of the thoughtful and considerate nature of the counseling relationship by making sure his office is furnished with a few comfortable chairs.

How the rabbi brings the client into his office is often very important. For example, a quick word to the secretary to hold all calls, a direction which is audible to the client, stresses the attention and individualization

inherent in the upcoming interview. Some clients, concerned about confidentiality, will appreciate a quiet greeting which does not broadcast the reason for their visit. Some may even prefer that the rabbi not refer to them by name until they are within the private confines of the rabbi's office.

Once within the office, there are two issues worth mentioning. The problem for the client is: Where should I sit? As mentioned previously, how the client handles this problem may have some significance for the counseling process. The rabbi should resist the temptation to direct the client to a particular seat. This is a good moment in which to allow the client to express himself by his actions. A response like: "Wherever you wish", or "Whichever chair looks comfortable", is usually sufficient. "Telling a client where to sit may confirm his wishes that the counselor will tell him what to do. Occasionally, there may be a client who is so extremely anxious that he is unable to make a seating choice, in which case the counselor is forced to point out a chair."[26]

The second problem is the rabbi's: How does he address the client? Some rabbis may be tempted to reach a quick rapport by using first names. This may be acceptable where there is some informality already shared between the rabbi and the particular client. However, in many cases, a quick jump into informality may be perceived as an unjustified intimacy and cause the client to become even more anxious and defensive. It seems most desirable to initiate discussion

on a "Rabbi" and "Mr., Mrs., or Ms." basis. In that way the professional nature of the relationship is maintained; the client does not feel pressured into intimacy; and the rabbi remains "Rabbi" for the client, which is what the client was seeking to begin with. Of course, the rabbi can refer to children and teenagers on a first name basis. It also stands to reason that the matter of address can be reassessed whenever the counseling relationship calls for it.

After the initial greeting, many clients, having a great deal on their mind, will begin to describe their situation. Still, the rabbi shares some responsibility for getting the interview moving. A simple, open-ended question usually serves the purpose. "What brings you here?", "How did this problem develop?", or "How was it you came to call my office?" are some examples of the many possible remarks. A more reluctant client may not respond. In that case the rabbi can take a few different approaches. He can communicate an understanding of the client's difficulty with a remark like, "You find it hard to begin..." or "It's hard to start..." If the client will not respond to these leads, then the rabbi may feel it necessary to ask the client why he is present at all. This type of confrontary remark often elicts some response, but the rabbi must be quick to pick out a new tack from the limited information he may receive from a client in this situation. Another approach to the reluctant client is for the rabbi to relate

what he already knows about the client's situation without revealing sources other than acknowledging information received directly from the client. As soon as the rabbi misquotes, gets an event out of sequence, or makes any other comment which conflicts with the client's perception of the problem situation, the client will generally make a comment or a correction which opens the door to exploration of the situation.[27]

Concluding an interview can be even more difficult than starting. Often the interview is proceeding well when time runs out. Though the client need not be cut off in mid-sentence, the rabbi should still insist that the interview terminate on time. This is an important way to stress that there are limits to both the session and to the counseling relationship. Successful counseling requires that the rabbi set limits early, making sure that the client is fully aware of them. Subsequently, it is up to the rabbi to enforce these limits; otherwise, the client will have no respect for them.

Occasionally, a client may be very anxious about ending an interview, or may have an unreasonable expectation that by extending the session, the chances of solving his problem are increased. In either case, it is in the best interest of the client to terminate the session on time. To extend the interview can only postpone the inevitable and increase the the discomfort of the client. Or else, it serves as a false solution which does not confront

the problem which the client presents. Therefore, ending an interview is another phase of the counseling process which has important ramifications and requires some sensitivity. If the rabbi's announcement that "time is almost up", falls on deaf ears, he can use a different approach. He might say, "You find it hard to leave?" Putting the issue back into the counseling process often gets the client's attention.

> This is usually enough to mobilize the client by putting the issue back into a therapeutic context and reducing the element of struggle between client and counselor. Then the client is able to leave with dignity. A stronger measure is for the counselor to stand up and walk to the door. In very rare instances of a special crisis or stress situation that needs further attention, by mutual agreement and plan, the interview may extend beyond the usual time.[28]

These few illustrations clearly show that the counseling relationship is established not only on the basis of the intangible qualities of the rabbi-client interaction, but also on the basis of the rabbi's sensitivity to detail and consideration of the client. To an anxious, troubled individual, every aspect of the counseling interview can be significant and open to interpretation. In his attempt to evaluate the attitude of the rabbi and the "safety" of the counseling relationship, the client will be sensitive to verbal nuance and physical detail. The rabbi should make every effort to characterize his counseling with desirable qualities which are attuned to the needs of the client.

These qualities should extend from the essence of the counseling relationship to the mechanics of the counseling interview. In this way, the rabbi utilizes every opportunity to assure the client of a warm, accepting, and individualized relationship.

CONCLUSION

Counseling, both in preparation and in practice, is a process. Therefore, it is somewhat misleading to speak of a conclusion. The rabbi who engages in counseling as an integral part of his rabbinate will find that he is perpetually involved in analyzing new techniques, assessing his counseling interventions, and evaluating his counseling role in relation to other rabbinic activities. He learns more about counseling and about himself with each counseling episode. Thus, the rabbi is always involved in a degree of counseling-preparation as he strives to integrate new information into his theoretical and practical approach to rabbinic counseling.

Of course, this process needs direction and purpose. The elements of role and skill analysis, theoretical and theological considerations, evaluation of techniques, and awareness of relational and mechanical facets of counseling are the fundamental building-blocks of rabbinic counseling. Careful and thoughtful attention to these areas can only help the rabbi increase his skill and understanding as a counselor.

However, above all else, rabbinic counseling offers a unique opportunity for the rabbi. In the counseling relationship he can bring his skill and the wisdom of Judaism

to bear in the problem solving process. In this intimate and immediate situation, he can give Judaism new vitality and relevance for his troubled congregant. The challenge of counseling is great; the constant preparation is taxing; but the rewards are substantial for all involved--for the congregant, for the rabbi, for the community, and for Judaism. The rabbi who commits himself to the pursuit of these rewards dedicates himself to a deeply humane and caring rabbinate. As he applies himself to the counseling role, let him keep this paraphrase in mind:

Who shall ascend unto the
counseling room?
And who shall stand in this
sacred relationship?
He that hath cleansed his hands
of his own cares,
And freed his heart from
bitterness and frustration;
Who hath not assumed his
position out of vanity,
And is not commited to any
fixed ideas or prejudices.
He shall receive the blessing of
service
And the righteous reward of
seeing his clients solve
their own problems!

--Samuel Glasner

GLOSSARY

M'sader: from seder, meaning "order, form". One who arranges things (Alcalay). This implies an ability to give structure and meaning to events or ideas, which is a major task for the counselor.

Mitzaveh: from tzivah, meaning "to command". A commander or governor, one who gives commands (Alcalay). In behavioral terms, the mitzaveh is any source of compelling authority. It is a goal of counseling to have the client act as his own mitzaveh to the degree that subjective behavioral guidelines are appropriate.

Mitzvah: Pl., mitzvoth; from tzivah, meaning "to command". A commandment; a "good deed" (Alcalay). Mitzvoth represent behavioral guidelines. Regardless of our opinion of their nature, origin, or authority, we can recognize their intent. Often, it is in the best interests of the client to establish such "commandments" in order to guide, and to give structure to a disorganized individual. The rabbi may appeal to his own authority, or to a civil or religious authority, in order to establish these mitzvoth. However, in keeping with the preceding entry, it is most effective when the client, himself, recognizes an outside authority and accepts it, or acts as his own source of authority.

Tshuva: from shuv, meaning "to return". Repentance, a turning from evil toward good (Alcalay). In any counseling situation, the client must be helped to recognize the source of his dissatisfaction. He can then reject that behavior or that attitude, and establish a more satisfying one in its place. To this degree, the process of counseling shares some dynamics with the process of tshuva.

Tzaddik: from tsedek, meaning "justice, rightness, true honesty". A righteous, just, honest, upright, pious, God-fearing man (Alcalay). The leader of a Hasidic group, whose followers consider him to be a model of the highest ideals of Jewish life. (Birnbaum, Jewish Concepts) The Tzaddik often gave his followers advice concerning personal matters. This was consistent with his status,

and the understanding of his role in the Hasidic community. Most of the Tzaddik's influence was the result of his manner, piety and compassion. The modern rabbi, as well, gains credence as a counselor by virtue of the same qualities. In other words, the rabbi is a model of contemporary Jewish ideals. If he is accepted as such, then it is most fitting that he share those ideals and their application to daily living through active counseling.

Yetser: from yatsar, meaning "to create, produce, fashion". An instinct, inclination, impulse, drive (Alcalay). Yetser harah: the inclination toward evil. Yetser hatov: the inclination toward good. The Rabbis viewed man as being torn between these two, natural impulses. In counseling, the client can often be viewed as being equally torn between conflicting behaviors or attitudes. These conflicts are the source of psychic and physical tension. It is the role of the counselor to help identify these tension-sources and to help establish a creative, dynamic equilibrium.

APPENDIX

ROLE INVENTORY

1. Take a few quiet moments and relax. Think about the rabbinate in ideal terms. Think about your rabbinate in real terms.

2. Make a list of: 1. what the ideal rabbi should be (list characteristics); 2. what the ideal rabbi should do (list activities). List these items in order of importance, the most important one first.

3. Put the lists aside for a few days. Mark on your calendar a time to continue.

4. A few days later, make a new list of your rabbinic characteristics, the most important or desirable first. Then, make a list of your activities, listing the areas according to the amount of time they demand. Put these lists with the first set, and set aside some time for yourself two or three days later.

5. In the meantime, approach 3 or 4 congregants. Ask them to list the qualities they feel are desirable in a rabbi. Ask them to list the activities in which they feel the rabbi should engage. Set these lists aside with the others.

6. During the time you have set aside, compare these three sets of lists. How does your ideal rabbi/rabbinate compare with that of the congregants? How does your real rabbi/rabbinate compare with your own ideal; with your congregants' ideal? Where are counseling activities and counseling related personal qualities on these various lists? Do the lists agree? Where do they differ? How important is counseling to you? To your congregants? Are you meeting your own ideal as a counselor? Are you meeting the expectations of your congregants? Identify the congruencies and the disagreements between these lists. Consider ways of bringing "reals" and "ideals" closer together.

WHO NEEDS ME?

1. Make a list of the different populations in your congregation, Hillel, etc. For example: Elderly, Widows and Widowers, Single Parents, Young Marrieds, Families, Teen-agers, etc. List any group which can be identified, even if some of them overlap.

2. From this list make a second one, ranking the groups according to your perspective of how much potential counseling-need they represent. If "Young Marrieds" appear to require more counseling as a group, list that one first, and so on. Put the lists aside for a few days, and set a time to come back to them.

3. A few days later, take out the first list. Rank these groups according to how much you like being with members of these groupings. Do not think of individuals. Think, rather, of your stereotypes and generalizations of your relationships with the various groups.

4. Now take out the second list. Compare it with the third list. Are there any groups which are far apart in their positions on the lists? Example: If "Teen-agers" is number one as the group who rely on the rabbi as a counselor, or who represent the greatest need for counseling, are they in fifth or sixth position in terms of "counselor comfort"? What does this mean? How will it affect your counseling relationships with members of that group? Any group which has a difference of four or more spaces may require some attention. Do not worry. Acceptance is a difficult skill. We all have some discomforts to overcome.

5. (Optional) Ask a few congregants to rank, in order of greatest need, those groups whom <u>they</u> feel need the rabbi as a counselor. Compare these lists with your own. This may give you a good insight into the congregation's understanding of the place of rabbinic counseling.

DO I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

1. Make a list of personal qualities and characteristics which you feel a good counselor should have.

2. Make a list of what you consider to be your positive personality traits. Compare lists. How do you stack up?

3. Make a list of what you consider to be your negative personality traits. Are any of them possible obstacles in counseling? What can you do to overcome them?

Note: Remember that knowledge of self is an important ingredient of successful counseling. If you think it will help, consult with a counseling professional. He or she may be able to help you identify some of these problem areas and give you advice as to how to minimize their effect on your counseling.

For self-help in this very difficult endeavor, consult Self-Therapy by Muriel Schiffman. Personal insight is the key to her approach, and she gives some good hints about how to achieve it.

4. Make a list of positive attributes which you have in common with list number one. (Compare 1 and 2.) What can you do to emphasize them in your counseling? What type of counseling approach will take advantage of these qualities?

5. Consider the negative personality traits. How will you keep them out of your counseling? What type of counseling techniques will you avoid as a result? What type of counseling situations will you avoid?

REALITY THEORY: CASE HISTORIES

Eric: Reported by Norman I. Barr

Eric was a 19-year-old college sophomore who had recently received his draft notice and was considering fleeing to Canada to avoid induction. Eric lived with his parents. His father disagreed with his politics but was personally supportive of him. His mother fought with him over his irregular hours, his girl friend, and her suspicion that he was smoking marijuana. Eric had a history of minor disciplinary problems in junior high and high school. He was a loner. Eric had one idiosyncrasy. He carried a rabbit's foot on his key chain, and refused to set foot outside his house without it. During previous crises in his life, he had experienced severe, incapacitating anxiety. Because of this, his father recommended he seek professional help in deciding what to do about the draft.

During Eric's initial visits, the Reality therapist concentrated on getting involved with him. Talk centered on areas where Eric was successful: his relationship with his father, his good grades in school. This discussion built up Eric's self-esteem and communicated the therapist's awareness that he had strengths and capabilities, as well as problems.

The therapist then found out as much as he could about Eric's current activities. He increasingly reminded the young man of the alternatives open to him, and of his responsibility for choosing among them. People in crises are often unaware of other possible courses of action and feel as though they have no choice in what they are doing. When this feeling eclipses rational calculation, the result is irresponsible behavior, and, often, unhappiness.

Together the therapist and Eric carefully went over all Eric's possible responses to the draft notice. They looked for new, previously unconsidered options. How would Eric feel as a soldier, what would be his reaction to life in Canada, when would he finish his education, where would he see his girl friend, his family? How, what, when, where. The Reality therapist never asks why. He makes no attempt to provide insight, but focuses entirely on behavior. The therapist's underlying assumption, which he communicated intentionally, was that Eric was fully capable of responsible action.

In effect, the therapist asked Eric, "Is what you are doing in this particular situation getting you what you want?

If not, let's discuss what you can do differently in order to achieve a more satisfying result." The therapist ignored the rabbit's foot. He stayed clear of any discussion of symbolism. That would only have opened the door to meaningless talk, bypassing the goal of therapy. It would have allowed Eric to take his symptoms too seriously. The therapist simply assumed that Eric's idiosyncracy would disappear as he gained increasing control over his life.

The therapist got Eric to make a value judgment on his present behavior, and assisted him in mapping out his new plan of behavior. After the plan was written down and Xeroxed, the therapist and Eric signed both copies, each keeping one. It became their contract.

"Now," asked the therapist, "are you going to follow through on this? Are you willing to tolerate the difficulties we both anticipate this plan will cause?" Eric's agreement here was crucial. A plan that does not have the client's firm commitment is likely to fail, and failure not only encourages a self-defeating identity, but interferes with the therapeutic process. The commitment to the plan is separately written, Xeroxed and signed. It's a second contract.

Eric asked his Reality therapist if he would write a psychiatric report saying Eric was emotionally unfit for military duty. The therapist refused the request on the grounds that it was untrue. So Eric chose his next plan: to respond to his draft notice, report for induction, and serve his two years. He was surprised that he felt a sense of relief when he made this decision. Unfortunately, he stopped seeing his therapist when he went into the Army. After he completed basic training he changed his commitment to his plan and chose to go AWOL on two separate occasions. Since his second return to duty he has been hospitalized for evaluation in a military hospital's psychiatric ward.

If Eric hadn't kept his original commitment to accept induction, the therapist would not have searched for the reasons why the plan failed. To do so would have encouraged Eric to find excuses for his failure, and inhibited the development of a success identity. If the plan had failed, the therapist would simply have fallen back on the first axiom of Reality Therapy, that a man is capable of making conscious decisions regarding his behavior, and started over again. If the therapist had treated Eric in the military hospital, he would begin with the premise that both AWOLs were conscious decisions to change his commitment.

Jim: Reported by William Glasser

Jim, a highly intelligent electronics engineer, came because he was depressed. Working at a good job, with a wife and two children whom he loved, he felt that he could not face another day. Things were barely real to him, every moment was an effort; he just wanted to stop functioning completely. Hospitalization would have been detrimental

to his already sagging morale. Several previous periods of hospitalization with electric shock treatments had provided temporary respite, but now the depression was back in full force and he was looking for more lasting relief. I was also encouraged not to hospitalize him because he had never had any psychotherapy when he was functioning well, although he had been under psychiatric treatment during his depressed periods.

In the first interview I told him both that the depression would pass (he knew it would also, but this was little consolation) and that if he wanted a more permanent solution he should stay in treatment until I discharged him. I emphasized that my goal was higher than helping him through this episode; my goal was to see him until he gained enough strength to overcome the increasing periods of depression that were ruining his life.

In recent years he had become severely depressed every four to six months. I told him to come in every week, that our scheduled hour was essential, and to keep working. I also told him to call me any time, to come in more often if necessary, and that together we would make it day by day, week by week. I gave him one final instruction--and this is the correct word because he was in a numb depression where he needed concrete and forceful direction--he must go to work every day and, if he could do nothing more, at least sit at his desk eight hours no matter how excruciating it became. Probably this last order pulled him through the week that followed. He also began to understand that his present treatment was going to be different from his previous hospitalization and electric shock therapy.

The weeks that followed were nightmarish; he could barely get along. He had no energy, no desire even to eat. He wanted to fade into oblivion. He felt that no one could possibly respect him, that he was of no value to himself or anyone else. Driving became difficult; sitting at his desk was an ordeal. He could do almost no work, but fortunately he was ahead in his project so he could coast awhile. I told him to tell his group leader about his problem and that he was seeing me. Fortunately, this man was compassionate, having had a stomach ulcer for which he too had received psychiatric care. The group leader called me and I told him to be tough and demanding outwardly yet understanding of Jim's temporary inability to do much work. It is important that depressed patients do not get sympathy because sympathy emphasizes their worthlessness and depresses them even more.

We continued to struggle along and the depression finally lifted. As it did he was able to describe his real problem. In his depressed state all he had been able to say was that he was wrong and the rest of the world was right. As the depression lifted, however, he was able to describe a serious marriage problem that initially he had not been able to mention. According to what his wife told him, his marriage was failing because he was not able to act enough like a man for her satisfaction. Although his soft, passive demeanor lent some credence to her accusation, his wife had serious problems of

her own which she projected onto Jim. When, trying to help the marriage, I asked her to come in, all she could tell me was that she wanted a man just like him, but not him. For her, he was too kind, too soft, too good, and completely unsatisfactory sexually. She was convinced that nothing could help him become the man she wanted. During this time he began, with my help, to get tougher and more masculine. Feeling better for a while, he changed to a new job and hoped his new attitude might save the marriage. When his wife insisted upon a divorce, he again became depressed, blaming his wife's rejection entirely upon himself.

Now, besides having to live alone, he was assigned to a new project for which he had sole responsibility. In the past the group carried him when he became depressed, but now even this crutch was removed. Things looked so black to him that I feared he would kill himself. Fortunately, we had the experience of living through the previous episode together, and we had intensified a warm, firm involvement during the five months between depressions. Because of the involvement I was able to be hard on him as he became depressed. I told him to stop feeling sorry for himself, to go fishing, to go out with girls, and to work voluntarily on weekends to make up for his slowness during the week.

The suggestion that he owed the company something for his inefficiency struck home. Although he always claimed that he did, the possibility of doing something about it had never really occurred to him. I hammered away at how his depression removed him from responsibility. The first good sign occurred when he began to respond to my pressure with anger. I became tougher, he became more angry, and as the anger drained, his depression lifted. I gave him a small dose of a mild stimulant which I feel had more of a psychological than a pharmacological effect.

As he got over the depression a fortunate and to us, looking for some relief from the tension of the preceding months, somewhat humorous event occurred. When Jim gets over depressions he usually feels very good, almost a little euphoric. He was soon able to triple his output at work, almost singlehandedly pushing a critical project to completion. Because the company had only known him when he was mildly or severely depressed his increased work output as the depression lifted resulted in two promotions and three raises in less than four months. We could not help laughing about this fortuitous combination of circumstances.

Therapy continued for a year until we passed two more periods when he ordinarily would have become depressed. He dated and married a woman who not only loves him but also pushes him, something he needs very much. Her attitude is very different from that of his first wife, who criticized him but did not feel he could change, so she did not push him. Interpreting this push as love and interest in him, which it is, he is happier than ever. "Helen now can take over your job," he said in his last Christmas card, which added, "I thought you would like to know that things are going well for Helen and me. She has really been cracking the whip and I think she has me just about straightened out...."

RATIONAL-EMOTIVE THERAPY: CASE HISTORY

Mrs. Martin: Reported by Paul A. Hauck

Mrs. Martin was typical of my clients who immediately questioned the implications of this theory. After I explained it to her during our first counseling session she remarked, "Then according to your thinking, it's never others who upset me, but always myself?"

"That's right, Mrs. Martin," I added, "as long as other people aren't actually hurting you physically."

"Well, what about when my husband goes into one of his wild scenes and swears and calls me the vilest names? You surely don't mean that he isn't upsetting me then, do you?"

"Yes, I do. If he isn't giving you a black eye while he's screaming and bellowing at you, I insist he isn't upsetting you in the least."

"But, doctor," she protested, "you must be joking. Everyone knows that words can hurt. Why, it's only natural to get upset in such a situation."

"I agree, it's natural all right. So is eating raw meat. That has nothing to do with it. The point you fail to see is that he has done nothing to you except throw a lot of ugly words at you, which you take seriously and use to stir up your own emotions. It is not your husband's arguing that can do you harm. It's at point B, your thinking about his arguing that causes your depression and anger at C. If you changed those alarming thoughts at B, you'd soon feel better. For example, what sort of nonsense do you tell yourself when he attacks you verbally?"

"I frankly don't tell myself anything. I only know I get mad and am very unhappy."

"Yes, but you must have had some mad and unhappy thoughts to make you feel that way. The thought always comes before the feeling, whether you're aware of it or not. Try right now to imagine what you generally are thinking about when he starts a fight with you."

She thought a moment and said, "Let's see, I'm probably telling myself that I hate him for being so unfair and unreasonable and that's he's an awful, terrible person to treat me so badly."

"Anything else?" I urged.

"Then I probably think about how miserable I've been lately and how much I want him to love and approve of me but he won't. That really brings on the tears," she said with a sad smile.

"It seems to me, Mrs. Martin, that you've just proven my point. Can't you see how impossible it would be for you to feel any other way but angry and depressed after feeding yourself those disturbing thoughts? No one, I repeat, no one could conceivably remain calm during a scene with a husband as long as she kept telling herself such poison."

"And if I changed my thought, I'd change my feelings? I'd love my husband while he was calling me dirty names?"

"Almost. You wouldn't, of course, like what he said, but you could certainly like <u>him</u> nevertheless. Suppose you had told yourself sensible, logical thoughts such as: 'Poor fellow, there he goes again, making himself angry and spoiling another evening for himself. Well, that's too bad, but all his screaming won't hurt me unless I let it, so I might just as well stay calm until he gets over this. After all, it's his problem, not mine.' Now, if you had told yourself this kind of thing, can't you see how utterly impossible it would be to get disturbed next time?"

"I confess it sounds very reasonable, but almost too easy. All I'm supposed to learn is how to think calm thoughts and I'll never be upset again as long as I live?"

"It's not quite that easy, Mrs. Martin. You'll have to concentrate hard not to repeat your past thinking habits, and you'll slip many times along the way. However, if you do begin to question, seriously question, the neurotic junk you've been believing all along, you will most certainly begin to improve."

"It sounds almost too mechanical and too simple. I've tried to talk myself out of lots of upsetting feelings in the past and it hasn't worked."

"Technically, it isn't just what you think that upsets you. The thoughts that upset you are those thoughts which you <u>believe</u> to be true. That's the big difference. If you believe your husband is a demon because he speaks unkindly to you, you'll have to get upset if he continues after you ask him to stop. If, however, you have the thought that he is a demon but don't honestly believe it, then you won't be upset."

"So it isn't just what I tell myself that upsets me but what I believe, is that it?"

"True. The reason I go back to asking you to tell me what you are telling yourself is that all your beliefs are expressed in verbal symbols, or in silent words. That's what your thoughts are, aren't they?"

"I suppose so. If I want to think of something, I can't do it unless I use language, that is, words and sentences. These are the tools of my thinking, or talking to myself. And some of this thinking I believe and some I reject. Right?"

"Right, Mrs. Martin. The sensible and logical ideas you have and accept will not upset you. The illogical, alarming, upsetting things you tell yourself may or may not upset you--depending on whether or not you believe them."

"I see it now," she blurted out. "In the past when I have tried to talk myself out of a disturbance and it didn't work, it wasn't because I was telling myself sensible things, but because I didn't believe what I was thinking. Is that right?"

"Precisely. You are probably talking to yourself on two levels. The one was conscious and healthy, while the other was unconscious and disturbing. For example, after getting into a fight with your husband, you may have told yourself consciously that he's not all bad, that the poor fellow can't help getting upset each week, and that none of his outbursts can really do you any great harm anyway. If you could have accepted these thoughts as being eminently and practically sound, you would have believed them and calmed down.

"In the past, however, you have subconsciously added other thoughts, which were sabotaging the good thinking you were doing on the surface. In addition to the thoughts that your husband is not all bad, you probably whispered the idea to yourself, 'Perhaps so, but he has more than his fair share of faults.' If you had the thought that he can't help being disturbed, because of the way he was raised, you probably countered it at a suppressed level with: 'I don't care how badly his folks raised him. I'm not his parents and why should I have to take the brunt of their mistakes.'

"You see, Mrs. Martin, what I'm trying to say is that mere talking to oneself is not enough reason to get upset or to calm down. It is only when we believe that our internalized irrational thoughts make sense, that they make us upset. It is only when we believe the rational things we are saying to ourselves, that we calm down."

"Then I apparently must try to reexamine the things I am telling myself about my husband and his arguing, and then refuse to let myself believe they all make sense. And that should get me over my anger and tension?"

"After you tell yourself sane thoughts which you then completely believe are sane, your emotional disturbance will be over," was my unequivocal answer.

This line of instruction went on for several weekly sessions, each time rephrased, and each time answering her questions and countering her objections. In our fifth hour she came in beaming a broad smile. "Doctor, something happened this week that I wouldn't have believed if it hadn't happened to me."

"What's that?"

"Just this past week my husband began getting irritable in his usual way and I knew he was just itching for a fight. He started arguing, finding fault and calling me the usual nasty names. Naturally I started to get angry and could feel myself getting hot under the collar, when I suddenly recalled what you've been telling me: 'His words can't hurt you, and if he dislikes you right now, so what? You can't expect him to be charming and delightful all the time.

So calm down, Mrs. Martin. Straighten yourself out at B and your husband out there at point A won't be able to upset you in the slightest at point C.'"

"And it really worked, didn't it?" I asked.

"It certainly did. I sat there calm as a cucumber while he got madder and madder. It was a wonderful experience. The amazing thing about it was that I didn't merely keep quiet with a tight lid on my anger, as I've done so many times before. I actually had no anger at all that needed to be bottled up."

From that time on, Mrs. Martin was a changed woman, although her husband, whom I never saw, continued on his neurotic way. She learned to accept him as he was and to avoid hurting herself by letting him upset her.

REFLECTION AND DRAWING-OUT

(from Reality Games, Sax and Hollander)

The client must know that you are listening and hearing what he is saying. One way to indicate this is through reflection: "reflecting back to him what you understand him to be saying or feeling". This lets the client know that you are following his statements, and it helps you to clarify your own understanding by means of the client's reactions to your reflection. What is a reflection?

1. A reflection may be a paraphrase of what is said.
2. A reflection may stress the feelings or thoughts.
3. A reflection may be a condensation or summary of a great many things that were said.
4. A reflection may emphasize certain things rather than others.
5. A reflection should be warm in tone and accepting.
6. Avoid satirizing or mocking reflections.

It may be helpful to ask yourself some questions about "reflection" after each counseling session.

1. Which reflections were accurate? Which were not?
2. What kind of reflections were most helpful?
3. Did the client feel sarcasm or ridicule in any of the reflections?
4. Did the client feel warmth and concern from the reflections?
5. How did you feel doing "reflection"?

"Reflection" is an important counseling tool all by itself. However, it is particularly significant to the process of "drawing-out", encouraging the client to expand on his descriptions of events or feelings. Reflecting back to the client what he has already discussed indicates understanding and interest. These underlying qualities make it easier for the client to respond to questions from the

counselor. Questions must be asked carefully and with purpose. Drawing-out is a key process in the counseling relationship. It is the type of interaction which promotes the sharing of information and feelings. It is the process through which the client becomes known to the counselor. In order to make the best use of this process:

1. Ask questions that help the client elaborate, clarify his thoughts and feelings.

2. Ask questions that help the client explore in a total way by asking about what is missing.

3. If he talks about the past, ask about present relevance.

   If he talks only about ideas, ask about feelings.

   If he talks about emotions, ask for facts and situations.

   If he talks about details, ask about relationships.

   If he talks in general ideas, ask about examples.

After each counseling session, ask yourself these questions:

1. What questions help the client to elaborate and clarify thoughts and feelings?

2. What questions helped the client get a better balanced view?

3. How did "reflection" help to draw-out this client?

SCORE CARD #1

When you do not have the advantage of supervision, you must try to evaluate your own progress as a counselor, Keeping a log or a series of reports on your counseling sessions gives a history of the case. What is also needed is a way to evaluate yourself as a counselor.

One way to do this is to keep a "score card". After the counseling session, sit back, relax, and think over what happened during the session and take an honest, objective view of your role in the interaction. As an aid to this process, fill out the following "score card", by putting a check at the appropriate point on the continuum.

1. I helped the client to talk freely.

Very true_____Not true

2. I helped the client explore his situation the way he wanted to.

Very true_____Not true

3. I was sensitive to:
   a. the feelings that the client expressed verbally.

Very true_____Not true

   b. the feelings that the client expressed physically.

Very true_____Not true

4. I understood what the client was trying to say.

Very true_____Not true

5. I helped the client gain new insight or understanding.

Very true_____Not true

6. I helped the client to plan a course of action.

Very true_____Not true

7. I was understanding, accepting, and respectful of what the client was saying.

Very true_____Not true

After evaluating yourself, consider why you chose the positions on the continuum which you checked. What point of the counseling session were you thinking of in each instance? How might you have handled that moment better? What did you do that was very good? How will you use this insight and analysis in your next session with this client?

Write down your evaluation now, and take it out to re-read just before your next session with this client. This little step will refresh your insights and add a sense of purposefulness to the session.

SCORE CARD #2

Having used a score card to focus on your role as a counselor, you can now use a score card to direct your thoughts to the client and his part in the counseling interaction. It is often helpful to write down some of your impressions of the client immediately after the session. Describe the client on paper. What about him caught your attention? What about him was attractive? What made you uncomfortable? After considering the physical elements, reflect on the client's participation in the session. Evaluate the client by checking the appropriate point on these continua.

1. The client gave his own perceptions, thoughts and feelings.

Very true_____Not true

2. The client was willing to explore and go into his feelings even when it was difficult.

Very true_____Not true

3. The client was willing to look at and explore the facts of his situation.

Very true_____Not true

4. The client was willing to confront contradictions in feelings.

Very true_____Not true

In values

Very true_____Not true

In behavior

Very true_____Not true

In thought

Very true_____Not true

5. The client expressed his feelings and thoughts as intergrated, rather than isolated.

Very true_____Not true

After evaluating the client's participation, consider the "how's" and the "what's". How do you know these things? What are the sources of your impressions? What cues or hints did the client give? What did you do to indicate you received them? How did you help to "draw out" the client? How did you cut him off? Did he require encouragement? How did you give it to him? What could you have done to increase his participation? What did you do to increase it? What worked?

Add these impressions to the results obtained from use of the first "score card". Refer to them before your next session with this client.

Notes to Chapter I

[1]Robert Katz, "Counseling, Empathy and the Rabbi", in Rabbinical Counseling, ed. Earl A. Grollman (New York: Bloch Publishing Company 1966), p. 4.

[2]Robert Katz, "The Sociology of the Reform Rabbi's Role Today", in The Role of the Rabbi in Human Relations, ed. Robert Katz (Cincinnati: HUC-JIR 1960), p. 23.

[3]Bernard Kligfeld, "A New Look at Rabbinic Counseling", CCAR Journal 67 (October 1969), p. 59.

[4]Earl A. Grollman, Rabbinical Counseling, p. xv.

[5]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 4.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Robert Katz, ed., "The Rabbi Asks", CCAR Journal 25 (April 1959), p. 51.

[8]Robert Z. Segalman, "Rabbi-Caseworker Co-operation", CCAR Journal 87 (Autumn 1973), p. 26.

[9]Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1966), p. 31.

[10]Julian B. Feibelman, Pastoral Counseling (Richmond: Central Conference of American Rabbis 1952), p. 2.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Grollman, Rabbinical Counseling, p. xiii.

[13]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 2.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual (Garden City: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1967), p. 19.

[18]Felix P. Biestek, S.J., The Casework Relationship (Chicago: Loyola University Press 1957), p. 105.

[19]Robert Katz, ed., "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", CCAR Journal 36 (January 1962), p. 46.

[20]Henry Enoch Kagan, "The Role of the Rabbi in Counseling", CCAR Journal 2 (June 1953), p. 21.

[21]Robert Katz, "Some Criteria in Rabbinical Counseling", in Rabbi in Human Relations, p. 110.

[22]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 19.

[23]Wilford W. Bower, A Dictionary of Pastoral Psychology, ed. Vergilius Ferm (Scranton: Haddon Craftsmen, Inc. 1955), pp. 320-321.

> transference: The term applies to the regard which a counselee, or psychoanalytical patient, has toward the counselor or psychoanalyst. It is patent that during a period of successful analysis, the patient will treat and respond to the analyst in the same manner as he would respond to those responsible for his developed patterns of response from childhood. Wherever the analytical sessions produce freedom, the patient will often regard the analyst as perhaps father one time, mother another time and even as a sibling at the next. Often the responses are "irrational" insofar as the analyst really has acted like one of these persons. As the patient develops, he will express hostilities and loves for these persons to the analyst; the latter, in fact, becomes the hated object, the loved object, the rejector, etc. at various states in the relationship. This transference is to be expected and is, in fact, an essential element in a productive analytical relationship. If transference does not take place, it is likely that the movement in the analytical relationship will be slow, if there be movement at all. It is usually the case that this "transferred" object of feelings makes it possible for the doctor and the patient to see at first hand wherein the roots of these feelings are buried. If the transference is not utilized and permitted to establish a "block," e.g., where a patient regards the analyst so completely as the hated father that he cannot reach a close and understanding relationship with the analyst, then it is felt that transference may be a hindrance. Transference as a part of the success-

ful counselor-counselee relationship must be looked forward to as essential to the outcome; it must, however, serve its role in a balance. See analysis, displacement; psychoanalysis.

[24]Seward Hiltner, The Counselor in Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press 1952), p. 120ff.

[25]Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, p. 55.

[26]Katz, "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", p. 47.

[27]Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, p. 55.

[28]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 3.

[29]Jerome B. Folkman, "Can They Trust Their Rabbis?", CCAR Journal 45 (April 1964), p. 23.

[30]Katz, "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", p. 47.

[31]Kligfeld, "A New Look at Rabbinical Counseling", p. 68.

[32]Katz, "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", p. 45.

[33]Robert Katz, "Some Guideposts in Rabbinical Counseling", in Rabbi in Human Relations, p. 112.

[34]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 8.

[35]Ibid., p. 5.

[36]Rav A. Soloff, Howard M. Newberger and Sidney A. Cohlan, "A Course of Psychology for Religious School", CCAR Journal 65 (April 1969), p. 66.

[37]Katz, in Rabbinical Counseling, p. 5.

[38]Jerome D. Folkman, "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", p. 49.

[39]Katz, "The Rabbi Asks: On Rabbinical Counseling", p. 48.

Notes to Chapter II

[1]Robert Katz, "Some Criteria in Rabbinical Counseling", in Rabbi in Human Relations, p. 111.

[2]James Rosenberg, "Towards a Theology of Rabbinic Counseling", CCAR Journal 66 (June 1969), p. 38.

[3]Ibid., p. 36.

[4]Kligfeld, "A New Look at Rabbinic Counseling", p. 61.

[5]Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality, (New York: John Wiley & Son, Inc. 1957), p. 15.

[6]Ibid., p. 14.

[7]Ibid., p. 15.

[8]Ibid., p. 4.

[9]Rosenberg, "Towards a Theology of Rabbinic Counseling", p. 36.

[10]Robert Katz, "The Rabbi Asks", CCAR Journal 28 (January 1960), p. 46.

[11]Mendel of Kotzk in A Treasury of Jewish Quotations, ed. Joseph L. Baron (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, Inc. 1965), p. 293.

[12]Frank C. Porter, "The Yeçer Hara: A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin", Biblical and Scientific Studies, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons 1901), p. 116.

[13]Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1967), p. 30.

[14]See Stanley M. Davids, "Some Psychological Perspectives of the Rabbinic View of Man" (Rabbinic Thesis, Hebrew Union College 1965).

[15]May, Art of Counseling, p. 51.

[16]Ibid., p. 48.

[17]Ibid., p. 45.

[18]William Glasser. Reality Therapy (New York: Harper & Row 1975), p. 13.

[19]Kagan, "The Role of the Rabbi in Counseling", p. 21.

[20]Nachman Bratzlav in A Treasury of Jewish Quotations, p. 2.

[21]Encyclopedia Judaica, "Repentance" by Jacob Milgrom.

[22]Kagan, "The Role of the Rabbi in Counseling", p. 19.

[23]May, Art of Counseling, p. 28.

[24]Ibid., p. 30.

[25]Kagan, "The Role of the Rabbi in Counseling", p. 19.

[26]For a different approach which arrives at a similar conclusion see Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, p. 28.

[27]Kagan, "The Role of the Rabbi in Counseling", p. 21.

[28]Hans Hofman, Religion and Mental Health (New York: Harper Bros. 1961), p. 154.

Notes to Chapter III

[1]Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company 1961), p. 50.

[2]Ibid., p. 51.

[3]Ibid.

[4]All quotes from Reality Therapy, by William Glasser (New York: Harper & Row 1975), paperback edition. Page numbers directly follow all quotes.

[5]All quotes from Reason in Pastoral Counseling by Paul A. Hauck (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1972). Page numbers directly follow all quotes.

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[5]Ibid., p. 18.

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[9]Gordon Hamilton, "Helping People--The Growth of a Profession" Journal of Social Casework 29 (October 1948), p. 296.

[10]Charlotte Towle, Common Human Needs (New York: American Association of Social Workers 1952), p. 9.

[11]Biestek, The Casework Relationship, p. 35.

[12]Ibid., p. 38.

[13]Ibid., p. 49.

[14]Ibid., p. 50.

[15]Ibid., p. 55.

[16]Ibid., p. 58.

[17]Ibid., p. 72.

[18]Edinburg, Zinberg, and Kelman, Clinical Interviewing, p. 9.

[19]Biestek, The Casework Relationship, p. 92.

[20]Ibid., p. 90.

[21]Ibid., p. 103.

[22]Ibid.. p. 121.

[23]Ibid.. p. 129.

[24]Edinburg, Zinberg, and Kelman, Clinical Interviewing, pp. 30-31.

[25]Ibid., p. 30.

[26]Ibid., p. 31.

[27]In such a situation, the rabbi might begin, "I understand from your call that...", or, "Let me share with you my understanding of the situation...". The rabbi must be careful not to reveal information obtained from other sources--friends, family members, etc.--until the client is comfortable with the idea of the rabbi being privy to intimate knowledge of his situation. To do otherwise violates confidence and may undermine the client's relationships with people who are concerned about him.

[28]Edinburg, Zinberg, and Kelman, Clinical Interviewing, p. 42.

This problem is best dealt with before it arises by setting clear and mutually acceptable limits on the length of the counseling sessions. The rabbi needs to be sure that the client understands and accepts these limits and is willing to abide by them.

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