The Female Rabbi: Redefining the Symbolic Exemplar

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2017 — 5777

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

This thesis is dedicated to all the strong women in the world who work to #smashthepatriarchy each day.

Working from the phrase, "symbolic exemplar," coined by Rabbi Jack Bloom z"l in his 1972 dissertation by the same name, this thesis redefines symbolic exemplarhood after demonstrating how the woman's entrance into the rabbinate changed the field and thus changed how the phrase, "symbolic exemplar" should be understood. Working from the view that gender identity has an impact on the symbolic exemplar model, surveys were sent out to women rabbis ordained between 1990 and 2015 via Facebook, the Women's Rabbinic Network Facebook page, and the Women's Rabbinic Network asking female rabbis to complete a 20–30-minute survey. 117 female-identifying rabbis ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion from 1990-2015 completed the survey. Additionally, five rabbis ordained in that time frame filled out a separate questionnaire that used the same eight questions posited by Bloom during his research to determine how male rabbis understood their role as symbolic exemplars. In using those same questions, I was able to compare the answers of female rabbis today with those of male rabbis from 1972. In limiting the focus of the thesis to the last 25 years, the research does not take into account the insights of the pioneering generation of women rabbis (1972–1989), and instead focuses on women rabbis who were rarely, if ever, firsts in their respective roles. The survey's findings are intended to support women rabbis who may serve for the next 15–35 years as well as those future rabbis not yet ordained. Women have significantly and perhaps profoundly changed the rabbinate from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. This thesis intends to discern how the changed rabbinate appears though the eyes and reflections of women rabbis. May they and we go from strength to strength.

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I. Introduction

A. Rabbi Jack Bloom's Definition of the Symbolic Exemplar

In 2002 Rabbi Jack H. Bloom, Ph.D. (z"l) published *The Rabbi As Symbolic Exemplar: By the Power Vested in Me,* a book rooted in his 1967 doctoral dissertation, "The Pulpit Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar." As predicated in the title, his writing comes to define the rabbi as a "symbolic exemplar," a term that requires significant unpacking. Though he never uses the sentence structure, "a symbolic exemplar can be defined as…" he does provide a number of definitions, examples, and descriptions throughout his book. On one page he writes, "Being a rabbi means being a symbolic exemplar who stands for something other than one's self."[1] Though a broad statement, Bloom's early definition sets the rabbi aside as one, who must live his life thinking of others. The gender pronoun, "his," as related to Bloom's research, is necessary, as his research included only men. Later, he provides further description of the symbolic exemplar:

> It is this symbolic exemplarhood that enables the rabbi to be taken seriously in the first place and the myth that surrounds this symbolic exemplarhood provides much of the rabbinic power to touch individual lives and direction the future of the Jewish community. It is the symbolic exemplarhood which distinguishes the rabbi from the social worker, psychological counselor, or federation executive.[2]

Thus, Bloom sees the rabbi's role as a man set apart from the rest of the congregation, in many ways he is untouchable, and his status continues to grow with his experience. He makes a cyclical statement that the rabbi is taken seriously because of a myth that surrounds his symbolic exemplarhood, which in turn, is what provides him

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[1] Bloom, Jack H. The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar: By the Power Vested in Me. New York: The Haworth Press, 2002. 136.

[2] Ibid.

with rabbinic power that is linked back to his symbolic exemplarhood. Thus, by virtue of the title, the rabbi is given access and power to meet people and form hierarchical relationships. The Jewish-clergy status that comes with the title also leads to a status unattainable to the non-rabbinical individual working in the secular or Jewish community. Indeed, Bloom asserts that the rabbi is, in many ways (though not in all ways at all times), superior to the lay person. Regarding the hierarchy of symbolic exemplarhood, Bloom writes:

> Vertically, rabbis are Symbolic Exemplars of God and are expected to emulate and "stand in" for God. Horizontally, rabbis are Symbolic Exemplars of the Jewish people, enjoined to love and care for every last one. External courage and inner fortitude are demanded in living daily in the world as Symbolic Exemplars and moving forward in that world, with all one's frailties, deficiencies, inadequacies, and wounded "*selves*." The stress and strain of being Symbolic Exemplars, and its weight on their inner life, rabbis know from their everyday "being" in the rabbinate.[3]

Bloom argues that rabbis, by virtue of filling the role of the rabbi, have set themselves apart from the rest of the community in a hierarchical manner, one that makes them appear, and perhaps be, holy. In the Hebrew this is quite fitting as the root, קדש can mean both "set apart" and "holy". Though there are times in the book in which Bloom changes the gender pronouns of the rabbi to female, he wrote his dissertation on the topic five years before Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) ordained their first female rabbi, Sally Preisand, in 1972.

Rabbi Bloom's experience in the rabbinate comes from his specific journey — he was ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1959 and proceeded to serve a small Conservative congregation. What is unknown through scientific research, is whether or not his experience would have differed if he had fulfilled the role of rabbi in

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[3] Ibid., 153.

the Reform Movement. Although he maintained membership in both the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR, Reform) and Rabbinic Assembly (RA, Conservative) one must question whether these movement approach the "rabbi figure" in the same way. Namely, do Conservative Jews have similar or dissimilar expectations and relationships with their rabbis when compared to Reform Jews? Additionally, though his service was significant, it was limited to ten years of congregational work in the same synagogue, Congregation Beth El, a small Conservative synagogue in Connecticut. Perhaps an entire thesis could be written on the expectations of Reform rabbis as compared to those of Conservative rabbis; however, mentioning these elements is a necessary framework for understanding part of the writing composed by Rabbi Bloom. His book was not limited to his personal experience, but he does include such experiences in his work.

Furthermore, his initial dissertation included much more technical and psychological language than that of his later, published book on the same topic. In his doctoral dissertation, Bloom makes many references to various psychologists and their schools of thought as well as sociologists: Freud, Ecks, Booth, Klapp, Murray, Moore, and several others. Perhaps this difference is a result of the respective audiences: He wrote his dissertation for an academic community while he wrote his book for general, popular consumption.

Much of Bloom's research, which was clearly applicable to the lives of many Reform rabbis during the 1970s, as affirmed by the long applause after his speech on the

topic at the 1976 CCAR convention[4] — a claim he makes in his book (but one that cannot be confirmed as the audio recording of this session cuts off before the end), brought to light a significant struggle for men in the rabbinate during his time. His research was unable to account for the experiences of women in the rabbinate, and thus this current thesis, inspired by Bloom's research, sets out to discern how women in the rabbinate relate to the symbolic exemplar paradigm. Working from the hypothesis that female rabbis evince qualitatively different characteristics as symbolic exemplars from male rabbis, we thesis will redefine the phrase "symbolic exemplar" so that it reflects the influence of women on the role of the rabbi. The thesis will work from a survey of female HUC-JIR rabbis, ordained between 1990 and 2015. In limiting my focus to the last 25 years, the research does not take into account the insights of the pioneering generation (1972–1989), but rather seeks to see where we are in present day, and its findings are intended to support women rabbis who may serve for the next 15–35 years.

B. Origins of Rabbinic Authority

The authority of the rabbi has been seen in many facets throughout history, beginning with the early rabbis (*Tannaim*, pre-3rd C. CE) who provided commentary on biblical law and/or details where the biblical text lacked specifics (Oral Torah). The rabbi's role involved resolving disputes, carrying forth legislation, providing non-*halakhic* Biblical exegesis, and advising nonlegal matters.[5] In this stage, the rabbis were often known as "the Sages," (referring to Talmudic Sages) and filled the role of filling in

[4] C-1568 to C-1626. CCAR convention [sound recording], 21-24 June 1976. [AV]

[5] Berger, Rabbinic Authority : The Authority of the Talmudic Sages. 1 edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 18–19.

ellipses in the Biblical narrative and establishing ritual norms. To bolster their authority, the rabbis created the title (and image) of *Moshe Rabbeinu*, our biblical character Moses, as a way of transforming the quintessential prophet into a rabbi himself. Just as Moses interpreted the laws of God, the rabbis claimed to be his heirs of such tasks.

Their time in power as Sages (*Tannaim* and Amoraim) is seen to span from "one or two generations before the Destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. to the death of Ravina and Rav Ashi about 500 C.E."[6] Depending upon the theory in which one approaches their transmissions and the information for which they transmitted, one is then able to piece together the perception of their authority. Their authority ultimately comes from having the knowledge that they pass down to their disciples. At a certain point the Sages stand on two things:

1) Mishnah Avot 1:1's delineation of transmission through *semikhah* (rabbinic ordination)
2) The community who believed them when they said, "because my father said so" or "as my father taught me," when providing their constituents with teachings of Torah.

Whether or not these men fulfilled the role of Sage through creating the literature or transmitting the literature, this element does not affect the role they filled in society at the time of their transmission. Their authority as individuals was upheld by the institutional authority that affiliated itself back into Torah through the text of Deuteronomy: "Choose from each of your tribes men who are wise, discerning, and experienced, and I will appoint them as your heads."[7] Despite this claim of authority, the argument is ultimately cyclical, as Berger explains:

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[6] Berger, 27.

[7] הָבוּ לָכֶם אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וּנְבֹנִים וִידֻעִים לִשְׁבָטֵיכֶם וַאֲשִׂימֵם בְּרָאשֵׁיכֶם

> Logically speaking, justifying their authority requires a theory that excludes them entirely from any of the critical premises of the argument. It is circular to claim that we must obey the Rabbis in their transmission of the Oral Law because it is divinely ordained and at the same time to admit that it is they who claim that this is what the Oral Law says. It would be similar if our inquiry concerned the grounds for obeying God's Torah and we used the Torah's proof of the divinity of the text.[8]

Being a part of the Sanhedrin, and thereby having the authority of that institution required a certain amount of competency and ordination provided an appropriate credential. Through this method of confirmation, the act of ordination and the inclusion of a man into the Sanhedrin gave him the ability to deliver his opinions on communal topics of discussion and debate. The Sanhedrin functioned while the Jews were under Persian and Syrian rule from 333 to 165 BCE and through its very existence furthered the authority for decree and opinion coming from those in its ranks. After the death of one generation, a new generation would arise within the ranks of the Sanhedrin, and they would stand on the shoulders of the previous generation, etc., going back to the textual link of authority. This method allowed them to establish precedent for their opinions (like the U.S. Supreme Court does to this day). The Sanhedrin functioned to provide judicial council in a religious context and functioned as a religious legislative court and council — they were the authority.

In contrast to this approach to the authority of the rabbi, which relates the rabbinate back to the Sages, Simon Schwarzfuchs, a rabbi and professor, offers a different approach — though he starts from a similar premise, rooted in biblical and rabbinic text.

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[8] Berger, 35.

In biblical text, Moses passed his authority through the laying of his hands upon Joshua under God's command in Num. 27:23.[9]

The term "*Rav*" (later "my *rav*," 'rabbi') did not appear until the *mishnaic* literature, like in *Berachot* 10a, where "*Rav*" is used to refer to 'master.' The placing of the hands and the use of this phrase conferred the status of Rav onto an individual. After the destruction of the Second Temple and the resulting elimination of the Priestly class for the purposes of Temple sacrifice, ordination became a necessary part of the institution of Judaism. Without any priestly function in the Temple, the Rabbis became the *de facto* leaders — the authoritative teachers of a Jewish community that revolved around learning. Once the Jews were exiled from the land of Israel by the Romans in 135 C.E. ordination became complicated, as Schwarzfuchs explains:

> The ordained were forbidden to ordain others outside Palestine, even when they had settled there permanently. Since there was no *Semikhah* outside Palestine, when it disappeared there it could not survive anywhere (Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 14a). In consequence, only Palestinian sages were entitled to the title Rabbi. Babylonian scholars who had not been and could not be ordained, had to be satisfied with the title of *Rav*, and the Talmudic literature is very stringently consistent in its use of these two titles.[10]

Those who fulfilled "rabbinic" roles during the exile took on new titles such as *Gaon*, *Resh Galuta*, and *Haver* because *Semikhah* was restricted to *Eretz Yisrael* after Moses and Joshua. The title of "HaRav" resurfaced in the eleventh century, in the time of Rashi, when he referred to Rabbenu Gershom of Mainz in such a fashion.[11] Though the title resurfaced, it took time for the use of the term to obtain widespread use.

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[9] Schwarzfuchs, Simon. A Concise History of the Rabbinate. 1st edition. Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell Pub, 1993. 1.

Other instances occurring in Deut. 34:9 and Num. 11:24–25

[10] Schwarzfuchs, 4.

[11] Schwarzfuchs, 10.

Leaders of the Sanhedrin who traced their line of ordination back to Moses mimicked (Num. 27:23 mentioned above) the laying of hands ritual and used the phrase "*yoreh yoreh; yadin yadi*n" as the means of ordaining future rabbis. The phrase translates to, "he is authorized to teach; he is authorized to judge," or "May he teach? He will teach. May he judge? He will judge."[12] Fully ordained by Rabbi Yehudah with both benedictions of *yoreh yoreh* and *yadin yadin*, this phrase defines the bounds of rabbinic authority during the second-century CE for *Rabbah bar Chanah*.[13] Despite leading in diaspora, this declaration was used to affirm *Rabbah*'s authority. First and foremost, a *rav* is a teacher. *Rav*, as a title for what we know today as a "rabbi," came much later than *rav* as "teacher." Later, *HaRav* came about in the eleventh century Rhineland region out of a development from the medieval Jewish community, and thus *HaRav* separated the title to firmly mean "rabbi" instead of "teacher." [14]

There were two popular paths to obtaining the title of "Rav." On the one hand, a man could become a *Rav* by demonstrating his knowledge of law and text; and, after demonstrating his knowledge, elder *rabbanim* could elect him to receive the title. On the other hand, a man could obtain the title through the receipt of a certificate and/or appointment by a teacher.[15] After the Black Death and the expulsion of Jews from France in 1394, the delineation of who qualified as a rabbi came into question given the chaotic

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[12] Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 5a

[13](2016-06-14). The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate (CCAR Challenge and Change Series) (Kindle Location 2786). CCAR Press. Kindle Edition.

[14] Schwarzfuchs ,12.

[15] Schwarzfuchs, 29.

times. Additionally, a lack of institutions led to the revival and reappearance of *Semikhah* as the signature for ordination. Those ordained received the new title of *Moreinu ha-Rav*.[16] Although *Moreinu ha-Rav* represented an official title, the hierarchical value of the title was dependent upon who bestowed the newly minted Rav — the more prestigious the bestower, the greater the prestige of the title.

Regarding the reinstitution of the *Semikhah*, one Sage held that no such thing truly existed. Judah ben Barzilai of Barcelona, writer of the *Sefer ha-Shtarot* wrote:

> ...Today, when there is no *Semikhah* [ordination] outside of the Holy Land, the rabbinic court or the elders of the community can write...an ordaining letter for one of the students who are worthy of receiving ordination or an appointment. This does not matter, because it does not resemble the [ancient] *Semikhah*. This is absolutely not a *Semikhah*, but only a semblance and a memorial of the *Semikhah*, so that the students will adopt the ways of the Sages, and will climb slowly in the ranks and degree of wisdom and its uses.[17]

In this view, the use of the term "*Semikhah*" was only a tribute to the *Semikhah* that died at the end of the fourth century. In other words, this new title looked and sounded like the old title, but instead was just a place-marker rather than a revival of the actual intention of the word. Other scholars argued the opposite — that the distribution of *Semikhah* was, in fact, a continuation of the original act rather than a revival of a tradition with the same title functioning as only a place-marker.

The rabbinate filled the role of providing a leadership for figure for various communities. This call for leadership resulted in a struggle for authority between lay-leaders and the office of the rabbi. This tension — between lay-leadership and clergy —

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[16] Schwarzfuchs, 31.

[17] Judah ben Barzilai, Sefer ha-Shetarot (Berlin, 1898), 133.

As found in Schwarzfuchs, 31.

still exists in some congregations today. The *Shiva tovei ha-Ir*, "the seven good men of the city" (even if there were fewer or more than seven) functioned as the lay-leaders' "board." During the early Middle Ages communities selected wealthy men with strong community ties to fill those lay-leadership roles.[18]

Like the authority derived by the Sages, Schwarzfuchs' approach to the authority of the rabbi delineated that the rabbinate:

> ...Had to combine considerable expertise in Jewish law with the community's express agreement to accept its religious and judicial leadership. A well-deserved rabbinic title gained through ordination, in conjunction with election to a rabbinic seat by a community, made one a rabbi.[19]

In Medieval France, the rabbi's role was territorial, and it involved being the rabbi of a city (and only later, the rabbi of a synagogue). Throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, lay-leaders and rabbis held conflicting visions for Jewish life; however, lay-leaders provided the rabbi with ample space in the arena of ritual.[20]

In parts of Europe (i.e.,Austria, but not the Rhineland), the rabbi received a tax exemption.[21] As those currently in the rabbinate are aware, rabbis in the United States receive a parsonage allowance as clergy people. This modern day allowance helps to lower a rabbi's income-tax category by allowing them to exclude from their annual income the rental value of their home, their mortgage interest, property taxes, etc.[22] In some communities back in Europe, a tax exemption functioned as payment. However, in

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[18] Schwarzfuchs, 13.

[19] Schwarzfuchs, xi.

[20] Schwarzfuchs, 19.

[21] Schwarzfuchs, 18.

[22] "Tax Topics - Topic 417 Earnings for Clergy." Tax Topics - Topic 417 Earnings for Clergy. IRS, 10 Oct. 2016. Web. 18 Dec. 2016. <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc417.html>.

the days of Maimonides, who worked as a physician in addition to being a rabbi, he would not accept payment for rabbinical work, as he saw this as a profanation of God's name (accepting money for studying/teaching Torah). Other communities decided that rabbis deserved compensation for their work because their time spent serving the community as rabbis meant that they were unable to hold a steady job to provide them with stable income. The latter became a widely accepted understanding, adopted across most European Jewish communities.

The rabbinate lost much of its prestige after communities "professionalized and salaried" the rabbinic position.[23] The professionalization of the rabbinate, evidenced by the rabbinic contract, the earliest of which dates to 1575 of rabbi Man Todros of Friedberg, Germany, can be summarized as follows: The contract began with a stipulation that the rabbi remain in the community for four years. He held limited authority regarding excommunications and warnings, as the rabbi was unable to make these decisions without the community's approval. Communities paid the rabbi 12 gulden a year, and he did not pay taxes. He received a gulden for a marriage and one for supporting his students. He received funds surrounding the *ketubah* as a form of a retainer. He received payment for sitting on the Jewish court (*beit din*). If the rabbi taught Kabbalah, he received a retainer. He received six shillings from drafting a *Gittin*. Hosts provided the rabbi with food and drink when he attended a festive meal. He could moderate disputes, but permitted parties to bring matters to a court if need be. With the help of the community collectors, the rabbi collected money from the community. Finally, the rabbi,

[23] Schwarzfuchs, 19.

as head of a court, could not change a community's custom without approval from the community board. The contract clearly demonstrates that the rabbi held limited authority — which meant that the contract's keepers, the lay-leadership, maintained much of the power in the community. The rabbi was an employee of the Jewish community.

By the sixteenth century, with a greater acceptance of rabbis, rabbis started to appear in surplus, and thus more contracts began to surface. The contract of Rabbi Asher Loeb of Metz, France in 1765 looked similar to that of Rabbi Man Todros of Friedberg, Germany, though significantly longer, Rabbi Loeb's contract listed twenty-three distinct points as compared to the thirteen points of Todros' contract.

By the eighteenth century, the rabbi had a distinguished profile. He was to preach often, and he monopolized the public preaching space. The rabbi acted as judge and headed the rabbinic court, and he was trusted in matters having to do with money.[24] He taught both in services and in general courses. In short, he was the *Mara de-Atra*, the master of his town.[25] The title, *Mara de-Atra*, did not necessarily provide him with complete authority. For example, if he worked in a large city he might face conflict from the head of the yeshivah, but if he worked in a small town as the only rabbi, then his authority would be more absolute and people would look to him as the authority of Jewish law in their community. Although afforded many privileges and authoritative positions, like representing the community when meeting with the city's Christians, they

[24] Schwarzfuchs, 54.

[25] Schwarzfuchs, 54–55.

restricted the rabbi regarding the distribution of the title *Haver* or *Moreinu* — distributing this title required approval from the community council.[26]

The authority of the rabbinate continued to evolve. When France was under the rule of Napoléon Bonaparte in 1807, Napoléon attempted to revive the Great Sanhedrin as a way of solidifying Jewish loyalty toward France. He brought before them twelve questions concerned with the Jews' ability to integrate into French life and support France. He asked about Jews marrying Christians, whether or not their laws of marriage aligned with French law, and what type of conduct Jewish law prescribes toward non-Jews in France. Nappoléon's hoped to assimilate the Jews of France, but ultimately the rabbis told Napoléon what he wanted to hear and kept their true intentions to themselves.

On 17 March 1808, Napoléon issued a decree regarding the expectations for rabbis. The rabbi should: teach religion and the decisions of the Sanhedrin; mind the laws of the land; teach his constituents the importance of serving in the military; preach in the synagogue and pronounce prayers for the Emperor and the Imperial Family; perform marriages and decree divorces *after* the performance of a civil marriage or divorce.[27] In France, judgments remained in the civil courts, and the rabbi had no control or power over territory. Instead, the rabbi focused on the realm of morality while the *yadin, yadin*, the judgment aspect of his ordination, was almost entirely eliminated. When those seeking advice came to him, he no longer had any control over whether or not they

[26] Schwarzfuchs, 57.

[27] Schwarzfuchs, 84.

followed his advice, as he was no longer able to excommunicate someone for failing to uphold his ruling — a sign of lost power and authority for the rabbi.

After Napoleon's power came to an end after Waterloo and he abdicated on 22 June 1815, many of the Jewish communities in Europe recognized that with their newfound freedoms, they could change the tides of the rabbinate. The early 1800s became the opportune time to create rabbinical seminaries.

The first rabbinical school, Istituto Convitto Rabbinico, opened in Padova in 1829.[28] With the granting of equal rights as citizens — individual rights and freedoms; but the Jews suffered a loss of class/group status. In 1831 France also worked toward opening a rabbinical school. Though the opening of a rabbinical school did not transpire smoothly, The Central Consistory of France stepped in and incorporated a new aspect to rabbinical studies in 1839: preachers. Dissatisfied with this attempted shift, as they feared courses on preaching would forever alter the role of the rabbi, the early rabbis dissented.[29] Despite their dissatisfaction, this French influence came to be the impetus for a major shift in the rabbinate. Next, the Dutch seminary, Nederlandsch Israelitisch Seminarium in Amsterdam opened its doors, though the date is unclear. Historians do know that the initiative for the seminary's creation came from a royal decree in 1826.[30] In November of 1855 the Dutch seminary, The Jews' College in London laid their foundation.

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[28] Schwarzfuchs, 88.

[29] Schwarzfuchs, 92.

[30] Schwarzfuchs, 93.

The trends in Germany differed. Many of the Talmudic schools in Prague, Frankfurt, Altona-Hamburg, Furth, and Halderstadt declined throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the Enlightenment in full swing, Abraham Geiger brought a new message of the changing rabbi that led to the start of another seminary:

> There seems to be no worse situation today than that of a rabbi. As a result of the revolution in [our] circumstances and the state of education, the contemporary rabbi cannot satisfy himself with the knowledge of the Talmud and the rabbinic writings, and his activity does not limit itself to the solution of casuistic problems which have been submitted to him. The rabbi must nowadays be intimate with biblical research, he must acquire a large philological knowledge, which is necessary for any scholar, he must know the Talmud in its historical development and also be able to express himself on it in a scientific way, he must understand the necessary ways of religious instruction...because he is now a minister of religion...[31]

Many of the rabbis of Germany gathered three times between 1844 and 1846 to discuss the changing tides of German Judaism.[32] During these conferences schisms formed and rabbis either embraced the reform of Judaism or they preached the rejection of such changes. In 1854, Zacharias Frankel, a well-known rabbi in attendance of these meetings called for the created of yet another new seminary.[33] His proposal for the seminary's curriculum included:

> The Holy script and its exegesis, including the Targumim (Aramaic Bible translations), Hebrew and Aramaic; geography of Palestine;
> Historical and methodological introduction to the Mishna and the Talmud;
> Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud;
> Classical languages and realia;
> History of Judaism in relation to the history of Jewish literature;
> Midrash;
> Religious philosophy and ethics according to Jewish sources;
> Ritual (Talmudic) practice;
> The spirit of the Mosaic criminal and civil law with particular emphasis on the Mosaic-Talmudic family law;
> Pedagogy and catechesis;

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[31] Abraham Geiger, Ueber die Errichtung einer jüdisch-theologischen Facultät (Wiesbaden, 1838), 12–13, 33. As found in Schwarzfuchs, 98.

[32] Schwarzfuchs, 99.

[33] Schwarzfuchs,100.

Homiletics[34]

Such a curriculum is still emphasized in rabbinical schools today. This particular seminary opened its doors in 1854 and ran until the outbreak of WWII in 1938. A curriculum designed like this stood on the expectation that the rabbis produced would have the capacity to carry authoritative knowledge in the topics, with an emphasis on their continued study and further learning. The addition of pedagogy, catechesis, and homiletics to a traditionally text-based *yeshivah* model signaled the shifting role of the rabbi to be more than an encyclopedia of Jewish law, but to be knowledgeable in other aspects of synagogue and communal Jewish life as well.

In America, after the first attempt at a rabbinical seminary, Maimonides College, which opened in 1867 only to close closed in 1873, Isaac M. Wise along with the Union for American Hebrew Congregations, helped create the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in 1875. HUC remained the only institution training liberal rabbis until Rabbi Stephen Wise opened the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1922 (the two would later merge in 1950). The Jewish Theological Seminary opened in 1887, though they did not produce "liberal" rabbis at the time. After the Pittsburgh Platform,[35] American Judaism split into two groups with Reform on one side and all other "Judaisms" on the other. As such, JTS originally began as an Orthodox Seminary. In 1913, Solomon Schechter founded the United Synagogue of America to bolster the seminary and provide rabbis for

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[34] Schwarzfuchs, 101.

[35] "Declaration Of Principles - The Pittsburgh Platform." Central Conference of American Rabbis. CCAR, 27 Oct. 2004. Web. 27 Dec. 2016. <https://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/platforms/declaration-principles/>.

Conservative synagogues which led to JTS's affiliation with the Conservative movement.[36,37]

Thus, for America's non-Orthodox rabbis, the completion of a rabbinic seminary was necessary to obtain ordination and rabbinic authority. Although HUC-JIR and JTS ordained rabbis serving non-Orthodox communities, their claim to the line of tradition remained. The founders of these institutions studied at Orthodox *yeshivot* and received the textual knowledge and training of those who remained in the Orthodox realm. In their view, they passed on the tradition through the same line that reached Moses and in the same way that other rabbis continued that tradition.

There is no exact moment in time that can be undeniably confirmed as the moment that the rabbi received authority. However, there are definitive shifts in history that led to the changing role of the man and his title. Back to the passing of the great title through the hands of Moses, to the need for the community to shift its focus from the Temple sacrifices to diaspora Judaism, the role of the leader, the *rav*, changed. Changing tides in medieval times led to new delineations for who qualified as a rabbi and the communities' need for a rabbinic figure meant that rabbis held authority within their geography. Once a community had a rabbi that they liked, they began to fear that he would have to busy himself with work to earn a living rather than attend to his duties as a rabbi. As such, they recognized a need to pay him for his services, and thus the

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[36] Schwarzfuchs, 114.

[37] Later "liberal" institutions include: The Zeigler School of Rabbinic Studies (Conservative), Hebrew College (non-denominational), Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (Reconstructionist), Aleph (Renewal), Academy for Jewish Religion (AJR).

professionalization of the rabbinate began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[38] The professionalization of the rabbinate led the community's view of him to decline and conflict with lay-leadership increased. Such conflict led to the development of rabbinic contracts, the oldest of which, as previously mentioned, has been dated to 1575.[39] Through the next three centuries, rabbinic authority continued to ebb and flow based on geography and relations with the secular government. The 1700s saw the introduction of *Hasidut* under the Baal Shem Tov as his movement battled against the *Mitnagdim* of Eastern Europe. *Hasidut* made Judaism accessible to more Jews by making the religion less academic, more joyful, and more emotional, while the *Mitnagdim* still functioned under a hierarchical structure of learning. As the Enlightenment followed, more Jews turned away from traditional and superstitious practices and began looking for a Judaism that fit their newly enlightened (and heavily assimilated) lifestyles. None of this happened overnight or in distinct stages; rather these shifts happened gradually as Judaism and the world evolved.

Jumping forward to the 1900s, for non-Orthodox Jews to keep up with the changing trends, seminaries developed into the only path to ordination for non-Orthodox rabbis — as the institutions provided the legitimization and approval of rabbinic authority. Synagogues trusted HUC and JIR to produce rabbis who were capable of fulfilling their needs. As Schwarzfuchs wrote of the rabbi in the early 1990s:

> Today the rabbi's authority has become essentially personal. Each rabbi has to prove himself to his community, which expects him to do wonders by fighting practically alone

[38] Schwarzfuchs, 17.

[39] Schwarzfuchs, 19.

> against religious indifference and lax standards of religious practice: he is the professional, hired and salaried to accomplish this mission. He will, of course, be made responsible for most of the ills that plague modern Judaism. There exists no bibliography of the rabbinate, but it would be quite easy to compile a rich one dealing with the advice and counsel given to rabbis.[40]

Though his statement discounts the entrance of women into the rabbinate for over twenty years, the rabbi of today is not the rabbi of the shtetl life in Europe — and the rabbi of today is not the rabbi of the 1950s or 60s either. Though the role of the rabbi changed and continues to change, the rabbi's authority has shifted as well. For the Reform Movement, which prizes on personal autonomy, the rabbi may feel restricted in many areas surrounding individual observance, but that does not prevent him or her from taking stances within the synagogue or organization for which they serve. In that way, the rabbi's authority is strong, but it is only as strong as the employers, leaders, partners, or volunteers allow it to be. The rabbi of today is being trained by HUC-JIR to encounter many, though not all, of these new developments in the changing Jewish community by offering professional development courses in addition to the traditional text courses. Students can learn about fundraising, budgeting, leadership styles, human relations, clinical pastoral education, and many other aspects of being a rabbi — courses added to the seminary curriculum long after its inception.

One of the latest shifts in the changing role of the rabbi has come about as a product of the entrance of women into the rabbinate. Though the initial policy change appeared in 1923 under a faculty vote, no ordination of a woman occurred in America until 1972.[41] Women's roles in the congregation had already been shifting for years. As

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[40] Schwarzfuchs, 146.

[41] The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate (CCAR Challenge and Change Series) (Kindle Location 1538). CCAR Press. Kindle Edition.

early as the 1840s, women fulfilled educational roles in the synagogue, and their opportunities continued to expand with the emergence of the family pew in the 1860s and 1870s where men and women could sit and pray together. In the late 1880s, the first Sisterhood formed at New York's Reform Temple Emanu-El and became a national movement of Temple Sisterhoods in 1913. After women received the right to vote in America in 1920, women pushed their synagogues to allow room for women's involvement, leadership opportunities, and voting. The first *bat mitzvah* honored the daughter of Mordecai Kaplan, Judith Kaplan, in 1922. The secular feminism of the 1960s pushed women in the Jewish community to demand equal treatment in their synagogue roles (like eliminating the idea that women are not obligated to time-bound *mitzvot*, counting them in the *minyan*, and adapting marriage laws).[42] With increased visibility in synagogue life, it was only a matter of time before one of these committed women would make an effort to enter the historically male field of the rabbinate and the men in power would yield to the cogency of her argument.

C. Survey/Questionnaire Methodology

For the purposes of this thesis, a survey[43] was created to gather information from women ordained by HUC-JIR between 1990 and 2015 (inclusive). I decided to limit the survey to women ordained in the last 25 years in order to learn from those women who entered the rabbinate after women were already being ordained for almost twenty years.

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[42] Goldman, Karla. "Sharing StoriesInspiring Change." Reform Judaism in the United States | Jewish Women's Archive. Jewish Women's Archives, n.d. Web. 18 Dec. 2016. <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/reform-judaism-in-united-states>.

[43] The Survey instrument is available in full in Appendix A.

These women have all served in the rabbinate during my lifetime, and I wanted to learn and grow from their experiences. Although important, and the foundation on which later women became rabbis, the experiences of women ordained in the 1970s and 1980s may greatly differ from those ordained in the 1990s and 2000s. This, in and of itself, is a topic that deserves its own research focus. However, in evaluating answers from the most recently ordained rabbis, I will learn the current trends of those who will continue to be in the field for another fifteen to forty years. Women ordained in the 1970s are beginning to retire and those ordained in 1980s will begin to retire in the next five to ten years.

The survey was divided into five parts: 1) Personal Ritual Objects 2) Leadership and Power 3) Image 4) Personal Status 5) *Mikveh*. Prior to these sections, participants were asked for their ordination year, name, past positions, years spent working full-time or part-time, and a request for e-mail or phone number for further inquiry. Every question for the survey was set-up to be optional except for the ordination year. Providing room for anonymity and the freedom to skip questions was done with the hope that participants would feel comfortable being as honest and open as possible. Additionally, participants were able to select multiple answers and comment on almost every multiple choice question. In general, the survey was composed of "select all that apply" questions, short answer, and essay questions.

After the first draft of the survey was completed, three female rabbis took the time to look through the questions and provided feedback to improve the inclusivity and warmth of the survey. After these additions and corrections were made, the survey was posted on the Facebook page of the Women's Rabbinic Network by me, directly, and onto

the Central Conference of American Rabbis Facebook Page by a current CCAR member. Additionally, the survey was posted directly on my Facebook page with requests for people to share the link and to tag rabbis who were eligible to fill-out the form. This led to 117 responses out of a possible 467.[44] The survey link was also given to the Women's Rabbinic Network president to be added to the end-of-summer e-mail to all members of the WRN. Each of the six sections was framed with an introductory paragraph, the goal of which was to explain the reason for asking questions in these specific categories. Here are the six introductory paragraphs to the survey questions:

Personal Ritual Objects

"For some women, the demand for women to don *tallitot* and *t'fillin* indicates that women must in effect become men, by wearing male garb, in order to empower themselves as Jews. Others believe that *tallitot* and *t'fillin* are the garb of the Jew, and simply because women have not, by and large, had access to this meaningful ritual attire in the past does not mean that they should not wear it now, any more than they would decline to wear judge's robes or surgical scrubs because women came late to the professions of medicine and law."[45] With this complex context mind, I am seeking to gather information on choices of personal ritual objects for female rabbis to better understand how female rabbis approach head-covering, *tallit*, and *t'fillin*.

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[44] According to Robert Covtiz, Manager of Institutional Research & Assessment at HUC-JIR.

[45] Goldstein, Elyse, ed. New Jewish Feminism: Probing the Past, Forging the Future. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009, 70.

Leadership and Power

"In 1983, Rabbi Laura Geller wrote about her own experiences: she found that 'people don't attribute to women the power and prestige that they often attribute to men.' And from that observation, she derived the following conclusions: 'When women become rabbis or priests, there is often less social distance between the congregant and the clergy.' As a result, 'the lessening of social distance and the reduction of the attribution of power and status leads to the breakdown of hierarchy within a religious institution.' Thus, she argues, female participation had the effect (and, presumably, continues to have the effect) of redefining congregational life [and I would add, non-congregational life] in more democratic and egalitarian terms."[46] The answers to these questions will help me to better understand the dynamics of being a female in a leadership position.

Image

Our texts demonstrate our tradition's emphasis on dress (such as the text of *Parashat Tetzaveh*), especially as it relates to the priestly class. These garments provide the class with a certain status and role in the community. As such, we have had ties to external garments since our inception. Though the garments have changed, dress still provides meaningful insight into the leadership of the Jewish community. Like the leadership of the priests, the role of the rabbi often involves a place at the front of the community. With this privileged position comes many choices afforded to the female rabbi regarding her image, i.e., clothing, hair, nails, shoes, makeup, ritual objects.

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[46] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Location 7094.

Personal Status

Historically, the community valued a male rabbi whose spouse (until recently this has only been a wife) was very involved in the life of the congregation. I am seeking to find out how this has shifted with female rabbis and their spouses both in synagogue life and other roles of the contemporary female rabbi.

Motherhood

"Indeed, as I have become a rabbi, so too I have become a mother. Just as both roles are challenging, so too are they incredibly gratifying. Since the inception of my career, I have tried to forge a path that accommodates both motherhood and the rabbinate, a path that, theoretically, allows me to be the kind of mother I want to be and the kind of rabbi I'd like to be. And for me, these worlds are inextricably linked, not seamlessly by any means, but in some kind of patchwork fashion." With these words in mind, I seek to better understand how pregnancy and/or having children affects women in the rabbinate today.

Mikveh

In recent years, organizations like *Mayyim Hayyim*[47] have reclaimed the use of the *mikveh* for Liberal streams of Judaism. As a piece of one of the three historical mitzvot obligated to women, I am seeking to discover if female rabbis, in particular, have begun to incorporate this ritual back into their personal lives and those of their congregants/ communities.

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[47] "Mayyim Hayyim." | Mayyim Hayyim. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http:// www.mayyimhayyim.org/>.

The above introductory paragraphs provided a framework for the survey participants as they endeavored to answer the questions. The survey, was designed to take approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, I received feedback that the survey took closer to 30 or 45 minutes for those rabbis who chose to write in great detail. The information gathered from the survey proved to be a formative piece of this thesis and will be elaborated on in greater detail below.

Survey Responses

Of the 117 women who responded to the survey, I received 26 responses for those ordained between 1990–1999, 53 responses from those ordained between 2000–2009, and 38 from those ordained between 2010–2015. The number of potential respondents was 467,[48] which yielded a 25% response.

After obtaining a copy of Rabbi Bloom's 1972 thesis, which was the impetus for his later book, I reviewed the methodology for his work. An entire chapter of which focused on the "study of laymen's symbolic expectations of rabbis," a topic that I did not seek to research in terms of a survey or interview.

Bloom's procedures for study were: "Rabbis' experience of themselves as symbolic exemplars; rabbis' participation in maintaining their status as symbolic exemplars; laymen's participant in maintaining the rabbi as a symbolic exemplar." Outside of the introduction to my survey, I did not ask the women to reflect on their experience of seeing themselves as symbolic exemplars, nor their participation in maintaining that status, at least not overtly. Instead, I asked questions in the survey that

[48] According to Robert Covtiz, Manager of Institutional Research & Assessment at HUC-JIR.

would produce information that I could apply to others forms of research for the purposes of supporting my hypothesis. Since I seek to define what it means to be a symbolic exemplar, using the terminology in the platform of a survey would have been unhelpful, misleading, and even undermine the purpose of this thesis.

A second major point of differentiation was that Bloom based his research on the interviews of five Reform rabbis and five Conservative rabbis (who were of course all male). I did not ask for age in my survey, though Bloom did, and the mean age was 42, with all of the men being married to women and having at least one child.

In light of Rabbi Bloom's method of research and in addition to the general survey, I decided to select nine women, ordained in 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2014 to answer the same questions Rabbi Bloom posed. Afterwards, I used the HUC-JIR database to select, at random, women to e-mail who were ordained in these years and appeared to be working in a congregational context at this time. Although the database was not up-to-date, I confirmed the rabbi's current placements through their synagogue websites. Since Rabbi Bloom's survey participants were working in congregational positions I decided to match this criteria. Unfortunately, only 5 of the 20 women I contacted responded to the survey, so my ability to apply those responses in broad terms was limited. However, I thought this meant that I could compare the results of the 5 women who completed my survey with the 5 Reform rabbis interviewed by Bloom, but Bloom did not distinguish which answers came from Conservative rabbis and which came from Reform rabbis. Thus, I decided to pull general trends from all of the

responses articulated in Bloom's dissertation on these questions. My questions were as follows:

1) Name
2) Year Ordained
3) Age
4) Number of Congregations Served
5) Willingness for follow-up contact
6) What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to you?
7) What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to the average laypeople in your own congregation?
8) Are their problems that you experience in "being a rabbi?"
9) How do you handle the problems that you experience in "being a rabbi?"
10) What are the things you *must* do in order to remain a "rabbi" in your own eyes?
11) What are the things you *must* do in order to remain a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?
12) What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in your own eyes?
13) What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?

I contacted each rabbi via e-mail and requested answers to be submitted through the Google Form by September 29, 2016. When I did not receive enough answers in the first round I sent out 10 more e-mails and received no responses. The results of this intensive survey will be unpacked in the concluding section of this thesis.

D. Gender Identification

At the outset of the research for this work, a few choices had to be made regarding the focal point of the thesis. I made choices so that I could cover a topic in the broadest sense possible. This meant that individuals who identify as non-gender conforming may have had difficulty in filling out a survey requesting responses from female rabbis. Similarly, rabbis who identify as female but suffer discrimination from

gender non-conformity may have found it difficult to respond to much of the survey and therefore opted not to fill it out. An entire thesis on rabbis who do not feel they fit into one single-gendered category could and should be written, and thus it is worth acknowledging that their voices may be unheard in this particular thesis.

When I use feminine terms in this paper, what do they include? The intended definition of "female" was not to be limited to cis-gender women, but rather to be inclusive of all rabbis who identify as female. Gender identity has become a topic of mainstream media, conversation, and sociological and psychological research. With regard to the rabbinate, questions arise as to how much gender should be acknowledged, especially in the Reform Movement, which, from its inception, has sought to find ways to make Judaism egalitarian. However, such a call has also brought to light questions as to what happens to gender when everyone is equal, and what does equal mean in a religious space historically reserved for men? Is raising women up as equals in prayer spaces only an invitation for them to join a normatively male space? Does portraying God as male lead to a continued pursuit of patriarchal dominance in a stream of Judaism that attempts to be inclusive of both gender conforming and non-gender conforming individuals?

As Rabbi Kari Hofmaister Tuling, Ph.D. writes in her chapter, "Shifting the Focus of Women Rabbis and Developments in Feminist Theology" in *The Sacred Calling*, there are two possibilities related to gender and God:

> ...Either (1) masculine language reinforces patriarchy and therefore should be balanced, corrected, or replaced; or (2) the masculine language is a by-product of patriarchy and will evolve as patriarchal systems give way to egalitarian ones; our language will naturally evolve in response to deeper societal change.

The female rabbi who brings these issues forward may be seen as overly sensitive, on a mission, or otherwise on a feminist rant. Alternatively, perhaps her congregation is ready to hear these issues, and they sympathize with her, acknowledging that she is correct in identifying an implicit bias that deserves addressing and has the training to speak as a theologian. When a male rabbi shares these words, a different message might be heard, which is why we also need strong male voices to promote these types of feminist questions and strive to break down gender barriers.

God's gender is relevant to the role of the female rabbi because of the image a congregant experiences when seeing a woman calling out to God with male pronouns or seeing a man calling out to a God with female pronouns. The famous line by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, which circulated in a viral nature, help solidify this conclusion: "...And when I'm sometimes asked when will there be enough [women on the Supreme Court]? And I say when there are nine, people are shocked. But there'd been nine men, and nobody's ever raised a question about that."[49] Female rabbis everywhere may have screamed aloud or in their heads, "exactly!" as they quote spread like wildfire across social media. Although less common among the female rabbis ordained after 1990, almost everyone has heard someone say, "I did not know women could be rabbis," and perhaps fewer have heard, "Oh, I was looking for *the* rabbi." Both are products of a changing norm. It was the norm for the Supreme Court to be made up entirely of men,

[49] "When Will There Be Enough Women on the Supreme Court? Justice Ginsburg Answers That Question." PBS. PBS, n.d. Web. 18 Dec. 2016. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/will-enough-women-supreme-court-justice-ginsburg-answers-question/>.

just as it was the norm for only men to be rabbis. Thus as one relates gender to the rabbi, again there are two main possibilities to be raised:

> (1) The rabbi's gender matters, for a woman's lived experiences will be fundamentally different from those of her male counterparts, as will her relationship to the congregation;
>
> (2) the rabbi's gender does not matter, and we should move past gender and focus on capabilities; talking in terms of gender only reinforces the false notion of a fundamental difference between the genders.

I have come to agree with the first point rather than the latter, that gender does matter, and that the experience of being a woman in the 20th and 21st century has influenced how people see them as rabbis and how they see themselves as well. I will unpack how I came to this conclusion in the following section.

II. Uniqueness of the Female Rabbi

A. Image

If a rabbi wants her rabbinate to be perceived with gravitas and respect, she must dress the part. Thinking about the image she wants to project should inform what she wears, since communicating her role visually is as important as her auditory communication. What she looks like has an impact before she even opens her mouth. She should spend time and consideration creating her outfits and complementary accessories, just as she devotes thought and effort to writing a sermon. Far from being frivolous, this is holy work, part of creating and maintaining a sense of the sacred, of celebrating God's presence in her own life and being as well as in the lives of the Jewish people she serves.[50]

When someone asks you to think of a rabbi, what is the image that pops into your head? Is it your current rabbi? Does the figure look more like a *hasid*? Is it a man? Is it a woman? Is the image of an androgynous individual? Are they wearing a suit, dress, a *kippah*, a *tallit*, a head-wrap, heels, dress shoes, or makeup? Is their hair long or short? Do you expect them to dress a certain way all of the time or only in certain contexts? Our tradition's emphasis on image and dress connects back to our biblical writings. *Parashat Tetzaveh* (Ex. 27:20–30:10) is almost entirely dedicated to the dress of the priestly class — with exacting detail regarding garments, colors, fabric, etc. The clothing worn by the priests symbolized their role in the community as not only a prestigious class but also one considered to be separate from the community and close to God through their work in the *Mishkan* and later the Temple. Like the leadership of the priests, the rabbi often finds himself/herself at the front of the community. This privileged position comes with many choices regarding the image projected by the rabbi. However, the standards and expectations for men and women have historically been a controversial issue, especially in secular society, which has flowed over into our religious world.

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[50] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Locations 11875-11879.

i. Clothing

For example, an Australian newscaster, Karl Stefanovic tested the standards of fashion for men and women after becoming frustrated by the criticism that his female co-host constantly faced from viewers due to her fashion choices. For one entire year, he wore the same blue suit and found that no one scrutinized his appearance or made a single comment for the entire year. His personal conclusion: "I'm judged on my interviews, my appalling sense of humor — on how I do my job…Whereas women are quite often judged on what they're wearing and how their hair is."[51] By judging women on the superficial elements of their outward appearance and subjecting them to standards not placed upon men we limit their ability to grow personally and to progress societally.

The image of women in power has been amplified to be a part of the national discourse due to the inclusion of Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's position in the 2016 presidential campaign. When one does a Google search of "Hillary Clinton's dress choices" and then does a search of "Donald Trump's dress choices," the results differ dramatically. The Clinton results produce pages and pages about her dress choices, the costs, her fashion dos and don'ts, etc. While the results from the Donald Trump search yield more references to his wife, Melania, and her choices than they do to his. His search produces fewer than ten substantive articles about his clothing choices while Secretary Clinton's search results in hundreds, maybe even thousands of "relevant" hits.

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[51] Prisco, Joanna. "Newscaster Karl Stefanovic Wore Same Suit for a Year, No One Noticed." ABC News. ABC News Network, 17 Nov. 2014. Web. 17 Nov. 2016. <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/newscaster-wore-suit-year-noticed/story?id=26972399>.

One of the most stirring articles I came across, published by the Washington Post, detailed an outfit choice by Hillary Clinton when she was a Senator on the Senate floor. The article, entitled, "Hillary Clinton's Tentative Dip Into New Neckline Territory," was entirely dedicated to the small amount of cleavage shown to the world on C-SPAN2 one afternoon. On this topic, the female author concluded:

> Showing cleavage is a request to be engaged in a particular way. It doesn't necessarily mean that a woman is asking to be objectified, but it does suggest a certain confidence and physical ease. It means that a woman is content being perceived as a sexual person in addition to being seen as someone who is intelligent, authoritative, witty and whatever else might define her personality. It also means that she feels that all those other characteristics are so apparent and undeniable, that they will not be overshadowed.[52]

When the author says, "It means that a woman is content being perceived as a sexual person," there is a bit of a dichotomy here. Humans are all sexual beings, and although the mainstream culture of America encourages the reservation of sexuality for private matters we never stop being sexual beings, biologically speaking.[53] At the same time, mainstream culture sends a different message when it fills television screens with shows and advertisements that regularly objectify the body.

Regarding the article's criticism of the shirt, I am left wondering what other aspects of clothing would produce this kind of reaction — does tight, modestly cut clothing evoke the same calls for objectification? What is the spectrum of tight or loose skirts or pants that sexualize a woman or make her look masculinized? Women were not

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[52] Givhan, Robin. "Hillary Clinton's Tentative Dip Into New Neckline Territory." The Washington Post. WP Company, 20 July 2007. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/19/AR2007071902668.html>.

[53] Though hormones and medication affect the level of sex drive.

allowed to wear pants on the Senate floor until 1993[54] — prior to that date were they forced into objectification by wearing suit-skirts or were they merely professionally dressed women? Ultimately, it seems, the group in power decides these answers for their place in history to be debated by future generations.

The articles that discuss Secretary Clinton's style go into great detail about how her fashion has changed, comments on her monochromatic pantsuits, as well as her modern and polished new look.[55] The Boston Globe's August article on her wardrobe dissects the many changes, but seemingly contradicts itself by stating that "In an election that's been unprecedented in its divisiveness, that's pushed the political dialogue well beneath the muck and deep into the earth's mantle, Hillary Clinton's fashion choices have been nearly unnoticed — which seems to be what her wardrobe is designed to do."[56] Where they miss the mark in this comment is that although many of the major news contributors are leaving her clothing out of the main conversations, plenty of websites are contributing to the conversation on what she is wearing. At the same time, perhaps the Boston Globe wants to distinguish that things could be worse, but instead the lack of attention paid to her wardrobe indicates that people are finally seeing past her outfit choices. In the article's concluding remarks, the Boston Globe notes, "The notion of

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[54] Henderson, Nia-Malika. "Barbara Mikulski Made It Okay for Women to Wear Pants in the Senate." The Washington Post. WP Company, 02 Mar. 2015. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/03/02/barbara-mikulski-made-it-ok-for-women-to-wear-pants-in-the-senate/>.

[55] Bernstein, Aaron P. "Hillary Clinton Has Left Her Fashion Critics Behind, along with the Pantsuits - The Boston Globe." BostonGlobe.com. The Boston Globe, 12 Aug. 2016. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2016/08/11/hillary-clinton-has-left-her-fashion-critics-behind-along-with-pantsuits/aGxCruR3IoaHyQ785iEqdP/story.html>. — as one example.

[56] Bernstein, Aaron P.

nitpicking Clinton's wardrobe may be viewed as inherently sexist, though it's a reality many women have come to accept."[57] As more and more women (and men) criticize the media for their double standards of men and women, the media is also becoming more aware of this view, and perhaps the serious articles will soon be left to satirical writers.

Although politicians are not clergy members — they are not expected to uphold the same ethics and morals, among other differences — but they are often in the spotlight and constantly watched by the public. As Rabbi Bloom notes in his dissertation, the clergy's status is in contrast to the politician. Rabbis are expected to maintain their symbolic exemplarhood without the physical distance that community members have from politicians. There is a much greater cushion between the politician and the public than there is between the rabbi and her/his congregants/community.[58]

Perhaps this gap has lessened with the advent of social media and the viral nature of controversial incidents. This spotlight means politicians and clergy alike have to think differently from many members of their community when they decide what to wear, what to post on social media, how many drinks to have at a party, etc. Even one small error can result in a lasting impact on the image of an individual in the communal spotlight.

Given the events surrounding the presidential election in 2016, the image of American politicians has been a major news headline across all forms of media. In particular, Secretary Clinton's outward image made news on countless occasions. Although Secretary Clinton made one of her trademark apparel items the "pant suit" as an

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[57] Bernstein, Aaron P.

[58] Bloom, Jack. "The Rabbi As Symbolic Exemplar." Diss. Columbia U, 1972. Print. 24.

attempt to rally people to focus on her policies rather than her outfits, not all feminists agree with this approach. Instead, some feminists propose that women should not change their appearance to appease judgment from others. In an article from the Jewish Women's Archive, "All Dress is Feminist, No Dress is Feminist," writer Elisabeth Eigerman concludes:

> There's no such thing as a feminist way to dress. Any feminist argument that supports a certain clothing style can easily be overturned by those who believe the style to be anti-feminist. Whether someone is arguing for modesty or immodesty, for masculinity or femininity, there is no style of dress that some won't deem anti-feminist.[59]

While Eigerman notes her stance at an early point in the article, she continues her writing by outlining different approaches to the feminist image. Those who promote modest dress, like the approach taken by Secretary Clinton, pursue a method of dress that will minimize objectification while promoting intelligence and personality. However, the quick counter to such an argument is to attack the assumption on which the foundation of the argument is built — that women's bodies are inherently sexual.[60] Then again, this can once again be turned to bring into question how society defines beauty and whether or not the use of makeup or other physical modifiers for the goal of being a "sexy" woman is feminist in the first place. However, if a woman must cut her hair short and dress like a man, what sort of feminism is left when the goal is to become like a man? Eigerman concludes, "The only way to dress like a feminist is to wear clothing that makes you feel empowered, and no one can dictate that."[61]

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[59] Eigerman, Elisabeth. "Sharing StoriesInspiring Change." All Dress Is Feminist, No Dress Is Feminist | Jewish Women's Archive. Jewish Women's Archive, 11 Dec. 2015. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <https://jwa.org/blog/risingvoices/all-dress-is-feminist-no-dress-is-feminist>.

[60] Eigerman, Elisabeth.

[61] Eigerman, Elisabeth.

With these varying approaches and the public position of the rabbi in mind, my survey to female rabbis included questions related to their clothing, shoes, makeup, and hair choices. I chose these categories because they are commonly referenced when speaking about a woman's outward appearance (the typical comments toward men's images revolve around hair styles, facial hair, and ties). As clergy, women are constantly in front of groups of people in classrooms, at services, and public events. I wanted to explore whether or not there were trends in dress for female rabbis to see if perhaps the statement, "You don't look like a rabbi," only has to do with gender or if other factors of the appearance elicited those remarks. Is there a trend in the appearance of a female rabbi?

When asked what they wear when leading Shabbat services, 76 responded that they sometimes wear slacks/pant suits and of those 5 respondents *only* wear slacks/pant suits; 98 responded that they sometimes wear skirts/dresses and of those, 23 respondents *only* wear skirts/dresses. When asked what they wear during the work week, 100 responded that they sometimes wear slacks/pant suits and of those 16 *only* wear slacks/pant suits; 87 responded that they sometimes wear skirts/dresses and of those, 4 respondents *only* wear skirts/dresses; 10 responded that they sometimes wear jeans, 14 commented that they tend to dress casually during the week.[62]

These results demonstrate a very mixed response to slacks/pant suits and dresses/skirts with skirts/dresses preferred for service leading and slacks/pant suits preferred for weekday activity. In both cases, most of the women wore both slacks/pant suits and

[62] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

skirts/dresses. These results demonstrate that there is not a strong enough preference for one over the other to say that you can walk into a synagogue and identify the rabbi based on her dress choices or that a female rabbi even "looks" a certain way. In the section of these related questions left for comment, few women mentioned having mentors or advisors who recommended clothing choices, but since this question was not specifically asked, it is not conclusive as to whether or not the women came to these clothing choices on their own. None of the women noted that they wear clerical robes on a regular basis.

ii. Makeup

When asked about wearing makeup while leading services, 68 always wear makeup, 26 sometimes wear makeup and 24 never wear makeup. During the week 49 always wear makeup, 42 sometimes wear makeup and 26 never wear makeup. These results demonstrate that women feel slightly more inclined to wear makeup when they are in front of larger groups of people i.e., during services. Additionally, 20–22% of the respondents never wear makeup at all.

Most surveys surrounding makeup and cosmetic use are tricky to validate as the major cosmetic and beauty companies distribute the surveys. That said, Business Insider notes that "Most women wear at least some makeup, some of the time," and that beauty companies report that "between 50% and 80% of women use it at least occasionally."[63]

In another example, the women working for Goldmann Sachs have made it "trendy" to wear little makeup and to wear their hair up, even noting a set of "unspoken"

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[63] Khazan, Olga. "Falling Victim to This $60 Billion Industry Makes Women More Likely to Succeed." Business Insider. Business Insider, 08 Aug. 2015. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/wearing-makeup-makes-women-more-likely-to-succeed-2015-8>.

rules for women's appearances at the company: "Hair: Neat, and pulled back or at least out of your eyes. No crazy 'dos; Nails: Manicured red, pink, or nude. Trimmed short and round; Make-up: Smooth, even-toned, fresh-looking skin. Mascara. No heavy eye-liner, ideally none. Light lipstick."[64]

Based on the responses of female rabbis, the image of her cosmetic appearance varies greatly — from those who wear makeup all the time, to those who never wear makeup. Not accounted for were the geographical and socio-economic factors of their respective locations that may lead to different choices surrounding trends in appearance and image. However, the results surprised me, I predicted that closer to 77% of the women would respond that they always wear makeup when leading services. Instead, just under 60% of women selected this option. In any given year of ordination, the highest number of women who never wear makeup while leading services was 3 (ordained in 2006 and 1992).

iii. Hair

When asked about how they wear their hair during services, 78 responded that they sometimes wear their hair down, 46 respondents *only* wear their hair down; 40 responded that they sometimes wear their hair up, 4 respondents *only* wear their hair up, 7 specified that they have short hair, and 20 responded N/A. A number of respondents

[64] Comstock, Courtney. "One Easy Way For A Woman To Ruin Her Interview At Goldman Sachs." Business Insider. Business Insider, 21 Jan. 2011. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/goldman-sachs-makeup-wall-street-2011-1>.

specified that they decided how to wear their hair based on whether or not they were "having a good hair day" or depending on the weather.[65]

These results show that a significant number of women tend to wear their hair down rather than up. Unlike the topics of clothing, makeup and shoes, the internet articles surrounding hair focus in much greater detail on the discrimination facing women with textured hair (not-straight), especially as related to women of color who want to wear their hair naturally and are told it looks unprofessional. No respondent to my survey specified this sort of discrimination.

I was quite surprised by the spread in numbers between women who only wear their hair down, 46, and women who only wear their hair up, 4. Upon further reflection, I am drawn in two directions. Either, my hypothesis that more women would only wear their hair up was dramatically incorrect; or, I should have opted for different wording in my questions or the possible selections. For example, women with hair that is too short to put up could never mark that they only wear their hair up — but I did not provide an option that would make that conclusion obvious; instead, I relied on women marking this specification in the comments section. I expected more women to only wear their hair up for logistical purposes — such as keeping it out of their face while praying, reading, or speaking with someone on the *bimah*.

iv. Shoes

When asked their shoe choices for services, 108 responded that they sometimes wear flats, 77 sometimes wear heels, 103 sometimes wear close-toed shoes, and 62

[65] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

sometimes wear open-toed shoes. Also mentioned were 8 respondents who commented that they sometimes also wear sandals, sneakers, boots, or flip-flops.[66]

When asked about their shoe choices during the work week, 110 responded that they sometimes wear flats, 56 sometimes wear heels, 102 sometimes wear close-toed shoes, and 85 sometimes wear open-toed shoes. Also mentioned were 6 respondents who commented that they sometimes also wear sneakers, boots, or flip-flops.[67]

These results indicate two main trends: first, that during the work week, almost twice as many women wear flats over heels, and during Shabbat services, almost twice as many women wear close-toed shoes over open-toed shoes. Addressing the first, it may be that due to the height of the *amud* (lectern) or in relation to other individuals on the *bimah*, women may feel more comfortable at a taller height. As many of these *amudim* are made to last, they were designed with the height of men in mind, not the height of women. During the work week, women do not encounter these height obstructions in the same way and can feel more comfortable wearing a heel. Alternatively, many of the respondents may simply find flats to be more comfortable than a heeled shoe, and that is why more women wear flats over heels during the work week.

Although the heel has existed now for centuries, the shoe has not been in fashion without controversy. With the increase in feminist groups during the 1960s, despite its popularity through celebrity dress, the high heel was highly criticized as a device used to limit women's mobility — in careers and in literal movement. Feminism has taken a turn

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[66] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

[67] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

back toward empowering women to wear what makes them feel powerful, and for some, that means sporting a heeled shoe.

v. Comments on Appearance

When asked about whether or not staff and/or those whom they serve comment on their clothing choices, 35 responded almost always, 55 responded sometimes, 24 responded rarely, and 10 responded never.[68] When asked about whether or not staff and/or those whom they serve comment on their hair 14 responded almost always, 50 responded sometimes, 39 responded rarely, and 17 responded never.[69] These responses demonstrate that nearly 50% of the women receive comments from their staff or those whom they serve on both their clothing and hair choices "sometimes." Of the 117 women, only 8–12% never hear comments on these choice.

Although men were not surveyed, watching the world around me, I have time and time again witnessed comments on female clergy clothing that have not also been made toward male clergy. Perhaps a man will change his hair, his facial hair, or wear an exciting tie, but as mentioned above with regard to the Australian newscaster, men tend to receive minimal feedback on their appearance.

It is worth noting that Rabbi Bloom did not have a parallel series of questions to match those related to physical appearance when he interviewed the male rabbis for his survey. Today, such questions are a necessary aspect of symbolic exemplarhood in a way that was not of prominent discussion when Rabbi Bloom conducted his research in the

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[68] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

[69] Respondents were able to select more than one response.

1970s. Such questions about appearance are necessary because they are the comments facing female rabbis today. Although some in our communities still comment, "I didn't know a woman could be a rabbi," it seems that society has moved from this catch phrase to making comments about the rabbi after she leads a service, delivers a sermon, or fulfills her many other roles as a rabbi.[70] The women ordained in the 1970s and 1980s were the courageous pioneers who pushed for the liberal Jewish community to link "rabbi" and "woman" into a living and thriving image, but women in the field today continue to push those assumptions and barriers that stand before them.

The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate, the newly released book from the CCAR dedicated an entire section of the book to the topic of "image." As Rabbi Wendy Spears notes in her chapter, "The Public Image of the Woman Rabbi" from, "As leaders of the Jewish community as well as 'symbolic exemplars' of God's presence, what the rabbi wears makes a statement about the rabbi's role as well as being a reflection of individual personal style."[71] She goes on to cite Rabbi Bloom's work and the symbolic exemplarhood of how friends and family perceive the rabbi versus how she sees herself when she peers into the mirror. In the 21st-century, women's appearance has become open to comments in private, public, and in (social) media settings — that is our world's reality. With the phasing-out of the pulpit robe and the movement towards more casual clothing in the work place of secular institutions, and more attention paid than ever to the appearance of clergy — perhaps this is why many clergy teams wear

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[70] I do not have data on this claim, only personal observations.

[71] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Locations 11737-11739.

clerical robes on the High Holy Days, but not during the other days of the year. These clothing choices affect relationships with congregants — a more casually dressed rabbi may encourage relaxed behavior from congregants or even "overly familiar" as Rabbi Spears notes.[72] While dressing overly formal might make congregants feel uneasy or isolated from the rabbi.

In a book of stories compiled by Rabbi Dayna Ruttenberg, *Ynetl's Revenge: The Next Wave of Jewish Feminism*, Rabbi Karen (Chai) Levy crafted a chapter entitled "Sexy Rabbi."[73] In this chapter, Rabbi Levy, at the time a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary (a seminary of the Conservative Movement), details some of her personal experiences and encounters with the community under the hat of a (student) rabbi. She points out our Torah's depiction of women's seductiveness to demonstrate how times have not entirely changed with regard to the viewpoint of a woman's sexuality and sexual nature. She notes Eve's temptress ways, the manner in which Potiphar's wife flirts with Joseph, how the rabbis blame Dinah for being raped, etc.[74] The dismissiveness of women's natural sexual presence in this world has created a culture of confusion for both men and women who can confuse inclinations for spirituality and loving God, to loving the one who teaches them about God.

Rabbi Levy presents two ways in which sexuality and the rabbinate typically manifest: The first situation involves a man in the congregation who takes advantage of

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[72] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Location 11852.

[73] Heschel, Susannah. Yentl's Revenge: The Next Wave of Jewish Feminism. Edited by Danya Ruttenberg. Seattle: Seal Press, 2001, 112.

[74] Ibid., 115.

the accessibility of the congregational rabbi by showing up to her classes, services, and religious programs. In another type of job perhaps the congregant would simply ask the rabbi out on a date, but given the varying boundaries for a rabbi's private and professional life, the rabbi can get caught in a position in which she is unable to ask an "eager" congregant to discontinue his presence at her synagogue events.[75]

Rabbi Levy describes the second situation as one "in which a man becomes attracted to a woman *because* she's the rabbi.[76] Perhaps it has nothing to do with her actual appearance, but the inspirational and intense religious feelings that a rabbi seeks to evoke may cross into the erotic for some congregants who are unable to recognize the distinctions. Importantly, Rabbi Levy notes that this type of attraction crosses both gender and sexual lines. Male and female congregants may develop feelings for their male rabbis as well; however, the important distinction is the historical tradition of our society, one that has sexualized and objectified women for so many years, putting them at greater risk for harassment than their male counterparts.[77]

Rabbi Levy describes what tends to be classified psychologically as transference: "Those feelings the person we are helping seems to have toward us in this relationship. They are, however, feelings appropriate to previous, significant persons in their lives,

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[75] Ibid., 114.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 15.

such as parents or those who took their place."[78] As Rabbi Ellen Lewis notes in her chapter, "Funny You Don't Look Like a Rabbi" from *The Sacred Calling:*

> While transference impacts all rabbis, unconscious fantasies about women have particular import for the female rabbi. In the unconscious primitive mind, the Mother Rabbi is enshrined as the source of unconditional love in a way that the Father Rabbi is not. The Father Rabbi may elicit a desire to feel protected and guided, but when you cry— and sometimes before you cry— it is the Mother Rabbi you turn to for comfort and sustenance...While all rabbis trigger unconscious responses in their parishioners, women rabbis evoke particular responses associated with their gender...[Despite all the progress made in promoting equality for women in Reform Judaism], Psychological transference remains a complex powerful phenomenon, as evidenced by what people have said and continue to say to female rabbis over these forty years.[79]

Rabbi Lewis points out that the transference to the female rabbi as mother, can lead to feelings of deprivation at emotional times — when their "mother" may not feel fully present with them. In sum, Rabbi Lewis argues that female rabbis trigger particular responses that are entirely influenced by their gender. The congregant would be triggered whether the rabbi was male or female, but Rabbi Lewis' point is that the rabbi's gender influences the unconscious response to that trigger.[80]

Rabbi Levy closes with her personal preferences for her appearance:

> Sexuality is part of who we are as human beings, and while I personally do not favor flaunting it in a way that insults our being created in the image of God—as our culture often does in its use of women's bodies in advertising and pornography—we also shouldn't have to hide our created-in-the-image-of-God-selves behind veils or, I could argue, wigs and *tichels* (scarves).[81]

Rabbi Levy's willingness to name that sexuality is a part of our identity reflects a shift in culture from the earlier attempts to asexualize the female rabbi. Rabbi Levy emphasizes

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[78] Kennedy, Eugene, and Sara C. Charles MD. On Becoming a Counselor: A Basic Guide for Nonprofessional Counselors and Other Helpers. 3 Exp Rev edition. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001.

[79] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Locations 11637-11638.

[80] Ibid., Kindle Location 11638.

[81] Heschel, 116.

balance — the balance of being a sexual being, while also ensuring that she respects her body as part of God's image. She writes further:

> I don't wear clothes that won't let me bend over without calling attention to myself—nothing short or low-cut. I won't wear shoes that prevent me from defending myself or running for the bus—so no high heels. However, I am a woman; I do have breasts and hips, and my *tallit* doesn't hide them! Nor should it have to. There's a difference between avoiding clothing that objectifies and degrades women and having to become asexual in order to be respected as a rabbi, and it seems that many people expect the latter.[82]

Rabbi Levy's desire to embrace her femininity demonstrates the turn that parts of the feminist movement have taken toward feeling empowered by the female body and not feeling the need to hide that femininity from society.

In the Emmy Award-winning Amazon Prime series, *Transparent*, a character of the show, "Rabbi Raquel," thrives as the solo rabbi of a small congregation in Los Angeles attended by the main characters, the Pfeffermans. According to an interview with the actress, Kathryn Hahn by the Times of Israel, Ms. Hahn consults with Rabbi Susan Goldberg, an Academy of Jewish Religion ordained rabbi currently working for Wilshire Boulevard Temple in L.A. From Rabbi Susan, Hahn learned the power of eye contact and sense of self and tried to bring that with her to the show. Hahn credits the authenticity of her role to Rabbi Susan and her role as an advisor on the show.[83] Instead of the stereotypical male rabbi with a black hat and suit, "Rabbi Raquel" models the inner (though somewhat dramatized) view of a single female rabbi trying to be both a good rabbi and a woman worth being in relationship with. She is given a sexual identity, wears a mix of modest clothing, and has authentic conversations where she fills the role of both

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[82] Ibid., 114.

[83] JTA. "The Nice Catholic Girl Playing a Rabbi on 'Transparent'" The Times of Israel. The Times of Israel, 11 May 2016. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/the-nice-catholic-girl-playing-a-rabbi-on-transparent/>.

a religious leader and a regular human. The screen is no longer home to only one type of rabbi — the "*hasidic rebbe*" whose congregants come to his home or his desk seeking advice on their latest personal problems. Instead, *Transparent* has been a part of reshaping the image of the rabbinate and represents a piece of the changing narrative surrounding the comments female rabbis receive about their appearance.

My assumption is that most rabbis prefer comments and feedback about their sermon content, the classes they teach, and the programs they run as opposed to well-intentioned (or not well-intentioned) compliments or unsolicited advice about their clothes, hair, accessories, or physique. Although I do not have the survey material to compare my findings to male rabbis, I can project that at least half of women rabbis are receiving these comments on a monthly, if not weekly basis, while I do not predict that their male colleagues receive such frequent comments.

With social media use as a significant form of communication and a system by which snap-shot decisions can go viral, attention to social appearance has heightened for all communal leaders. The rabbi must be aware lest her/his photo be taken in a compromising situation or in an unflattering or immodest outfit. The viral nature of such photos can impact the rabbi in ways that previous generations never thought possible. For the female rabbi, she must start from far behind her male counterpart with regard to the mainstream objectification of the female sex, and as such, must work that much harder to create a culture of conversation about her words rather than her appearance.

Her symbolic exemplarhood relies on the changing narrative on gender in mainstream discussions, and yet, she currently functions in the role of a leader by

smashing these patriarchal tendencies each day. Every time a female rabbi stands up for herself when she is treated differently because of her gender, or takes the hit of the moment and works to find a response for the next instance of discrimination or unwanted comments, these are the moments that she embodies what it means to be a symbolic exemplar to the women of her congregation or community. At times, the changing role of the symbolic exemplar means the rabbi models how to react when her gender is the focus of an individual instead of her humanity. So too does this role fit for the male rabbi who is attuned to these dynamics in society today — and he encompasses his symbolic exemplarhood when he models how to treat women in the workplace and in the world, in ways that empower her and raise up female voices when the male voices become too dominant.

B. Personal Ritual Objects

"For some women, the demand for women to don tallitot and tefillin indicates that women must in effect become men, by wearing male garb, in order to empower themselves as Jews. Others believe that tallitot and tefillin are the garb of the Jew, and simply because women have not, by and large, had access to this meaningful ritual attire in the past does not mean that they should not wear it now, any more than they would decline to wear judge's robes or surgical scrubs because women came late to the professions of medicine and law."[84]

i. Tallit

On a Friday night, the service leader(s) may be easily identified due to his/her donning of a *tallit*. Since wearing a tallit at night is not a *mitzvah*, the congregation does not don a *tallit* during the evening, though it has become custom in most Reform congregations for services leader(s) to wear a *tallit* at all times during worship.

Early Reform Judaism called for the abandonment of *kippah, tallit,* and *t'fillin*.

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[84] Goldstein, 70.

> In 1963 it could be states without controversy that in Reform temples 'the congregation and the rabbi worship with uncovered head.' The *tallit* was reduced to a ceremonial object worn by rabbis while leading service. *Tefillin* virtually disappeared. Today, by contrast, these trends have been reversed.

Despite their early absence, the *kippah* and *tallit* have made a notable return to synagogue life, though the frequency of their donning will still vary by congregation/community.

The wearing of *tallitot* by women began in the 1960s and 1970s. In the book, *Fashioning Jews: Clothing, Culture, and Commerce*, Rachel Gordan, of the department of Religious Studies at Northwestern University details pieces of the history of the *tallit* for women in her chapter, "What a Strange Power There Is in Clothing: Women's Tallitot." According to Gordan, the uprising for women's wearing of *tallitot* occurred in 1972 when members of the women's study group, *Ezrat Nashim*, attended the annual meeting of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly.[85] The women attending the Assembly meeting created and designed their own *tallitot*. At the meeting they called for being counted in minyanim, to be a part of all religious observances, to become rabbis and cantors, and to be obligated to time-bound *mitzvot* like men.[86] These women were concerned about the look — many did not want theirs to look like the wool black and white ones worn by men, others cut theirs to be worn more like a garment so that it did not feel like men's clothing.

However, prior to the 1972 uprising of *Ezrat Nashim*, one interviewed woman, Judith K., a faculty member at Harvard University in the 1960s recalled seeing women wearing *tallitot* at services at Harvard's Hillel. No other comments were made in this

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[85] Greenspoon, LeonardJ, ed. Fashioning Jews: Clothing, Culture and Commerce. West Lafayette, Ind: Purdue University Press, 2013. 167.

[86] Greenspoon, 167.

particular interview, but the starting date for women in *tallitot* could be even a decade earlier than the *Ezra Nashim* protest.

Looking again at the mid-1970s, it was then that the well-known Orthodox *posek*[87] and scholar, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, issued a statement in favor of women wearing *tallitot* as long as it reflected a feminine appearance. This was a major statement from a Modern Orthodox rabbi, one that is still highly contested by many in the Orthodox community who disagree with Rabbi Feinstein's ruling and see the *tallit* as a man's garment.

Another woman interviewed by Gordon, Rachel Kanter, a fiber artist, shared her feelings on *tallitot*,"She was reworking the tradition of wearing a *tallit* by the fact of her gender, Kanter and her *tallit*-wearing female peers evince a willingness to create new versions of the old."[88] They crafted *tallitot* to look and feel feminine and fitting toward their desire to fulfill this commandment like the other half of the community. Through her interviews, Kanter concluded three features of the *tallit*:

1) Wearing a *tallit* as a means of belonging to a community
2) Wearing the *tallit* as an embodiment of egalitarian values in Judaism
3) Wearing a *tallit* as a means for Jewish women to fashion a personalized connection to Judaism — by selecting the style and color and material.[89]

One might question if all three of these features are still relevant today. For a child who has only known Reform or Conservative Judaism, wearing a *tallit* is not necessarily about egalitarian values, but about Jewish values, and the Judaism that they know, encourages both men and women to don *tallitot*. The *tallit* still represents a belonging, as many *b'nei*

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[87] A legal scholar; one known for making *halakhic* (Jewish law) decisions

[88] Greenspoon, 170.

[89] Ibid., 175

mitzvah students receive their first *tallit* for their service and have the opportunity to learn about the *tallit's* meaning and how the garment identifies them as a part of not only the Jewish community, but also an adult capable of fully participating. Finally, the *tallit* remains an object for women to personalize and use as a connection to Judaism.

For rabbinical students, a popular Jerusalem and Jaffa *tallit* designer, Gabrieli, has sold many *tallitot* to both male and female rabbinical students offering a variety of materials and colors to help them feel connected to their *tallit*. The choices for young men and women becoming *b'nei mitzvah* have also expanded as having a unique and stated *tallit* has become a part of the culture of the Jewish community. As these teens and young adults see more and more of their rabbis wearing colorful and vibrant *tallitot*, they too will want to capture something of their personality or spirituality in their *tallitot*.

Many feminists asked then, and still ask today, whether or not the movement to wear a *tallit* was an attempt by women to adopt male practices and appear "like the men," or, if it was approached with an understanding that despite not being worn by women in the past, the *tallit* was a Jewish ritual object waiting for a woman's touch. We cannot know the motivations of each woman then, but today, we can look around our communities and see that many women (and men) don colorful *tallitot* while the classic white with black stripes remains popular as well.

96% of the female rabbis surveyed wear a *tallit* when leading services, a clear indication of the adoption of the *tallit* for women in liberal prayer spaces. There is no uniform *tallit* for women rabbis, instead there are those who wear the *atarah*, a medium-sized *tallit*, as well as a large *tallit*. Just as the size is not uniform, neither are the colors or

materials used to make them (which could also be said for *tallitot* worn by men). Given the Reform Movement's reclamation of ritual objects in the 70s as well as the rise of women's movements at that same time, the inclusion of women in the wearing of *tallitot*, to an outsider, may seem like a natural outcome for a movement that strives for egalitarianism. However, as mentioned above, women had to fight for the ability to don *tallitot*, and thus consciously or unconsciously, each time a female rabbi wears a *tallit* in front of her community she represents all that the generations of women before her fought for, and she too continues to work toward equality in the community.

When surveyors were asked about the *tallit* size they wear when leading services (respondents could select more than one answer), 99 of the 117 women responded they wear a medium *tallit* (one that hangs over the shoulders), 43 wear a large *tallit* (one that requires tossing *tzitzit* over their shoulders), 41 wear an *atarah*, and 4 do not wear a *tallit* (women could select multiple sizes of *tallitot*). At their congregation, 58 of the women said that the clergy do not all wear the same size *tallitot*, 23 said they all wear the same size, and 30 women said the question was not applicable or that they are the only clergy on staff. For the 23 women who all wear the same size, no comments were added, but this could happen for a number of reasons: the senior rabbi requests that all clergy match their *tallitot*, all of the clergy happen to like wearing the same size *tallit*, the clergy decide together that they all want to match their *tallit* size so that they all look equal in their roles, etc.[90]

[90] Results in percentages do not work in this section because the respondents were able to select more than one option, and since many of them did, you will notice that the results are greater than the 117 respondents.

I did not send out a survey to men regarding *tallitot* or *kippot* choices, but I decided to investigate the ordination photos from 1972–2015 to see what the trends were for *tallitot* size among the ordinees of the Cincinnati campus of HUC-JIR. One of the problems with using this method (that could lead to a higher margin of error) is the chance that any individual without a *tallit* had simply taken it off and forgotten to put it back on for the photograph. In 1972 only 3 men were wearing *tallitot*, and all of them were wearing *atarot,* but in 1973, 34 people wore *atarot* and 2 people wore large *tallitot*, and only 1 person was without. The rest of the 1970s tended toward a strong mixture of *atarot* and large *tallitot*, with only a few medium-sized *tallitot.* 1978 had the largest showing of large *tallitot*, with 11 people opting for that size. In each class ordained from 1972–1983, at least one individual opted not to wear a *tallit.* In the 1980s, the College-Institute took ordination photos on a staircase, and it was too difficult to distinguish *atarot* and medium *tallitot.* After 1988 there is not a single ordination photo in which an individual is without a *tallit.* During the 1990s and early 2000s, the majority of ordinees were wearing *atarot*, with a few wearing medium and large *tallitot* in each class. 2007 had one of the most diverse *tallit* choices by the ordinees with 6 wearing *atarot*, 9 wearing medium *tallitot*, and 8 wearing large *tallitot*. The class of 2015 had 7 wearing *atarot* and 5 wearing large *tallitot*. In all, the smallest *tallit*, the *atarah* is the most popular amongst rabbinical students based on the ordination photos in which *tallit* size was visible, 2.5 times more popular than the large tallit, and 7.5 times more popular than the medium *tallit.*

Many choose their *tallit* size based on their own body-type, whether they play the guitar while leading, based on their outfit, based on the material (i.e., wool, silk), but the data shows that a majority of the women surveyed, 99, are (sometimes) currently leading in the medium-sized *tallit* that wraps around the shoulders. The spread among other *tallitot* is even, with 43 (sometimes) wearing the Large *tallit* and 41 (sometimes) wearing the *atarah*.

There are many reasons for the popularity of *tallit* in the Reform Movement. As the movement shifted away from the decorum of Classical Reform, Jews wanted to reconnect to various rituals and ritual objects. The *tallit,* a beautiful piece of cloth, was and continues to be a ritual object that people can touch and then remember the places they prayed, the people they sat next to, and the prayers they prayed. Another reason for the rise in popularity may relate to the climate of the Jewish world, especially in Israel, where Reform Judaism faces harsh scrutiny from Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jews who call Reform Jews heathens. The wearing of the *tallit* says to them, "We are Jews too, and we understand what it means to don these ritual objects." All the more so for non-Orthodox rabbis who have no legal ability to officiate weddings or receive money from the same government account as their Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox counterparts in Israel. Women especially have taken to the *kotel* with the activist group, Women of the Wall, on Rosh Chodesh mornings fighting to wear their *tallitot* and pray aloud in the women's section. Perhaps the final reason for the rise in popularity is that that *tallit* has been normalized by the rabbis (men and women) of the Reform Movement, and have set up this beautiful garment that a child is finally able to wear for the first time at his or her

b'nei mitzvah as something to look forward to. For some children, their *b'nei mitzvah* will be the first time they feel ownership over a ritual object that is completely theirs and they may even have the privilege to choose the *tallit* that best fits their Jewish interest and style as they enter Jewish adulthood.

For the female Reform rabbi, her donning of a *tallit* is a symbol to the boys and girls, the men and women of her congregation that women can wear the same ritual objects as men and still look the way they want to look — be it more feminine, more masculine, or as gender neutral as possible. The autonomy within the Reform Movement provides female rabbis the ability to make these choices and to model her thought process for the congregation.

ii. Kippah

Thought to be a custom of the Middle Ages,[91] the covering of one's head is also mentioned in Babylonian Talmud *Shabbat* 156b which states, "Cover your head in order that the fear of heaven may be upon you." In another section of the Babylonian Talmud, *Kiddushin* 31a R. Chuna ben R. Yehoshua explains that he keeps his head covered "Because the Divine Presence is always over my head." The law of covering ones head was later codified in Yoseph Karo's *Shulchan Aruch* which says that a man should not walk more than 4 cubits without a head covering.[92]

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[91] "Ask the Expert: Can Women Wear Kippot?" My Jewish Learning. My Jewish Learning, n.d. Web. 09 Jan. 2017. <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ask-the-expert-why-dont-women-wear-kippot/>.

[92] Orach Chaim, 2:6.

As mentioned above, the practice of *kippah* came about during the rabbinic period or Middle Ages (around 500 CE) for Jews living in Babylon. The custom followed the Jews to Spain during the medieval period and was later adopted by *Ashkenazim* in Eastern Europe as well. However, *minhagim* (customs) in Judaism tend to hold strong social weight and thus the *kippah* was a heavily debated topic in Reform Jewish life.[93] By the 1950s, under the influence of the growing *havurah* movement, Reform Jews increasingly returned to the wearing of *kippah* (and *tallit*). In 1989, a survey confirmed, "more than half of all Reform congregations provided skullcaps for their members."[94] Although not everyone who entered would wear one, this marked the increased accessibility to *kippot.*

Regarding the tradition of wearing a *kippah* for female rabbis today, 74 of the 117 women responded that they wear one while leading services or officiating at lifecycle events, 28 wear one during professional hours, 16 selected that they wear one almost all of the time, 19 never wear a *kippah*, and others specified in the comments that they wear one during pastoral visits, while teaching, or during study or prayer at home (respondents were able to select more than one option).

When asked about whether they wear a headband/head-wrap/headscarf as a way of covering their head 94% of women responded that they do not, only 1 respondent said she wears a head-wrap almost all of the time, the remaining respondents said they will

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[93] Washofsky, Mark. Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice. 1st edition. New York: UAHC Press, 2010, 10–12.

[94] Sarna, Jonathan, "The Great American Jewish Awakening," 30.; *Reform Judaism 27* (Winter 1998): 23–24; Sanford Seltzer, *Worship and Ritual Patterns of Reform Congregations: An Interim Report* (Brookline, n.d. [1990]), 9.

wear one (or a hat) during exercise, at Orthodox synagogues, or when visiting communities where that is the norm, the other 5% of women left the question blank. From interacting with and having friends at JTS, I know that wearing a headband/head-wrap/headscarf (even when unmarried) in place of a *kippah* has grown into a major trend of the Conservative seminary. Based on the survey results, this trend has not become popular among Reform rabbis. Perhaps the trend is more popular in the Conservative Movement because their rabbis are expected to wear head coverings, and thus these women have found a way to fulfill that tradition while also feeling feminine. In contrast, HUC-JIR and the CCAR do not expect their rabbis to wear a head-covering and thus more women have opted to not wear anything at all rather than wear a *kippah* or alternative head-covering.

63% of the respondents wear a *kippah* while leading services or officiating a lifecycle event, while 37% of the female respondents do not. This divide raises a few questions. While the majority of women are wearing *kippot*, I wonder why 37% are not wearing one. Although not a part of the survey, perhaps one could speculate that some women find *kippot* to be a male-normative custom, unpractical (i.e., difficult to match to outfits or to keep in hair), or simply a custom that they do not wish to keep. Although artists have developed more feminine looking *kippot* made out of wire or lace, the *kippah* remains a custom with varying degrees of observance.

iii. T'fillin

While the *kippah*, *tallit*, and *t'fillin* had almost all disappeared from Reform Judaism in Europe and America, as mentioned above, *kippah* and *tallit* have made their

return in a way that *t'fillin* never has. The non-return of *t'fillin* is likely due to few Reform Jews attending services every morning, and as such, *t'fillin* becomes a mostly private home ritual. That said, during the 1990s, when the promotion of "Jewish living" in the home was encouraged (such as Shabbat observance and *kashrut*), *t'fillin* observance resurfaced (though at what number is unknown).[95] Additionally, *Gates of Prayer* and *Mishkan T'fillah* include the blessings for wrapping *t'fillin*, signaling the accepted presence of the ritual in our movement.

My hypothesis was that of all the rituals, *t'fillin* practice among female rabbis would be low — the results were as follows: When asked about their *t'fillin* practice, 40% responded that they have wrapped a few times but have chosen not to take on the ritual, 38% that they have never wrapped *t'fillin,* 9% that they wrapped before or during HUC-JIR fairly regularly, but no longer wrap, 4% wrapped before HUC-JIR and continue to wrap fairly regularly, 3% never wrapped before HUC-JIR but now wrap fairly regularly, 3% wrapped during HUC-JIR and now sometimes wrap, and 2% are vegan/ vegetarian and do not wrap.[96] Without sending a survey, it is unclear whether or not the male rabbis would yield similar results. If the Year-in-Israel is any sort of thermometer for this practice, my particular Year-in-Israel class had only a few female rabbinical students wrapping *t'fillin* with close to 10 male rabbinical students wrapping. One significant obstacle for women is finding a place that will sell *t'fillin* to women without having to pretend the ritual object is for a male relative, friend, classmate, or significant

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[95] Sarna, Jonathan D. American Judaism: A History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005, 325.

[96] Totals 99%, remaining percentage is distributed in decimals of results.

other. There is one shop in Jerusalem known to sell t'fillin to women, but otherwise, access to an honest and upfront purchase that feels comfortable and authentic, is quite difficult.

When asked how they view the practice of *t'fillin*, 25% responded that they wrapped a few times but did not connect to the ritual, 15% find it to be a meaningful ritual, 13% do not find the ritual meaningful at this time, 10% see it as a male-ritual, 8% are against the wrapping of leather because they are vegan/vegetarian, 5% find the ritual meaningful but time consuming, 2% find the ritual time consuming, 6% left the question blank, and 16% provided a response that did not fit any of these categories.

76% of the respondents have either never wrapped *t'fillin* or have wrapped a few times but did not choose to take on the ritual and only 23% of the respondents find the ritual meaningful. These numbers seem to indicate that those who have wrapped and/or continue to wrap do so because they find meaning in the ritual — though few women commented as to why they find the ritual meaningful. One respondent noted:

> The verses used when wrapping around the fingers come from Hosea and are the verses of the only covenant in the Hebrew Bible wherein a woman is the object of the covenant with God [Hosea 2:21: וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי לְעוֹלָם וְאֵרַשְׂתִּיךְ לִי בְּצֶדֶק וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים: *And I will espouse you forever I will espouse you with righteousness and justice, And with goodness and mercy*]. I betroth myself to God when I lay *t'fillin*. We (God and I) have, in that time, a relationship bursting with love and potential.

Her connection to the feminine language of one of the blessings of *t'fillin* creates a meaningful way for her to be present in the ritual. The use of the feminine Hebrew ending verb-constructs in the Hosea verse signal that the object in reference is female. The "you" referred to is in the feminine singular form. In context, the "you" referred to is Israel, and Israel is always referred to by the biblical authors in the feminine. In this feminine

language, God delivers power — she will be espoused with righteousness, justice, goodness, and mercy. This espousal provides her with the support she needs to succeed. She will be as an example, a symbol of what it means to be devoted to God. Thus, when a woman wraps *t'fillin* and recites the words of Hos. 2:21, she empowers her identity to lead and put forth the righteousness, justice, goodness, and mercy given to her by God.

For other women, the binding of leather on a woman's skin is not something they find comfortable in ritual. For those who see *t'fillin* as a male ritual, it is not entirely clear as to where that thought or even "feeling" comes from — especially since, for the majority of respondents, this was not their reaction to *kippah* or *tallit*, the ritual objects previously worn only by men.

As mentioned above, the wrapping of *t'fillin* in the Reform Movement has yet to become a mainstream practice. Even more so, few Reform congregations hold morning prayer services (at a time when the practice of wrapping *t'fillin* ritually appropriate). We find in the text of *Eruvin* 96a that "*Michal*, the daughter of King Saul used to wear *t'fillin*, and the sages did not protest," and other stories from this time exist as well. In medieval Europe we also know of women who wrapped *t'fillin*, though this was more the exception rather than the rule and faced criticism in the community.[97] Since our textual tradition knows of women wrapping *t'fillin*, some may be surprised that women have not reclaimed the ritual on a larger scale. However, the reclamation of *tallit* and *kippah* may demonstrate that *t'fillin*'s reclamation simply lacks the communal aspect present for the other two.

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[97] Baumgarten, Elisheva. Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe. Princeton University Press, 2004, 91.

C. Leadership, Power, and Gender Dynamics

Every time a rabbi or scholar quotes a man to support a point, he or she perpetuates the notion that men's voices are authoritative. Of course, some men's voices are authoritative; the challenge is that we must also demonstrate that women's voices are just as powerful and just as worthy of our respect. — Rabbi Oshrat Morag[98]

Women's leadership is still considered the exception, the anomaly, the unique occurrence, the traditionally left out — evidenced by the inclusion of a chapter, "Nurturing Women's Leadership" in Erica Brown's book, *Inspired Jewish Leadership: Practical Approaches to Building Strong Communities.* When evaluating the content of a leadership book, one may raise an eyebrow as to why "women's leadership" merits its own chapter. Such a chapter may also lead to a particular set of questions about how women's leadership differs, in what ways are women's leadership experienced, and what can we learn in just one chapter? Erica Brown's chapter immediately acknowledges the desire *not* to need a chapter devoted to women's leadership while also recognizing the reality of the system.[99] She begins by confronting the often confused topics of gender and power in a leadership dynamic:

> Gender and power are not the same thing. To be blinded by gender means that we cannot evaluate a person's leadership capabilities because his or her gender forces a biased blind spot. When someone assess a leader's ability by color or gender rather than speech or actions, they cannot see beyond the blind spot. We do not measure a person's worth or capability beyond what gender signals. The wrong question is "Can a woman do this job?" The right question is "Does this *individual* have the talent, background, temperament, and experience to do the work?"[100]

Women are still battling this blind spot that plagues the male-dominated hiring force. The Jewish community is not immune to the discrimination of the secular world. In a 2003

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[98] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Location 6901.

[99] Brown, Erica. Inspired Jewish Leadership: Practical Approaches to Building Strong Communities. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2008, 109.

[100] Ibid., 110.

study, "55 percent of women in senior corporate roles would like to be but are not being considered for a CEO position."[101] The lack of consideration for the position is a clear indicator that the gender blind spot bias is alive and well. In a survey directed toward Jewish communal organizations, the survey identified three main reasons that women were not moving up the leadership ladder at various organizations:

> 1) An insufficient number of women are in the leadership pipeline
> 2) Male decision makers have been slow to recognize women as possessing equal vision, political acumen, and financial skills
> 3) The perception that women place family needs above their career commitments and leadership advancement is not spoken of and thereby challenged. It is merely assumed[102]

These biases against women in the workforce have stunted upward mobility for many and affected their self-perception and confidence. The cycle continues as women search for female leaders with whom they can identify and look up to so that they too can envision filling that role in the future. But with limited numbers of women entering these roles, examples of strong women leaders becomes a limited list that feels exclusive and out of reach for women at the beginning of their careers. For the current female rabbinical student, the number of women serving in the senior position of a congregation (that has more than one rabbi) is few.

Of the 117 women who completed the survey, only 1 of the women is working as a senior rabbi with at least one assistant/associate rabbi on staff. 3 other women identified having the status of senior rabbi in their congregations, but they do not work with an

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[101] Paulette Gerkovich, Catalyst, *Women in Corporate US Leadership: 2003* (New York: 2003), sponsored by General Motors Corporation.

[102] S. Cohen. S. Bronznick, D. Goldenhar, S. Israel, and S. Kelner, *Creating Gender Equity and Organizational Effectiveness in the Jewish Federation System: A Research-and-Action Project* (New York: Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community, 2004), 2.

assistant or associate rabbi. 13 are assistant rabbis, 19 are associate rabbis, 34–37[103] are solo rabbis, 5 are rabbi-educators, 4 are directors of congregational learning, 3 are directors of education, 1 is an executive director of a congregation, 1 is a congregational preschool rabbi, and 32 either did not specify their position or they work outside of the synagogue system (i.e., non-profit, chaplaincy, Hillel, day school).[104]

Although only 1 female senior rabbi working with an assistant answered my survey, 9 of them women who completed the survey work *for* female senior rabbis. Though this is still a small number compared to the 37 women working for male senior rabbis, it recognizes that the distribution of this survey was not such that women working as senior rabbis had the time or access to respond to the survey. Another factor in the limited number of senior rabbi responses could be related to the limitation on ordination year — only women ordained before 2008 are currently eligible for senior positions, which were only 60 of the total respondents. However, other factors at play could include but are not limited to the mobility of women in the rabbinate or personal choices regarding family-work balance.

9 of the women work with a female senior rabbi, 37 work with a male senior rabbi, 6 with a female associate, 5 with a male associate, 6 with a female assistant, 10

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[103] I decided to indicate a range because some of the women who marked themselves as senior rabbis are currently in solo positions without other rabbis on staff.

[104] I decided to use numbers rather than percentages in the main page because certain categories had such low numbers, however the percentages are as follows: 0.85% working as a senior, 11% working as an assistants, 16% working as an associate, 29–32% working as a solo rabbi, 4% working as a rabbi-educator, 3% working as a director of congregational learning 2.5% working as a director of education, .085% working as an executive director of a congregation, .085% working as a congregational preschool rabbi, 27% either did not specify their position or they work outside of the synagogue system. The remaining percentages are distributed in the decimals of the rounded percentages.

with a male assistant, 19 with a female cantor, 15 with a male cantor, 2 with a female rabbi-educator, 3 with a male rabbi-educator, and 1 with a female director of engagement (rabbi). The women working with female senior rabbis indicates that women-women rabbi teams are not unseen. Though I have a personal story of hearing an older woman refer to her synagogue as Temple - - - Estrogen due to the all-female clergy team. One must assume that she would not have called the synagogue Temple - - - Testosterone, had the congregation had an all-male clergy team. Instead, the congregation would be called "normal." There is clearly still work to do. 77% of women working in congregations that have more than one rabbi work with a male senior rabbi; thus, men are still the main figures of hierarchical synagogue life.

37% of the women provided anecdotes of having felt excluded from a meeting or their opinion overlooked simply because of their gender. Quite an outstanding number, given the idea of *kavod harav/harabbah* (honor for the rabbi). The most common form of this exclusion or their opinion being overlooked involved stating an opinion or idea, having that idea shot down, someone else (typically male) sharing their idea, and having the idea approved. Several other women mentioned situations specific to the larger Jewish community and the inclusion of Orthodox or Ultra-Orthodox rabbis and thus being asked not to attend or to "lay low" during those community sessions. Other women felt that they were intentionally kept away from meeting that involved access to power or decision making in a way that their male colleagues or predecessors were not. Part of this was related to the hierarchal system, and thus being left out of Board Meetings or meetings with the Board of Trustees who only wanted the (male) senior rabbi in the

room. In other instances female rabbis have attended community meetings for the board of rabbis and have felt spoken over by the male clergy in the room. Though not felt by all of the women, a significant portion expressed these instances, and others like them, of feeling silenced.

While women from this survey work in a variety of contexts, with other rabbis, as solos, or in non-congregational positions, they each have opportunities to develop and grow in their leadership. When asked about their leadership styles, many of the women listed several attributes while others described their leadership in detail. The terms "collaborative" and "empower" were the most commonly shared leadership styles. Other words that repeated included: strong, confident, warm, assertive, relational, inclusive, and visionary. For those who have studied leadership styles, some agree with Dr. Judy Rosener, author of the informative article, "Ways Women Lead," who notes that women and men lead with different style — men tend to be more direct and top-down in their leadership styles while women tend to work collaboratively and prefer a web of relationships rather than hierarchy. Others take a different approach and believe that leadership is a gender-neutral activity that is affected by the trends of history and the realities of present society.[105]

I would posit that the trend of relational leadership from female rabbis has been a piece of the changing narrative for the way rabbis relate to their clergy-teams or other work teams and their congregations or communities. The requirement or encouragement of clinical pastoral education, courses dealing with human relations and synagogue

[105] Brown, 113.

basics, and changing demands from the synagogue and larger Jewish community are likely other factors at play in the shifting rabbinical narrative. The role of the Classical Reform rabbi, as a talking head behind the podium on a Friday night, is a thing of the past. If one agrees with Dr. Rosener's differentiation in leadership styles for men and women, then one can hypothesize that female rabbis, who fit the generalized female leader referenced by Dr. Rosener, tend to start from a place of relationship when they interact with congregants, community members, staff, and fellow clergy. Over time, this form of leadership comes to affect the men with whom they work. For the male clergy who have trained alongside women, who have taken advantage of the clinical pastoral education opportunities, and who had access to courses dealing with human relations, these influences can come together to change the leadership style of all clergy instrumentally.

When asked if they have ever felt silenced in their position because of their gender, 40% responded "never," 27% responded "rarely," 21% responded "sometimes," and 4% responded "often," and 2% responded "unsure," and 5% left the question blank.[106] When asked if they have been excluded from meetings or their opinions overlooked because of their gender, 42% responded "never," 26% responded "rarely," 24% responded "sometimes," and 4% responded "often," and 3% left the question blank. Next, respondents were asked, "If you have had such an experience, please briefly detail an experience of feeling silenced."[107] Those who chose to comment left such strong and

[106] A remaining 1% is distributed in the decibels of the categories.

[107] A remaining 1% is distributed in the decibels of the categories.

emotionally filled answers that I was left wondering how more women have *not* had these experiences? Are they in denial of such experiences or embarrassed? Perhaps I should have asked, "If you have not felt silenced, how have you avoided such situations?" I am left questioning how some women fall on such opposite ends of this experience — having never encountered it, to encountering it daily, weekly, or monthly. For the anonymity of the respondents, I will only describe general trends in responses rather than provide word-for-word examples written in the survey. The trends were as follows:

- Male congregants ignore her opinion that an idea at a board meeting is inappropriate
- Male rabbi takes-over during a lifecycle ritual in which she is the lead clergy-person
- She feels unable to voice opinions or ideas for fear of being shutdown or shamed by senior rabbi or board members
- She lacks feedback from male superiors when requests for such information are made
- She feels micromanaged by board or other senior staff
- She receives "put-downs" from supervisory staff
- She is spoken-over during board meetings
- She shares an idea at a meeting; the idea is shot-down; a male staff or clergy member shares the same idea and the idea is approved
- She does not receive recognition as "the Rabbi" (that was reserved for the male, hierarchically senior, rabbi)

These were the trends in narrative provided by many of the women respondents to my survey, and yet more women responded that these issues are something they rarely or never encounter. Although more and more women are not having the problems described above, there is still work to do so that women rabbis feel just as respected as their male colleagues. Much of this growth will come from our male colleagues helping to make sure congregants and other colleagues make room for female rabbis in the room —

making sure their voices are heard, naming when people repeat ideas already shared by women, calling on their colleagues as equals and rabbis in public settings, etc.

When asked, "How much do you feel that being a woman plays a role in your rabbinate and in what ways," the women overwhelming chose to answer this question in the positive. Many of the women noted that they cannot separate being a woman from being a rabbi and that their female identification is just one of their many identities. Women reflected that they value that opportunity to be role models (perhaps even symbolic exemplars) to other women and young girls in their congregations or organizations — a role that did not exist in previous generations.

A few women noted the difficulty in distinguishing between their unique personality and their gender identity — questioning how much their treatment was related to one over the other or a combination of many factors. Other women spoke about the balance they feel they bring to the clergy team (when working with a man) and provide a different relational presence from their co-clergy. Some women feel that congregants or community members confide in them more, with the assumption that they hold a higher level of natural pastoral capabilities. Finally, many of the women mentioned being highly attuned to and aware of their femininity in dress, rebuke, teaching, counseling, and other aspects of their rabbinate.

The more negative answers tended toward comments about appearance and issues of personal space that the women feel are specifically related to their gender. Others mentioned problems with receiving respect and the proper designation of authority that they deserve as rabbis. 11% of the respondents mentioned that they are the first women to

be hired by the congregation or institution they are serving and have thus faced power struggles and respect issues from congregants who are not used to a female rabbi or who do not agree with the movement's choice to allow women to be rabbis.

For this second wave of women rabbis (if one is to say that the first wave occurred in the 1970s and 1980s) I was curious to understand how they found role models that helped them grow into the rabbis that they are today. Not explicit in my question was the hope of understanding how these women found female role models or if they felt that their only notion of a role model source was male. Women noted that they found models during rabbinical school (in their classmates, students further along in the program, and faculty), at camp, with non-Jewish clergy, and with male and female Jewish clergy. This question received the longest answers from the survey with some women expressing that they are still looking for role models while those who have found them expressed the great struggle they faced to do so. Other women expressed almost opposite reactions, noting that they found mentors and role models with ease and through the many Jewish institutions that they encountered on their path toward and in the rabbinate.

When asked about how being a woman created opportunities for them in their career, women provided exciting feedback. As just noted, for many of the women, they were the first female rabbi to work for their congregation, which led to new opportunities for them to share their feminine presence and varied approaches to leadership (in contrast to the negative issues of the power struggle). Other women expressed feeling like congregants and community members were able to express more with them and share certain things that they do not believe they would ever share with a male rabbi. Some of

the women have embraced the stereotypes of "motherly" care and behavior, or as being more nurturing, as a way to develop deeper relationships and access people in a different way. Still, other women responded that they do not feel it has created opportunities for them or they were not yet sure.

In 2015, for the first time, female ordinees were able to choose the language of their *smichah*.[108] For the respondents, 75 would still choose to have their ordination certificate read *morateinu harav*, 15 would choose the feminine form of *morateinu harabbah*, 15 were still unsure, and 12 left the question blank. Those who chose to comment mentioned the significance of having an ordination certificate that looks the same as their male colleagues. Others cited the tradition of this form and the desire to continue the line of *morateinu harav.* Only one woman commented why she chose *morateinu harabbah,* and it was because she wanted her ordination certificate to reflect the proper Hebrew grammar.

Finally, despite all of the rhetoric to the contrary of our egalitarian movement, it is still the case that there is inequity in pay and compensation for female rabbis.[109] At its widest, the gender pay gap is at women earning 80% of what their male counterparts make (this gap is in the category of senior/solo rabbis in congregations of 600 or more members).[110] Women rabbis earn more than their male counterparts as associate rabbis in

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[108] For a complete history of this change, see Rabbi Mary Zamore's Chapter 9, "What's in a Word? Inequality on the Reform *S'michah*," in *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate.*

[109] For the complete CCAR study, see: https://ccarnet.org/media/filer_public/2012/06/20/salary_study_by_gender.pdf

[110] Graf, 588.

congregations with 401–600, 801–1,000, 1,200+ family units, and as assistant rabbis in congregants of 1,001–1,200 family units. In all other categories, they are earning less.[111] Although the numbers have been counted, the CCAR has yet to publish findings on why these discrepancies exist. For an in-depth article on this topic, see Chapter 37, "Women Rabbis and The Gender Pay Gap" in *The Sacred Calling.*

The leadership, power, and gender dynamic for women in the rabbinate is an ever-evolving and changing role. The female rabbis of the 1970s and 1980s did holy work to pave the path for rabbis today. They became the first women to work in their respective congregations or organizations as rabbis, and that trend continues, which means there is still work to be done. As our country continues to wait for its first female president, American secular society continues to navigate the changing feminist narrative and the refusal to allow women to remain second-class citizens. The Jewish community must also continue to work to be acutely aware of women's current status and their potential for growth and meaningful contributions. This means offering fair salary packages, and not just publishing material on pay gaps, but implanting tools so that synagogues and Jewish institutions can close those gaps. If the Reform Jewish community wants to continue to pride itself on inclusion and egalitarianism, equal pay is just one area that needs to change in order to align with the values of the movement.

D. Personal Status and Motherhood

Historically, the community valued a male rabbi whose spouse (until 1990 this has only been a wife) was very involved in the life of the congregation. I am seeking to find out how this has shifted with female rabbis and their spouses both in synagogue life and other roles of the contemporary female rabbi.

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[111] Ibid.

"Indeed, as I have become a rabbi, so too I have become a mother. Just as both roles are challenging, so too are they incredibly gratifying. Since the inception of my career, I have tried to forge a path that accommodates both motherhood and the rabbinate, a path that, theoretically, allows me to be the kind of mother I want to be and the kind of rabbi I'd like to be. And for me, these worlds are inextricably linked, not seamlessly by any means, but in some kind of patchwork fashion."

64% of the women were married or in a committed partnership prior to ordination and 36% women were not. Of those who were married or in committed partnerships, and listed the number of years, those results were: 5% married for 1 year, 7% for 2, 3% for 3, 2% for 4, and .85% for 5 — implying that they married during rabbinical school. 3% married just before entering school, and 3% were married for fifteen years or more prior to ordination. Making assumptions based on these numbers is difficult, as 51% of the women did not list the number of years married or in a committed partnership prior to ordination.

One of the most fascinating findings was the number of women who married (or entered into a committed partnership) after ordination, as the number was very few. Only 15 of the 117 women married after becoming rabbis: 3 after 1.5 years in the rabbinate, 3 after 2, 2 after 3, 2 after 4, and 1 after 5, 6, 7, 9, and 13 years; however, 27 of the women (23%) are not married. The few number of women who married after ordination raises a number of questions: Is it difficult for ordained female rabbis to find partners? Are fewer female rabbis searching for committed relationships or marriage? If the answer to either or both of these questions is "yes," then this would signal a shift in the general trend of partnership in the rabbinate. The CCAR has not done a study, but rumors and whispers go around each year at placement that the most desired candidates tend to be men who are married to women with one or two kids. This statement stands on no firm evidence, but it

is one that I have heard every year in my time at HUC-JIR during placement season. Thus, single-female women who do not intend to have a partner in life may be passed over by those congregations searching for their understanding of a "family-oriented" rabbi. Regarding the difficulty for ordained female rabbis to find partners, one could understand this to be a cultural and societal issue for the Jewish community — men or women interested in dating a rabbi might be sparse due to her position in the spotlight, the time commitment necessary for her work, a fear of having to be a "rebbetzin," etc. Additionally, she may have very little time for a dating life or be serving a congregation or community in a small town, and since there are steep ethical issues in dating a member of the congregation, her options may virtually be at zero.

According to Pew Research, as of 2012, marriage was on the rise again.[112] Researchers speculate that this slight uptick in marriage could be the result of a recovering economy, but past research has shown that marriage did not take a significant decline during the Great Recession, so the correlation between marriage and economy is suspect.[113] Significantly, the slight increase in new marriages consisted of adults above the age of 35. The median age of a first marriage for men was 29.0, and for women, the number has remained 26.6. If we apply this age of 26.6 to women in the rabbinate, the youngest women tend to be 26 years of age when ordained. So if this is the median age of marriage for women, it would seem that women in the rabbinate are either getting

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[112] Fry, Richard. "New Census Data Show More Americans Are Tying the Knot, but Mostly It's the College-educated." Pew Research Center. Pew Research, 06 Feb. 2014. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/02/06/new-census-data-show-more-americans-are-tying-the-knot-but-mostly-its-the-college-educated/>.

[113] Ibid.

married before that age or entering rabbinical school at a later age. However, the 15 women married after ordination and the 27 women who are not yet or will not choose to marry are over the median age of married women according to the 2013 Pew Research.[114]

These trends indicate that a majority of the women (64%) marry before ordination, which may indicate that these women decided that marriage was an important aspect of feeling fulfilled in their life — through the legal and spiritual bond of marriage to their partner. Alternatively, perhaps those women in the category of being married prior to ordination felt cultural pressure to marry prior to their job search (a statement that floats around the halls of HUC-JIR each year). In almost all years surveyed there were some respondents who were married prior to ordination and some who were not. There was no large trend in the statistics that indicated a great shift in the culture — at least not a trend that can be calculated based on the responses of this particular survey (in which 24 respondents were ordained in the 1990s, 53 were ordained in the 2000s, and 38 from 2010–2015). In all three categories of years there were respondents who married prior to ordination, and at least one respondent who did not (except for 2001 in which neither of the 2 respondents married prior to ordination). As mentioned above, my takeaway from this section of research was that a majority of women marry prior to ordination, though the reasoning for this choice requires further research.

After receiving feedback from the Women's Rabbinic Network Facebook Page regarding the survey, one change was made, the inclusion of the following question: "If you are currently or have been single in the rabbinate, how has the congregation/

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[114] Ibid.

community responded? (This may include individuals who are single but looking for a spouse, those who do not intend to marry, those who have been separated or divorced, etc.)." The first 17 women to fill out the survey did not have the opportunity to answer this question, of the women who did, 63 left the answer blank, 8 wrote N/A, and 29 left comments. Respondents mentioned congregants respecting their privacy, others mentioned feeling like there was a lack of privacy, some encountered congregants who tried to play matchmaker and set them up on dates, others whose congregants thought they were gay and that was why they were unmarried, and still others who were very respectful of the rabbi's private life and supported her journey as a single woman. There was a wide spectrum of reaction and varied feelings from the women involved.

Despite the slight increase in marriage according to the above mentioned-Pew Research, there are still a record number of eligible adults who are unmarried — approximately 20%.[115] For comparison, this number was at 9% in 1960.[116] The Pew Research attributes this dramatic change as due to: "Shifting public attitudes, hard economic times and changing demographic patterns may all be contributing to the rising share of never-married adults."[117] But how have opinions changed on the topic of marriage?:

> Opinions on this issue differ sharply by age—with young adults much more likely than older adults to say society is just as well off if people have priorities other than marriage and children. Fully two-thirds of those ages 18 to 29 (67%) express this viewpoint, as do

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[115] Wang, Wendy, and Kim Parker. "Record Share of Americans Have Never Married." Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. Pew Research, 24 Sept. 2014. Web. 06 Dec. 2016. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/09/24/record-share-of-americans-have-never-married/>.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

> 53% of those ages 30 to 49. Among those ages 50 and older, most (55%) say society is better off if people make it a priority to get married and have children.[118]

If applied to our Jewish institutions and congregations, then these statistics indicate that there is an aging group of congregants who still see marriage and children as a top priority. However, the younger generation feels that society does just as well if marriage and children are not a priority. With these changing tides, perhaps the image of the rabbi as a symbolic exemplar with a happy marriage and well-behaved children will be a thing of the past.[119] On the other hand, perhaps the Jewish anxieties of continuity will continue to influence pressures on rabbis to marry and have children.

For women who have made the choice to marry, 43% provided responses that their spouses were quite involved in the congregation or institutional community — in the choir, attending services, teaching in the religious school, volunteering, participating in the brotherhood, helping with various committees, etc. 30% women provided responses that indicated their spouses were somewhat involved — attending services on occasion, volunteering on occasion. 27% of women provided responses that indicated their spouses were not involved in the congregation or institutional community at all, and 30% of women either indicated that the question was not applicable or left the question blank.

Of the 90 women who are married, 64% are not married to another Jewish professional, cantor, or rabbi while 36% are married to such a partner. The high percentage of women married to other Jewish professionals it not surprising because

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[118] Ibid.

[119] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 44–46.

involvement in the Jewish communal world often leads to increased interaction, which in turn leads to greater opportunity to meet someone in a similar career. These encounters also include people coming together over shared values and world experiences that make them healthy matches for marriage. HUC-JIR's Year in Israel program is also known to produce couples after the intensive year spent together with people sharing similar passions and values. However, with the increased use of dating websites it is equally accessible to meet people outside of the Jewish communal world as well.

With 77% of respondents currently in committed partnerships or marriage, the statistic clearly indicates that these female rabbis value the bond of marriage or committed partnership (which is not to say that the other 23% exclusively do not hold such a value). What is still unclear is whether this value is raised up through cultural and social pressures for the purposes of employment or if the choice for marriage would also be made while on a different career path. In the next ten or twenty years it is quite possible that the social and cultural trends will shift and these statistics may even become outdated. However, at this time, based on majority, the female rabbi as symbolic exemplar is more often than not a married woman.

Regarding children, 28% of the women do not have children while 72% do. 10 women had a child before rabbinical school, 24 had a child during rabbinical school, 40 had a child in their first contract, 35 in their second, 20 in their third, 3 were unsure of the contract timing. Regarding pregnancy, 31 left the question blank, 5 responded N/A, 8 were pregnant before rabbinical school, 26 during, 39 in their first contract, 33 in their second contract, 18 in their third contract, 3 were unsure of contract timing, and 4 women

adopted children after rabbinical school.[120] Reactions to the pregnancies were varied; there were 68 responses in total: 85% of those responses indicated mostly positive experiences, while 15% of those responses indicated a level of inappropriate comments or touching. 27 women did not feel that they were treated differently by their staff, congregants, or community, while 22 felt that they were — both positively and negatively. Those who adopted noted mostly positive experiences, though there were issues regarding maternity leave, as some of the institutions did not consider adoption grounds for maternity leave.

In 1976, the first rabbi gave birth.[121] The look of a rabbi changed once more; not only could a woman be a rabbi, but a pregnant woman too! Never before had the Jewish community encountered a rabbi going through this private and yet very public change. If they had not already, now, congregants could view their rabbi as a sexual being. Sure, their male rabbis had created families, but never had the congregation watched their rabbi's body change for birth week after week before their eyes.

Many women mentioned that their desire to spend time with their families led them to make career choices that required fewer hours. 8 women never received comment on their work-life balance, 28 rarely receive comment, 41 sometimes receive comments, and 34 receive comments often. Many related that the questions had to do with who was taking care of their children while their mother was busy working. Others receive great

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[120] Since some of the women have had multiple children, it did not make sense to turn these findings into percentages. Based on the findings, the most common contract for having children was the first contract.

[121] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate,* 1.

support and are often asked things like "how do you do it?" usually in an endearing and praising way.

For the female rabbi who has children, her experiences vary. As mentioned above, many have found themselves in congregations and communities that continue to treat their rabbi with the same respect as they had done before while also being supportive throughout the rabbi's pregnancy. However, for many, in addition to the wonderful support they also received tons of inappropriate comments related to her body and appearance before, during, and after pregnancy. Other congregants or community members would share with the rabbi their own pregnancy experiences in a loving and supportive way. The word "support/supportive" appeared in 40% of the comments, a significant indication of the environment for many of the women (especially since this was a free-form answer without mention of the word in the question). As in most of these categories, the experience of the female rabbi varies, but overall, she is supported by her congregants in the category of pregnancy.

III. The Female Rabbi: Redefining the Symbolic Exemplar

A. Reviewing the Feminist Critique

In her chapter, "The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar: A Feminist Critique" of *The Sacred Calling*, Rabbi Sara Mason-Barkin looks at to Bloom's work through one feminist lens. In her critique, Mason-Barkin emphasizes the influence of feminism on the rabbinate — providing the community with "new language to described and participate in relationships where power differentials exist, changing—if not eliminating—the need for Bloom's concrete boundaries." She further argues that the relationship should be seen as relational rather than hierarchical, citing Carol Gilligan's work on such relationship dynamics in her book, *In a Different Voice.* Her emphasis on the relationship aspect of the rabbi's role extends so far as to seek to eliminate Bloom's use of hierarchical language, and she uses the metaphor of a web to describe how the relational role of the rabbi can function. Mason-Barkin continues, by poising a relational model of the rabbinate as one in which "rabbis need to teach their congregants how to care for themselves and their families," rather than burning out while trying to operate under the pressures of that status associated with symbolic exemplarhood. However, the piece to be challenged is Mason-Barkin's position of dismissal rather than redefinition of what it means to be a symbolic exemplar.

The phrase of Symbolic Exemplarhood may still be still relevant, but how rabbis come to define that phrase is of the utmost importance, but women may invest this phrase with new meaning. If one is to import Mason-Barkin's emphasis on a relational model and the rabbi's intentionality regarding social expectations and the like, perhaps others'

expectations of the rabbi will reach a shifting point, after all, this is the argument the Mason-Barkin seeks to bring regarding the feminist influence on the rabbinate. When her rabbinic life is that of "enter[ing] into relationship with congregants, teaching and preaching from an authentic perspective as one who dwells among them," then this is what symbolic exemplarhood will come to embody. To be in only a relational system leaves room for the rabbi to be seen as just another individual in the community, but the rabbi is trained to be something more than that.

The term "exemplar(hood)" seems troubling at times for the amount of responsibility it places upon the rabbi, but at other times, this is a crucial part of being a leader in a community, and such leadership comes with certain responsibilities of perception in the public eye, but equating Mason-Barkin's preferred term of "role model" with Bloom's preference for "symbol," need not be too far of a stretch to make. The rabbi acts as a symbol of how a Jew can function in the world today, and such a Jew might also be considered a role model. The phrase, "role model," has too many definitions and facets to provide one narrow definition, the term is often used without any qualifiers to help the reader or listener to understand what that phrase means to them. I most often understand the phrase to be about setting an example for how to live a good and moral life — by watching someone model that behavior. It is seeing an individual *do* something, and recognizing that I want to *do* things like that too. Rabbi Mason-Barkin argues that "In the relational rabbinate, the rabbi is expected to be a guide and a role model — not a symbol."[122] Her emphasis that role model cannot also by symbol or that symbol cannot

[122] Graf, 658.

also be role model is part of the impetus for this paper. Women's inclusion in the rabbinate has required a redefinition of what symbolic exemplarhood stands for, because I agree with much of what Rabbi Mason-Barkin presents, and thus want our terms to be in unison. I too no longer to see rabbis "pretending to be symbols of God and the ideal Jew"; rather, I want their symbolic exemplarhood to represent something more tangible, relatable, and authentic. Thus, we agree that Rabbi Bloom's definition of the symbolic exemplarhood of the rabbi no longer fits the rabbi of today, and so we can re-engage with the word to evaluate how we use it today.

Throughout *The Sacred Calling,* the phrase, "role model," is used 21 times, and yet it is left undefined in all 21 instances — we just assume that everyone has an equal role model understanding of what that phrase means. Thus it is of the utmost importance that we make clear our intentions in using such words if we are to embody them to their fullest.

B. The Male Rabbis of 1972 and the Female Rabbis of 1990–2015

Going back to Rabbi Jack Bloom's original dissertation on "The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar," and as mentioned in the methodology section of this thesis, Rabbi Bloom obtained his information by interviewing five laymen from the Reform Movement, five laymen from the Conservative Movement, five rabbis from the Reform Movement, and five rabbis from the Conservative Movement. As a reminder, I did not follow his methodology in using an interview process, but instead sent out a survey with the exact same questions he used to evoke his data.[123] Additionally, I did not interview or

[123] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 59; See Appendix B.

send surveys to laymen/laywomen as a part of this thesis, as I wanted to focus on the rabbi's perception of herself as a rabbi. The rabbis who answered the survey were ordained in 1990, 1996, 1999, 2003, and 2016. Their ages ranged from 30–53 and their median age was 44.2. All 5 are congregational rabbis have worked in 1, 2, or 4 synagogues. The full sample of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

In response to the first question, "What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to you?" the women mentioned that they serve, help, or raise up the Jewish community. Some of the women specified the ways in which they do this job through: teaching, leading, learning, mourning, officiating, visioning, connecting people to tradition, and working long hours. One of the women noted that she is a rabbi because she fulfilled the requirements for ordination from HUC, and thus her status stands upon the institution that approved her ordination. This answer indicates a recognition that her authority comes from the backing of an institution that was comfortable sending her out into the Jewish community as "rabbi."

The rabbis from Bloom's survey answered the same question, in non-symbolic terms, relating that they are "interpersonal helpers" who enjoy people and participating in the ups and downs of their lives. Additionally, the rabbi works to change the way people see the world — in their beliefs, values, and behaviors. He sees himself as a servant of the Jewish community as well as one who studies as an eternal student.[124] For this question, the roles of the rabbi align very similarly and highly value community, interpersonal relationships, and learning.

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[124] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 68.

To the question, "What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to the average laypeople in your own congregation?" one of the women specifically used the language of "symbolic exemplar" to describe how the community views her and another opted for the language, "I am a representative of the Jewish people to them." That same respondent also mentioned that the congregants would assume she holds "a certain level of knowledge and authority about Judaism." One woman's answers seemed a bit more pessimistic, in that the average laypeople only see her as a deliverer of sermons, a service leader, and one who can help with life-cycle events — with no other jobs to do. Another felt that her average congregants have a very "limited understanding" of her rabbinic responsibilities. Finally, one of the women mentioned that people think she knows a lot about Judaism and that in her role as rabbi people see her as a "safe person" who cares about them. This final example exemplifies the relational aspect that many women bring with them to the rabbinate.

For the rabbis of Bloom's survey, they again mentioned the role of the rabbi as an interpersonal helper and civil servants of the Jewish community. They then pushed this role, saying that his congregation sees him as the representation of Judaism to the non-Jewish world. He is to be the handler of all things life-cycle oriented, a good preacher, able to work with children, and to run a congregation. Notably, the rabbi's perception of laypeople's view of the rabbi is that they do *not* care about the rabbi's continued study. Again, both the opinions of the rabbis from Bloom's survey and those from the female rabbis similarly align. Given the expected learnedness of rabbis today, the responses put

forth by the women seem to indicate that the laypeople *do* expect the rabbi to continue to study in a way that perhaps Bloom's interviewees did not experience.

For the next question, "Are their problems that you experience in 'being a rabbi'?" four of the women mentioned the difficulty of time — whether that be the time to build relationships, to accomplish tasks in fewer hours, or to meet the needs of the congregation. Several of them also mentioned feeling immense pressure — to be their best self, to not burnout, to take care of their personal health, to bear the burden of "acting rabbinically" — even with family, and to balance their family and home life.

By comparison, the men from Bloom's survey responded that they struggle in the tension of feeling "set-apart" from the community and therefore feeling isolated. They also acknowledged the tension that them being a "rabbi" places on their family who are expected to behave a certain way. These two characteristics (feeling isolated and the pressures of the family behaving a certain way) were not present in the women's responses. I would attribute their lack of isolation to their leadership style and the changing boundaries of the rabbi. I know of rabbis (male) who have chosen to self-isolate by shopping at grocery stores in the next town or only eating in restaurants in the next town as a way of maintaining boundaries in a way that I have not heard women describe. Furthermore, the men mentioned, like the women, that they feel the tension and pressures of the high expectations that the community places upon them as well as feeling like they must continually "act rabbinically," at home and with family. Notably, in the interview process, Bloom noted that at certain points several of the men actually denied experiencing such tensions while later describing the very tensions he had previously

asked about. In this way, the men were trying to say that they do not feel set-apart and are comfortable with their role — but Bloom noticed that such statements did not correlate to the other information they provided.[125]

To the following question, "How do you handle the problems that you experience in 'being a rabbi'?" several of the women answered that they count on the support of colleagues and their synagogue team. One mentioned focusing on balance in their lives through prayer, study, meditation, and keeping a balanced perspective on life.

For this particular question, Bloom gathered many responses from the interview process that I did not receive do to the nature of the survey. However, it is worth mentioning their view on the topic so that individuals may be able to relate or note differences in their personal experience. For example, some of the men said that they do not do anything to relieve the tensions that something come with being a rabbi, that instead they just do what comes naturally. Others responded that they may passively or actively avoid areas where problems can occur — passively, by relating to a situation in non-direct ways or even ignoring it, and actively by taking time to go somewhere that he can be anonymous. The rabbis also focus on meeting the expectations of the rabbinate while also using distancing tools from others such as insuring that he be addressed as "rabbi." The men also noted that they make the choice to stand up and flaunt their individuality as a way of dealing with the tension by asserting his humanity. Finally, the men noted that they work to better themselves by making sure they understand their inner

[125] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 112–113.

feelings which, for some, means dividing his feelings so that he is only "rabbi" in appropriate contexts.[126]

For the question, "What are the things you must do in order to remain a 'rabbi' in your own eyes?" all five women specifically mentioned the need to continue to learn, study, and grow as a person. And to the question, "What are the things you must do in order to remain a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?" three of the women mentioned the necessity of their role in performing ritual and delivering sermons. The other two focused on the congregation's desire that she keep growing as a person and that she serve the community wisely. Bloom did not breakdown his research into a category that specifically answered these questions, but instead provided answers to the inverse question, "What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in your own eyes…in the eyes of your congregation?

To the question, "What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in your own eyes?" three of the women specifically mentioned that immoral behavior would invalidate their status. One rabbi mentioned that if she stopped teaching or serving others that she would no longer be able to see herself as a rabbi. Finally, one rabbi noted that she would remain a rabbi *even* if she "transgressed the ethics or expectations of a rabbi." To this, perhaps she means that she would never lose her title, though recognizes that there would be consequences for such behavior — especially since this rabbi responded to the next question, "What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?" by saying that "transgressing the ethics of Judaism and the

[126] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 127.

rabbinate" would invalidate her title in the eyes of the congregation. Four other women mentioned ethical issues. Additionally, one mentioned that "not being fully present when serving the community" would invalidate her status of rabbi in the congregation. The women also mentioned that the renouncing of Judaism, failing to bring in new membership, or failing to prepare for rabbinic commitments would lead their congregations to invalidate their status as "rabbi."

For the rabbis of Bloom's dissertation, to no longer be able to consider themselves as rabbis they named a number of categories:

> A. Not continuing to study
>
> B. Loss of Jewish commitments and/or beliefs
>
> C. Lack of ritual observance and practice
>
> D. Sexual activity outside of marriage
>
> E. Unethical behavior/lack of integrity. These include such behavior as lawbreaking, drunkenness, lack of sincerity, and just not being a decent person.
>
> F. Personality characteristics
>
> G. There are no limits. A rabbi is always a rabbi. He can do what he wants. He has a wide variety of options. Even if he were to do something ordinarily done by a layman, he would still be a rabbi.
>
> H. Public acts by which the community would feel 'jeopardized.' Such public acts can break the symbol. If they are kept relatively private there is less danger.[127]

The most agreed upon points were the lack of continued study, loss of Jewish commitments and/or beliefs, and that there are actually no limits, that the title would remain. To the question of what a rabbi would have to do to invalidate himself in the eyes of the congregation, the rabbis responded similarly, but with a few nuances. None of them thought that continuing to study or the loss of Jewish commitments and/or beliefs would affect their status. The issue of sexual activity outside of marriage was the most

[127] Bloom, Diss. Columbia U, 147.

agreed upon point. So too for the women was this the most commonly mentioned point, a clear indication that sexual morality is a necessity of the rabbinate.

In sum, although the male rabbis of the 1972 and the female rabbis of 1990–2015 shared many similarities in their views of what it means to be a rabbi and how their congregants see them as rabbis, there were also a number of distinct differences. The most significant difference between the men and the women was in the realm of relationship. The women raised issues of not having enough time to be in relationship with other people and the difficulties that come with being deeply invested in a community, ie. burnout. The men however, focused on both the necessity of creating a sense of "self-apartness," and yet they felt the loneliness and isolation of that action.

In no question did the women indicate a concern for how their family (or marital status) was perceived, though the men did. My hypothesis is that such is the case because many women have removed the curtain of their lives and stopped trying to make their families look like perfectly well-mannered members of society at all times, in a way that was not indicated by the men who felt the pressures of having well-behaved families. This transition of boundaries from the 1970s to today should be greatly credited to the women rabbis who pushed these barriers and boundaries in order to pave a meaningful rabbinate. Additionally, when confronted with problems experienced from being a rabbi, the women all mentioned how they turn to colleagues and their synagogue team, again in a very relational form of leadership and interaction. The men provided answers that could be categorized as independent — in that they strived to solve their problems on their own, the complete opposite approach taken by the women.

C. Concluding Thoughts

The role of the rabbi has changed throughout the centuries and thus calling attention to the rabbi as a symbolic exemplar is a necessary and important reflection. Having taken into account all of the above information, I have reached the conclusion that Bloom's definition of a symbolic exemplar requires amending, because the role of the (male) rabbi from the 1960s and 1970s is outdated. No longer does the rabbi solely fill the role of scholarly Jew who preaches from the *bimah* and facilitates lifecycle events (though some in our community still see the rabbi this way). Instead, more generally, the rabbi is CEO, fundraiser, pastoral caregiver, friend, mother, father, single, sermon deliverer, membership increaser, maintenance, educator of preschoolers and the elderly, administrative assistant, and so much more. Women in the rabbinate have proven that they can be successful rabbis while also keep their families a priority. Women have changed the boundaries — gone are the days of a baby being born into a rabbi's family and then the rabbi returns to work within two weeks. Women and men have pushed for family leave because women have made it acceptable and necessary to make family a priority. There are, for certain, still battles and disagreements on this front, but there is a conversation occurring that did not exist in the mainstream of the Reform Movement twenty years prior. As Rabbi Charles Kroloff shares from his chapter in *The Sacred Calling:*

> Our women colleagues have taught us that the "Jewish family" begins with our own families, who deserve the best that we can give them, not what is left over after we have visited every hospital in the region and polished a sermon for the eighteenth time. By

> integrating their professional and personal needs, they have demonstrated that unless we live what we preach, we are bound to feel less than authentic.[128]

The authenticity of rabbis living what they preach can have profound impact on their lives as well as the lives of their congregants and/or community. Women were also some of the first, partially by force (by not being hired by congregations), to say, "I am just as good and just as valued and just as much of a rabbi," while working part-time, in non-congregational positions, or in very small synagogue communities. Women rabbis were willing to set boundaries with their congregation and make requests that went unmade by other rabbis, such as:

> Deborah Bravo (HUC-JIR '98), on accepting a senior position in 2012, [she] informed her leadership that she would be available just two out of the four weekday evenings (Monday through Thursday). On the other two nights, she had to be with her family.[129]

Rabbi Kroloff goes on to say, "By watching our woman colleagues, we men have learned to develop a new equilibrium as we strive to maintain a healthy home life."[130] So too has Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson (HUC-JIR '83) suggested, "women rabbis brought their personal issues into the workplace, and in doing so, they made pregnancy and child-bearing an issue of societal significance requiring a communal response."[131] The rabbi as symbolic exemplar now means that these are important and sacred choices of our rabbis, and so too should our lay-people see these as sacred decisions in their own lives as well.

Furthermore, having women leaders has changed the status quo of many synagogues as women tend to work better in a collaborative environment, they tend to be

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[128] T*he Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Locations 5270-5273.

[129] Ibid., Kindle Locations 5279-5281.

[130] Ibid., Kindle Locations 5279-5281.

[131] Goldstein, 128.

more attuned to listening, and more sensitive to the needs of their fellow.[132] This new version of leadership in synagogue life has influenced their male counterparts to work on developing stronger aptitudes in these various arenas. The distance between congregant and rabbi has narrowed as a result of this new leadership style and the attention paid to personal interactions. The rabbi as symbolic exemplar must now include these attributes in its definition, attributes not highlighted in the past.

In summarizing the appearance of the female rabbi, I believe there are too many options and factors at play for any one "look" to be *the look* of the female rabbi. You may find her in slacks, dresses, skirts, heels, flats, with makeup, without makeup, and any of those combinations may change depending on the occasion, weather, or mood. No single trend statistically stood out as a clear majority for clothing choices. A clear majority of female rabbis always wears makeup for Shabbat services, but there was no clear majority for always wearing makeup during the week. Regarding ritual objects, a majority of female rabbis wear a *kippah* while leading services or officiating lifecycle events and a majority also wear a medium size *tallit*.

What *is* clear about *the look* of the rabbi, is that it is no longer clear! The image of the rabbi is forever changed. No longer should the children of the Reform Movement only imagine men as rabbis — if only it were that simple. Despite our egalitarian successes, female clergy receive feedback and comments about their image in completely disproportionate amounts from their male counterparts. And yet, the rabbi's image — man, woman, or non-gender conforming individual — matters to those they serve. What

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[132]*The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, Kindle Location 5307.

the rabbi wears says something to the community, intentionally or unintentionally about the rabbi's role, and even about their personality.

I set out to discover if there were any particular trends in *tallit* size, *kippah* choices, or *t'fillin* practices. Most notably, I uncovered that 99 of the 117 women responded they sometimes wear a medium *tallit* (one that hangs over the shoulders), by far the most popular *tallit* size. And for the wearing of a *kippah*, 74 of the 117 women don one while leading services or officiating at lifecycle events and yet very few wear them all the time or during professional hours (less than 28 individuals per category). There were no obvious trends in the results, other than the majority of women wear a medium *tallit* an *kippah* while leading services. Within the Reform movement, the wearing of a headband, hat, or headscarf in place of a *kippah* has not become a trend whatsoever as 94% of the women do not wear one for that purpose and 5% of women left the question blank. Regarding *t'fillin*, although 40% have wrapped a few times but have chosen not to take on the ritual, 38% have never wrapped, and only 7% currently wrap fairly regularly. As this ritual is not a part of mainstream Reform Judaism, it is unsurprising that the percentage of female rabbis wrapping *t'fillin* is so low.

On the topic of the women's role in leadership, power, and gender dynamics, through survey responses and my own research, it became clear that the Jewish world is not immune to many of the same struggles facing women in the secular business world such as: women's opinions being overlooked, their voices quieted, and their presence left out of certain meetings. However, general trends in women's leadership style has flourished in the rabbinate, leading to a large shift in the congregational structure of

leadership — striving to move away from a top-down hierarchical system, to one of relational engagement. Female rabbis have promoted collaborative efforts while empowering their clergy and staff teams when working on large projects and day to day synagogue initiatives. Many of these women value the opportunity to be role models and symbolic exemplars to other women and young girls in their congregations and organizations while showing the men and young boys of the congregation that women can be powerful and fill these types of positions as well. Many of the female rabbis count on the support and mentoring provided by the Women's Rabbinic Network and other organizations to help them continue in their journey of learning and growth in the rabbinate.

Finally, on the topic of personal status and motherhood, 77% of the women respondents are married and 72% have children. One of the most notable outcomes of the survey was finding that only 36% of the women who were unmarried at the time of ordination got married in the years following. I am left with two main questions on the topic: Is it difficult for ordained female rabbis to find partners? Are fewer female rabbis searching for committed relationships or marriage? For those women who decided to have children, the most women gave birth during their first rabbinic contract, but there were responses of women who had children before or during rabbinical school, or in their second and third contracts. Many felt supported by their communities and congregations through their pregnancies, and though there were also many who experienced negative encounters, the overall sense was a feeling of support.

The rabbi is still a symbolic exemplar, but that symbolic exemplarhood has morphed and transformed since Rabbi Bloom first presented the phrase in the context of the rabbi's role. Rabbi Bloom focused on the layperson's expectations of the pulpit rabbi and how *they* were looking for something different from their rabbi's identity. Though some of this expectation still exists, the advent of leadership brought to the rabbinate by women, and the changing demands of institutional Judaism, have both led to a new view of the rabbi. Though the rabbi must set herself apart from the congregation to create healthy boundaries, the rabbi today is not the rabbi of previous decades. Instead, she walks down from the *bimah,* she sits on the floor of the preschool and engages the kids in a story, she does not wear a "suit and tie" to work everyday, she shows young girls that they can access all aspects of Judaism, she brings together the clergy and staff members of the synagogue so that they communicate and maintain healthy relationships through her relational leadership style, she talks about women's issues, she preaches about family life, she models the importance of being present with her own family, she feels accessible and grounded in this world, she loves being a part of the lives of her community, she shares her life experiences in her sermons, and so much more. The current female rabbinical students and rabbis stand on the shoulders of the first women rabbis who paved the foundation for their participation in this occupation and calling. We are forever indebted to those who fought the early battles, and so too may all those women to come continue the work and the fight to create Jewish spaces that treat everyone equally at all levels. The calling of the rabbinate comes with great responsibility. May all rabbis work

to push the bounds of those who earn the role of the symbolic exemplar so that they remain relevant and integrated individuals for the Jewish community.

APPENDIX A

Thesis Survey - The Female Rabbi: Redefining the Symbolic Exemplar

(Copied from the Google Form)[133]

My name is Rachael Klein Miller and as a fifth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR Cincinnati, I am seeking to learn from your experience and expertise. I believe that women in the rabbinate are qualitatively changing what it means to be a rabbi. Specifically, I am working from a hypothesis articulated by Rabbi Jack Bloom, z"l, who posited the rabbi as "symbolic exemplar."[134] I intend to explore how aspects of gender identity have an impact on the symbolic exemplar model. The thesis will focus on women ordained as rabbis by HUC-JIR between 1990 and 2015 (inclusive). I believe the information collected from these completed surveys will come to help me understand how identifying as female has or has not shaped women's experiences in the rabbinate through the lens of the forthcoming categories. I hope to be able to share what I learn with everyone who participates in the attached survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. It is possible to complete this survey anonymously or with your name. By sharing your name, I will understand that you have granted permission to be quoted unless otherwise indicated by you in a specific response. If you choose to provide your e-mail in the survey, you will receive an abstract of the results. I am most grateful for your time and for your contributions to the rabbinate.

Ordination Year

_____

Name

_____

Please list all the positions you have held since your ordination, including the organization(s) for which you have worked and for how long you were in each position. If you are concerned about anonymity, please use terms like synagogue, Hillel, etc. without stating the full-title of the organization.

_____

_____

_____

[133] There is currently know way of downloading a Google Form into a word-processing format.

[134] Bloom, Jack H. The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar: By the Power Vested in Me. New York: The Haworth Press, 2002.

Years you spent working full-time

_____

Years you spent working part-time

_____

e-mail address and/or phone number for further discussion and inquiry

_____

Personal Ritual Objects

"For some women, the demand for women to don tallitot and tefillin indicates that women must in effect become men, by wearing male garb, in order to empower themselves as Jews. Others believe that tallitot and tefillin are the garb of the Jew, and simply because women have not, by and large, had access to this meaningful ritual attire in the past does not mean that they should not wear it now, any more than they would decline to wear judge's robes or surgical scrubs because women came late to the professions of medicine and law."[135] With this in mind, I am seeking to gather information on choices of personal ritual objects for female rabbis to better understand how female rabbis approach head-covering, tallit, and tefillin.

1. Select all that apply: When leading services you will wear a (add comments in "other" section):

   - ☐ Large *Tallit* (one that requires tossing tzitzit over shoulders)
   - ☐ Medium *Tallit* (hangs over shoulders)
   - ☐ *Atarah*
   - ☐ I do not choose to wear a *tallit*
   - ☐ Other…[add comment here]

2. Do all of the clergy/*shlichei tzibbur* wear the same type or size of *tallit*? (add comments in "other" section):

   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ N/A
   - ☐ Other…[add comment here]

[135] Goldstein, Elyse, ed. New Jewish Feminism: Probing the Past, Forging the Future. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009.

3. Select all that apply: When do you wear a *kippah*? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ When leading services or officiating at lifecycle events
- ☐ During professional hours
- ☐ Almost all of the time
- ☐ I do not wear a *kippah*
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

4. Select all that apply: When do you wear a headband/head-wrap/headscarf as a ritual act to cover your head? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ When leading services or officiating at lifecycle events
- ☐ During professional hours
- ☐ Almost all of the time
- ☐ I do not wear a headband/head-wrap/headscarf as a way of covering my head
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

5. Select the option(s) that best describe your tefillin practice (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ I wrapped before or during HUC-JIR fairly regularly, but I no longer wrap
- ☐ I wrapped before HUC-JIR and continue to wrap fairly regularly
- ☐ I never wrapped before HUC-JIR but now I wrap regularly
- ☐ I wrapped a few times but have not chosen to take on this ritual
- ☐ I have never wrapped tefillin
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

6. How do you view the practice of tefillin? Select the options that apply (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ I see it as a male-ritual
- ☐ I wrapped a few times but do not connect to the ritual
- ☐ I find the ritual meaningful
- ☐ I find the ritual time-consuming
- ☐ I am a vegan/vegetarian and am against the wrapping of leather
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

Leadership and Power

"In 1983, Rabbi Laura Geller wrote about her own experiences: she found that 'people don't attribute to women the power and prestige that they often attribute to men.' And from that observation, she derived the following conclusions: 'When women become rabbis or priests, there is often less social distance between the congregant and the clergy.' As a result, 'the lessening of social distance and the reduction of the attribution of power and status leads to the breakdown of hierarchy within a religious institution.' Thus, she argues, female participation had the effect (and, presumably, continues to have the effect) of redefining congregational life [and I would add, non-congregational life] in more democratic and egalitarian terms."[136] The answers to these questions will help me to better understand the dynamics of being a female in a leadership position.

7. What is the makeup of your clergy staff regarding gender identification? i.e. I am the senior and the assistant is male; I am the associate, the senior is male, and the cantor is female, I am the solo clergy member.

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Select all that apply: Have you ever negotiated your contract? (add comments in "other" section):

   - ☐ Yes, alone
   - ☐ Yes, with a lawyer
   - ☐ No, I have never negotiated
   - ☐ Other…[add comment here]

9. Have you ever asked for a raise? (add comments in "other" section):

   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No
   - ☐ Other…[add comment here]

[136] *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate,* 383.

10. To the best of your knowledge, have you been paid less than a male clergy person with comparable experience/resumé? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

11. Have you ever been denied what you thought was an appropriate maternity benefit? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

12. If you are a member of a clergy team, does any other clergy-member have a say in what your wear (if YES, add comments in "other" section).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ A vote but not a veto
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

13. How would you describe your leadership style?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Have you been excluded from meetings or your opinion overlooked because you are a woman?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Often

15. Please briefly detail an experience of being excluded from a meeting or your opinion being overlooked because you are a woman, if you have had such an experience.

16. "How much do you feel that being a woman plays a role in your rabbinate and in what ways?" (Question asked in The Sacred Calling Chapter 14)

17. "How did you find role models for yourself as a woman rabbi?" (Question asked in The Sacred Calling Chapter 14)

18. "How has being a woman created obstacles for you in your career?" (Question asked in The Sacred Calling Chapter 14)

19. "How has being a woman created opportunities for you in your career?" (Question asked in The Sacred Calling Chapter 14)

20. Have you ever felt silenced in your position because you are a woman? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often

21. If you have had such an experience, please briefly detail an experience of feeling silenced.

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. If it had been available for your s'micha, which phrase would you have chosen and why? (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ מורתנו הרב
- ☐ מורתנו הרבה
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

Image

Our texts demonstrate our tradition's emphasis on dress (such as the text of Parashat Tetzaveh), especially as it relates to the priestly class. These garments provide the class with a certain status and role in the community. As such, we have had ties to external garments since our inception. Though the garments have changed, dress still provides meaningful insight into the leadership of the Jewish community. Like the leadership of the priests, the role of the rabbi often involves a place at the front of the community. With this privileged position comes many choices afforded to the female rabbi regarding her image, i.e. clothing, hair, nails, shoes, makeup, ritual objects.

23. Select all that apply: When leading Shabbat services you wear (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Slacks/Pant Suits
- ☐ Skirt/Dresses
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

24. Select all that apply: During the work week you wear (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Slacks/Pant Suits
- ☐ Skirt/Dresses
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

25. When leading services do you (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Always wear makeup
- ☐ Sometimes wear makeup
- ☐ Never wear makeup
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

26. During the work week do you (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Always wear makeup
- ☐ Sometimes wear makeup
- ☐ Never wear makeup
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

27. When leading services do you (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Wear your hair up
- ☐ Wear your hair down
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

28. Select all that apply: When leading services you wear (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Heels
- ☐ Flats
- ☐ Close-toed shoes
- ☐ Open-toed shoes
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

29. Select all that apply: During the work week you wear (add comments in "other" section):

- ☐ Heels
- ☐ Flats
- ☐ Close-toed shoes
- ☐ Open-toed shoes
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

30. Staff and/or those whom you serve comment on your clothing choices:

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

31. Staff and/or those whom you serve comment on your hair choices:

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Almost Always
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

Personal Status

Historically, the community valued a male rabbi whose spouse (until recently this has only been a wife) was very involved in the life of the congregation. I am seeking to find out how this has shifted with female rabbis and their spouses both in synagogue life and other roles of the contemporary female rabbi.

32. Were you married (or in a committed partnership) before you entered the rabbinate? (add comments and # of years in "other" section):

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

33. If you were not already married (or in a committed partnership), how many years into the rabbinate did you marry (or enter into a committed partnership), if at all?

34. If you are currently or have been single in the rabbinate, how has the congregation/ community responded? (This may include individuals who are single but looking for a spouse, those who do not intend to marry, those who have been separated or divorced, etc.)

35. Are you currently married to another Jewish professional, cantor, or rabbi? (add occupation/responsibilities in "other" section):

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

36. Is your spouse involved in the congregation/community? If so, how?

Motherhood

"Indeed, as I have become a rabbi, so too I have become a mother. Just as both roles are challenging, so too are they incredibly gratifying. Since the inception of my career, I have tried to forge a path that accommodates both motherhood and the rabbinate, a path that, theoretically, allows me to be the kind of mother I want to be and the kind of rabbi I'd like to be. And for me, these worlds are inextricably linked, not seamlessly by any means, but in some kind of patchwork fashion."[137] With these words in mind, I seek to better understand how pregnancy and/or having children affects women in the rabbinate today.

[137] Personal Reflection of Rabbi Sara Yellen Sapadin in *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*

37. How often do your congregants/community comment on your work-life balance? (add comments in "other" section)

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

38. Regarding children, please select all that apply (if applicable, in the "other" section write # of children):

- ☐ I do not have children
- ☐ I had a child before rabbinical school
- ☐ I had a child during rabbinical school
- ☐ I had a child during my first contract
- ☐ I had a child during my second contract
- ☐ I had a child during my third contract
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

39. If you have been pregnant, were you pregnant during:

- ☐ The time before rabbinical school
- ☐ Rabbinical school
- ☐ Your first contract
- ☐ Your second contract
- ☐ Your third contract
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

40. If you adopted children, how did your staff or congregants/community respond?

_____

_____

_____

_____

41. How did staff or congregants/the community react to your pregnancy?

_____

_____

_____

42. Did you feel like you were treated differently by your staff or congregants/ community during your pregnancy? If so, how?

_____

_____

_____

Mikveh

In recent years, organizations like Mayyim Hayyim have reclaimed the use of the *mikveh* for Liberal streams of Judaism. As a piece of one of the three historical mitzvot obligated to women, I am seeking to discover if female rabbis, in particular, have begun to incorporate this ritual back into their personal lives and those of their congregants/ communities.

43. Do you or have you ever gone to the *mikveh* (regularly) after your menstrual cycle?

- ☐ I used to use the *mikveh*, but not anymore
- ☐ I use the *mikveh* regularly
- ☐ I have never used the *mikveh*
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

44. Have you ever gone to the *mikveh* for other spiritual purposes? If so, please list those experiences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

45. Do you talk to female congregants about *mikveh* practice? Select all that apply

- ☐ Yes, I teach a class
- ☐ Yes, if I am asked
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other…[add comment here]

46. Is there a community *mikveh* in town and are you on the board?

- ☐ No such thing exists
- ☐ Yes, but I am not on the board
- ☐ Yes, and I am on the board

Thank You

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey, it will be immensely helpful to my thesis. Once again, If you choose to provide your e-mail in the survey, you will receive an abstract of the results. I am most grateful for your time and for your contributions to the rabbinate.

E-mail address

_____

Anything else you would like to add?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Female Rabbis

(Copied from the Google Form)[138]

My name is Rachael Klein Miller and as a fifth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR Cincinnati, I am seeking to learn from your experience and expertise. I believe that women in the rabbinate are qualitatively changing what it means to be a rabbi. Specifically, I am working from a hypothesis articulated by Rabbi Jack Bloom, z"l, who posited the rabbi as "symbolic exemplar."[139] I intend to explore how aspects of gender identity have an impact on the symbolic exemplar model. The thesis will focus on women ordained as rabbis by HUC-JIR between 1990 and 2015 (inclusive). This questionnaire seeks to help me understand how you see yourself as a rabbi. I am following a similar, though not exact, methodology to that used by Bloom for the dissertation that he later turned into a book. The questions are in fact the same he posed over 40 years ago.

Your answers to these 8 questions will help me to understand how you view yourself as a rabbi. Although I will know who has responded, you will remain completely anonymous in the body of the thesis.

I am most grateful for your time and for your contributions to the rabbinate.

Name

_____

Year Ordained

_____

Age

_____

Number of Congregations Served

_____

Would you be willing to accept any follow-up contact from me? If so, please leave your preferred e-mail and/or phone

_____

[138] There is currently know way of downloading a Google Form into a word-processing format.

[139] Bloom, Jack H. The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar: By the Power Vested in Me. New York: The Haworth Press, 2002.

1. What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to you?

2. What does the fact that you are a rabbi mean to the average laypeople in your own congregation?

3. Are their problems that you experience in "being a rabbi?"

4. How do you handle the problems that you experience in "being a rabbi?"

5. What are the things you must do in order to remain a "rabbi" in your own eyes?

6. What are the things you must do in order to remain a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?

7. What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in your own eyes?

8. What would you have to do to invalidate yourself as a "rabbi" in the eyes of your congregation?

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