

Keynote Speech at the Convention of The Central Conference of
American Rabbis San Francisco 1976¹

On Being A Rabbi

Rabbi Lelyveld, Rabbi Glaser. Actually, in a manner of speaking, all of this began in a גן (*gan*)² in Rechavia in 1969 when Jack, who is Joe's little boy, met my daughter Rebecca. They constituted in that gan two thirds of the Anglo- Saxon landsmanshaft, and they got to know each other.... Randy told you a bit of my history. And as you know, a Ph.D. is supposed to be an original piece of research. Now had the people who were my advisors to my Ph.D. known something about Jewish tradition, they might have thrown it out as not being an original piece of research, because the tradition does say a lot about the שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*)³ from whom the pulpit rabbi is a direct descendant.

And in the sixteenth century, Moses Mintz of Hamburg says that the ideal שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*) -and you can hear this as a description of the ideal pulpit rabbi-should be blameless in character, humble, a general favorite and married; should be able to read easily and understand all the books "of the Holy Scriptures; be the first to enter and the last to leave the house of God, and to strive to attain the highest degree of devotion in his prayers. He should dress neatly and wear a long garment and knee breeches. And he should not look about him nor under his mantle. And he shouldn't move his hands restlessly but he should keep them folded neatly. And outside God's house, he should avoid sowing any seeds of anger or hatred against himself by keeping aloof from all communal disputes.

¹This keynote speech received a prolonged standing ovation. With the gracious and visionary leadership of my beloved friend, Rabbi Joseph Glaserz' it led to my becoming Director of Professional Career Review of the Central Conference of America Rabbis conducting multiple Mid- Career Review and Planning 4 day programs in a retreat location which for over 30 years assisted rabbis desiring to reshape their future. The text has been altered in recognition of the move towards gender equality that has transformed for the better, the symbolic nature of the rabbi..

²גן (*gan*)-Nursery School

³שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*)- Leader of Public Prayer

Now almost all the research in the work that I have done has been exemplified in that previous quote. Nonetheless, since they didn't know it. I will now talk about it.

The pulpit rabbi is, most of all, a symbolic exemplar. He or she, as the case may be, is the symbol of something other than himself or herself. The pulpit rabbi is a symbolic leader who is set apart to function within the community as a symbol of that community and as an exemplar of their desire for moral perfection. The rabbi is thus a walking, talking, living symbol. The rabbi stands for something other than himself or herself and in order to function, rabbis must be seen and perceived that way. And in order to function, rabbis must act in such a way as not to destroy that symbol.

It is crucial for the rabbi to fulfill the symbolic aspects of that role. Perhaps the major expectation of the rabbi is that in some crucial way, the rabbi is expected to be a different kind of human being. A rabbi is the embodiment of what people ought to do but have no intention of doing and a rabbi is expected to be different in morality, in caring for people, and is expected to be different as a spouse and a parent. That, of course, has a lot of implications for all rabbis, be they female or male.

Pulpit rabbis must truly care and must fully believe or at least must be seen that way as fully believing in what he or she is doing. Indeed, who the rabbi is, is more important than what the rabbi does. Now in my own work, I have quite clearly tested that out. The perception of the rabbi's inner characteristics is what for the laity determines a rabbi's efficacy and importance as a rabbi. Other people are hired or fired or valued in terms of what they do. The rabbi is valued in terms of who he or she is perceived to be.

And for the symbol to exist, a rabbi must have these special attributes. A rabbi is expected to be a different kind of person or must at least be seen that way. That makes functioning as a clergy-technician, to say the least, a very hazardous kind of thing. A doctor may have a superb bedside manner; a teacher a charismatic classroom presence; an executive may be a tiger on the job and a pussycat at home but a rabbi is expected to be the same person on and off the job. Because if the rabbi is not the same, then how else do you measure really caring and truly believing. A doctor could get by --and I've seen a lot of them --even if he or she didn't care

for people but was just a darned good surgeon. A rabbi could not. The rabbi could visit the hospital, could say and do the right thing. But if people discovered that the rabbi did not at heart really care, he or she would be in a very difficult spot. Now that too goes back in our tradition.

Speaking about the original שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*) we discern what one of the measures of the שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*) is. They say of the שליח צבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*) that

שליח ציבור שמעריך בתפילתו כדי שישמעו שקולו ערב,
אם הוא מחמת שמחה בלבו על שנותן הודאה לשם יתברך
תבוא עליו ברכה והוא שיתפלל בכובד ראש ועומד באימה ויראה,
אבל אם מתכוון להשמיע קולו, ושמח בקולו הרי זה מגונה

A שליח ציבור (*Shaliach Tsibbur*) who lengthens his prayers wanting the congregation to hear his beautiful voice-if he does that because of the joy in his heart at thanking God the Blessed One in beauty-is to be blessed-IF he prays seriously and stands in awe and fear-BUT-if he merely wants the congregation to hear his voice because he is proud of his voice-he is to be despised.”

We can't know for sure the inner heart of any rabbi. What we want to find out is the crucial question: "Is this rabbi (male or female) authentic and real?" That symbol is the crucial piece of work, for again -and I want to repeat it purposely -it is not what the rabbi does that is crucial but who the rabbi is and more important, who the rabbi is perceived to be. Both rabbi and laity have to work at maintaining this symbol. It is the essence of the rabbi. To break the symbol is to lose efficacy. And both rabbi and laity participate in creating and maintaining the symbol.

Now you may say that rabbis are not the only walking, talking symbols. After all there are celebrities and royalty and presidents of countries. It is true that all of these people are public property. That's not an illusion. And the public has adopted the celebrity, or the Queen of England, or the holder of public office as an image of a certain kind and does expect him or her to be that image or that symbol.

Let me tell you a story about a man who played at being one of those symbols. Some of you remember the TV serial Ben Casey, who was played

by Vince Edwards. Listen to this description of Vince Edwards after he had acted the role of Ben Casey for a while:

He became uncomfortably aware of the discrepancies of his own life, which happened to include a devotion to betting on horse races, and the God-like image that he had come to represent to the public. *"I won't do anything to destroy the image,"* he said, and tried to keep his private life subdued and separate. Sound familiar? Sounds familiar.

Yet it was not easy, because magazines published pictures of his horse-playing and the public watched him every possible moment. Even his close friends began to be effected. Listen to the next lines and see if they don't sound familiar. This is a quote: *"Some of my old friends begin to weigh their words when we get together now. They don't see me as plain old Vince Edwards now. What they see now is the image. They see Ben Casey. It makes a difference, believe me. Their attitudes change, they stiffen. And I can't say I like that and I'm not sure I like losing a little privacy. I wish it were different in some ways, the whole success thing. But that's how it is; how do you fight it?"*

Now that's what happens to a man who only plays a role on TV. As I say, he's playing a role on TV, playing at being a doctor. Imagine what happens to the rabbi who is so visible. Whatever private life the rabbi has is extremely vulnerable to that visibility. Is the rabbi different than the celebrity and different than the politician? The rabbi is expected to be a symbol without physical distance and is expected to be a unique and moral person. Now a celebrity is cushioned from the public. We saw in the Final Days what happens when a celebrity is not cushioned from the public. A politician is not expected to be moral. The rabbi is expected to be that as well.

Now, how do rabbis and laypeople participate in maintaining that symbol while still living in the midst of the congregation? Well like Vince Edwards, a lot of rabbis won't do anything to destroy the symbol. They are careful and circumspect. And some accept the exemplarhood of being a rabbi and work hard at it--and try hard to be consistent, fair, sensitive pious and moral models. Virtually all of us do some editing; we act the role; we try as far as we can to keep the private, private; We relish a little bit of anonymity. We channel our anger only to appropriate places. We try

to keep some distance and be circumspect. And indeed prudence politeness and restraint do help maintain the symbolic image.

But I maintain that no matter whom the rabbi is, each of us has the sense that the symbol has limits and we always act in such a way as not to break those limits. Now what do laypeople do? Laypeople do a great deal to create the symbol. First, they attribute to the rabbi special attributes, although not out of malice. Let's understand that. When the layperson says of the rabbi, "He's human, **but**" and attributes special attributes to the rabbi --the rabbi is supposed to be more moral, more learned, whatever it is—he or she is not doing that out of malice. Remember that! We have presented ourselves as rabbis and as those special kinds of people. Perhaps the best way I can show you that kind of special attribute is a story that happened to my wife and myself. It's a good story and I like it. It's a true story. Back in 1973, Meryl, who is my wife, decided that she was going to go to Israel to a friend's son's Bar Mitzvah. It was the first time she had gone by herself on that kind of trip. She was into Women's Lib and all of that kind of thing. And I called the Ritual Chairman of the congregation which was just beginning to give women עליות (*aliyot*)⁴ and said, "Look Mike, can you give Meryl an עליה (*aliyah*) tomorrow?" And the next day Meryl got up for her first עליה (*aliyah*), her knees knocking, went to the תורה (*Torah*), said the blessings and came down. At the end of the service, the rabbi, who used to be a camper of mine, didn't say a word. **Not a word!**

And Meryl turned to me and said, "For ten years I sat next to you and I slept next to you and I listened to you do all that junk -wishing people well on their trips, blessing them and hoping they enjoy their twenty-fifth anniversary or their fiftieth anniversary and I listened to you and I'd laugh at all that stuff. If he doesn't say something now when I'm nervous about going to Israel, I'm going to be sore as all getout." And she with some petulance in her voice said, "**You can't do it for me because you're not my rabbi.**"

But that is what happens with the rabbi. Thank God that Laybel found out that she was going on the trip. At the קדוש (*Kiddush*),⁵ he made all the

⁴ עליות (*aliyot*)plural- עליה (*aliyah*)singular-The honor of ascending to the reading of The תורה (*Torah*) -The Five Books of Moses and reciting the blessings.

⁵ קדוש (*Kiddush*) The Collation which often follows the Service.

proper מִיִּשְׁבְּרַךְ (*misheberachs*),⁶ and everything, and Meryl felt better and I had a lovely weekend.

This is true, incidentally. The other thing is that once a rabbi, always a rabbi. Once you've presented yourself in this way, once you've functioned- for people in that priestly symbolic role, you're always a rabbi. You can be described as the goofy, hippie rabbi, as I've heard a rabbi described. Orthodox people have called a specific rabbi, the Goyisheh rabbi. I've heard of the tennis-playing rabbi and the flying rabbi and recently, some ten years after I'd been in the rabbinate, I was introduced as the rabbi who isn't a rabbi. The rabbi is somehow seen and perceived as a different kind of person even if he or she disowns being a rabbi.

In the course of my research, one of the men there succeeded another rabbi who had gone into the stock market, and in his congregation, he kept on being asked the question, "Do you think it's right for a rabbi to go into becoming a stockbroker" This rabbi says that he asked them what they might have accepted as a legitimate change for a rabbi? And they said: "Well, a social worker might be OK! You know, a nonmercenary kind of enterprise." He asked them why they felt that way, and they said. "Because you fellows are in the rabbinate. That's a lifetime calling, and there's no way out; there's something special about it, and people depend on you." That was his quote.

It is that kind of specialness that you never lose, as long as people know that. Now, laypeople, of course, say that the rabbi is human, **but!** But I have not found any laypeople who do not perceive the rabbi as being a different kind of human being in some way. We all know the downshift that happens when someone finds out that you're a rabbi You can hear the gears clank as they start to talk to you about their Talmud Torah education, Sunday school, etc. All of a sudden, you know that an editing and a changing process has taken place in them.

In the research I did -research interviewing rabbis and laity of those rabbis. -the rabbi told me that he was chastised by his congregation for singing dirty songs to the teenagers. And the layman says, "I don't think I would ever tell a dirty joke in front of the rabbi, for some reason, though

⁶ מִיִּשְׁבְּרַךְ (*misheberachs*) "May the One who blessed our ancestors bless so and and so and so....."

I'm sure that the rabbi wouldn't object. I don't know, I've never told the rabbi an off-color story. Now, I would like to be able to have respect for the rabbi both as a human being and as a rabbi. I think that's what I'm trying to do, to find two people in one. And it's not easy!"

We know, of course, that there are those laypeople who will test the limits of a rabbi. The seductiveness of offering a drink, and another drink, and trying to get the rabbi a little high, and so forth, are all doing the same thing, kind of testing that symbol, seeing whether it's really there.

Now, what are some of the consequences of that? Well, for those for whom symbol and self are really one, there's very little problem. They function very, very well in the pulpit for years and years and years, and they're some of the great rabbis of America. But I found that what happens with most, increasingly over the years, is a sense of set-apartness that increases with time, a kind of loneliness in the middle of the crowd, a sense of living behind a glass wall with other people.

The other side of the set-apartness becomes also a self-apartness from one's own feelings. Let me tell you a story that will exemplify that better than any technical work. In Fairfield, Connecticut, where I live, there's a supermarket called Sunshine, which is *the* Jewish supermarket: they have the bagels and the lox and the kosher style this and that. Now, I remember the experience when I was in the pulpit of going to shop at Sunshine. Going into Sunshine to buy a container of milk was a work experience for me.

"Hello, how are you? How's grandma, grandpa? Your aunt, your uncle?"

Everyone?"

And then, God forbid, if I didn't smile wide enough to somebody, I heard about it.

I remember after coming back from Israel, that when I went into Sunshine Market for a container of milk and I saw someone whom I really had a lot of feeling for, I was able to smile and say, "Hey, how are you? Long time since I've seen you." And those whom I really didn't care for. -tough! And I didn't have to hear about it.

In the words of one of the men at Mohonk, (n.b. The very first Career Review) we as "professional lovers, lose touch with a very important differentiation in us, that is, there are those whom we really love because we really love them, because that's in our guts, and there are those whom we love because we are paid to care for the flock and to love every sheep, even the blackest or the whitest. "I don't want to get into the racial issue...but when I discovered that I was smiling because I really cared, and not because it was my job to smile and care, that was taking something very important back for me.

Now, as for as the rabbi's spouse and family, every rabbi's spouse-and I've gone through the literature on all this -- maintains all kinds of things. I maintain unequivocally that every rabbi's spouse has married both a human being and a walking talking living symbol. And marrying a symbol always has consequences, because the symbolic expectation of the rabbi that he/she be a special, caring, loving person who will have a model relationship with his spouse and family, makes the couple's relationship in the home, and in their comings and goings outside the home, whether within the congregational buildings, or on a trip where members of the congregation are present, the proof of the pudding. It also makes it terribly lonely. For a symbolic exemplar, the boundary between public and private is a dangerous, risky boundary or at least, it potentially is a dangerous, risky, vulnerable boundary.

Irving Goffman⁷ talks about the "Backstage area." I made a mistake yesterday at the St. Francis, and I went into the backstage area of the hotel. The backstage area of the St. Francis is not elegant, it's not beautiful. I'm sure that when the waiters make nasty remarks about the people outside, that's all backstage, but when they come out, they're smiling and wonderful, put the coffee down and everything's lovely.

For the pulpit rabbi, the backstage area is a very vulnerable place and sometimes very nonexistent. But that's the place where you must measure the rabbi. Is this authentic? Is this rabbi really the kind of rabbi that we expect him to be? That makes the rabbi's public image a hostage to his spouses and family's behavior. This puts a lot more stuff into the marital and family pot that are not items for any other family.

⁷ The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life; 1959

I could give you some examples from my research. There was the rabbi who wants to keep kosher and his spouse who doesn't want to keep kosher. You agonize for a long time. How can I be a successful rabbi if I can't even convince my spouse to be kosher? What are we going to do? Furthermore, the issue of **נִשְׂרֻת** (*Observing the Kosher dietary rules*) in the home doesn't become an issue between husband and wife--it becomes an issue of the rabbi's relation to the congregation as well as to the person who shared space under the chuppah.

One Rabbi reported; We had a whole big thing in this congregation because my wife wears pantsuits on **שַׁבָּת** (*Shabbat morning*)⁸, and my Religious Committee had taken a position against it. They printed an article and I had to go print a retraction. In any other family that would not be an issue. I'm not talking here about what a rabbi *should* do. I'm saying that that is additional stuff put into the marital pot that has to be dealt with.

Listen to just one rabbi talk about his kids. He said, "My children ride their bicycles on **שַׁבָּת** (*Sabbath*) and I don't mind. I know from speaking with my colleagues in some communities that their children have sometimes been criticized. Or the rabbi has been criticized for having children do something on **שַׁבָּת** (*Sabbath*). I have not been confronted with this although my children do ride their bicycles on **שַׁבָּת** (*Sabbath*). although if they were teenagers or adults, it would be something where that would cause public comment."

You name me one other person who would even bother to talk about it. The extent to which the rabbi and his Wife or the rabbi and her husband take into account how their behavior is in public and how it will appear to the world, has an effect. It's not a question of what answer we give the teenager who on Friday night wants to go to the basketball game instead of to services. The very fact that that is an issue becomes a kind of test of a rabbi's symbolic exemplarhood.

Other areas also affect a rabbi's spouse and family. I remember my wife and I having the following conversation in the first six years of my pulpit

⁸ **שַׁבָּת** (*Sabbath*) Friday evening until Saturday evening, a day of rest, when certain behaviors are required and others forbidden.

rabbinate-at least, twenty times a year. We would come home on a Saturday night and we'd say, "Aren't they a lovely couple? Do you think they could be our friends?" And each time, they were lovely, and loved us and paid their dues and gave to the building fund and said, "Rabbi, you're wonderful! but they weren't our friends. When I came out of the pulpit later on, I said to them, "Hey, Lenny and Marcia; What happened- those ten years? How come you never called us? How come you didn't call us just to go out?" And they said, "*Well you know, we had a party and didn't want you to be a wet blanket.*" I was no more interested in being a wet blanket at a party than being the man in the moon. But somehow, that perception, that the rabbi either is busy or that being with the rabbi is going to cause them to have to downshift the gears, leads to that sense of isolation among people who love us. Incidentally- בעלי בתים (ba'alei batim)⁹ don't understand this! You try to tell them what this loneliness is and if they really do love you, what they'll say is; "*Rabbi, we love you.*" And they mean it. They mean it that they do love you.

On the other hand, of course, you have what I call the clergy collectors. Those are the people who will take anyone who has been ordained in any way, and call them and invite them and deal with them. They're often very nice people. They're sometimes the backbone of congregations. They're sweet, nice people, but that's what they are. And that affects social relationships. Jews often form friendships in the congregation. They choose congregations often on the basis of friendships. Remember, for the rabbi, his socializing or her socializing is work. That's where you do your work. That kind of thing changes the nature of what Saturday night is, and how many Saturday nights you have available and what you can do on Saturday night. The very fact that the rabbi works when others are off, that rabbis are out of synch with the rest of society, evenings and weekends -what does that do to a family?

First of all, a rabbi's work is other people's recreation. I know it is. I'm a Board member of my old schule now. The rabbi, incidentally, is a former camper of mine. I said to him, "Laybel, I'm going to be on the Board. Am I going to give you a hard time"!! So! he said, "Why should you be different? But for me, I don't have to go to the Board meeting. If I'm bushed from a day's work, I don't go to the Board meeting. But schule is recreation for me. That's fun. As for him, that's work. And of course, that

⁹ בעלי בתים (ba'alei batim) lit: Home Owners—Here-Synagogue Members.

being out of synch has an effect. The women spoke this morning about spouses having a professional career of their own. What do you do if you have a professional career and when you're home with the kids, the rabbi is out? What do you do with that?

Or when other fathers are with their kids, the rabbi is out. It puts another element into the family pot and it's hard to live with rabbi-spouses gone so much of the time, especially when other husbands and wives are around.

Or of course, another difficulty happens when something in the congregational family interferes with something in the personal family. Each time a decision has to be made, about a funeral, a wedding, and what and how plans are made.

I know some of you will fight with me on this, but I have the podium so I'm going to say it. I've learned since getting out of the pulpit that the rabbi's family never really belongs. No matter how long you've been in the community, you and your family are never really part of that community in the same way that other Jews are. We can kid ourselves about that, but I think that's so. Some of the evidence for that is that among rabbis whom I know, the best friends of rabbis are other rabbis whom they went to school with fifteen, twenty, twenty-five and thirty years ago. This is different than the situation with other professionals. I know of very few lawyers who say, "My best friend is the guy I finished law school with, twenty-five or thirty years ago. But for rabbis, those are the people with whom they can really be close. I don't think that we have deep roots in the communities we live in. I think there's a lot of evidence for that. That's a painful fact, but I think it's so.

One other thing: A spouse's devotion and the family's devotion and loyalty are always tests of the rabbi's effectiveness and always on view.

There is no doctor's wife who expects to be treated by her husband medically. Even if he's an OBGYN and she's having a kid she'd go to some other OBGYN. If my family needs psychological treatment, the last one they'd come to would be me. But you just try as the spouse of a rabbi going to another congregation. Especially if you think the other rabbi is more spiritual and knowledgeable in arcane texts.

Your rabbi is supposed to be your rabbi, your minister as well as your spouse. Only in this career is that so. Again, that puts the test to loyalty: what has the rabbi produced?

One rabbi was fired from a congregation because he sent his child to a different synagogue school. His own Talmud Torah wasn't good enough. You can get by with day schools, but his religious school wasn't good enough! He sent him to another religious school down the road and said, "It's my kid. I'm going to do what I want." And he was talking to me from a different congregation

Now, symbolic exemplarhood in the moral and religious realm provides the rabbi with a larger than life image. There is no way around that. Such an image is at the very core of being a rabbi. The rabbi is designated by others and volunteers to exemplify a caring, nurturing, involved, moral person. Being a rabbi is choosing a profession in which it is crucial to both appear to be something more than one is, while still maintaining ongoing contact with other people. Rabbis are willing helpers, the good father or mother, the para-familial member of many families. And to help rabbis maintain their role, they are given significant protection. Rabbis are treated with respect and deference and shielded overtly from others' anger and vulgarity. Rabbis generally are not subjected to, many of the stresses that others are subjected to. Without such protection, the rabbi could not continue to maintain close contact and still function as an exemplar of those attributes that a rabbi is expected to symbolize. The price of this protection for the rabbi is a sense of otherness and difference, of loneliness in the midst of the crowd. The barriers erected by both laypeople and rabbi that create this insulated and isolated existence is made up of masks put on, words edited and emotions- held in check.

Let me suggest a couple of things: I think the most exciting thing that was done in recent years is the program of mid-Career Review that the CCAR has begun. This is potentially a rich program for helping rabbis to get to, again, know one another, get to share with one another, be able to put out the kind of thing that really shares their humanity.

Plus the creation, of course, that will come out of this- of rabbinic support groups, and there are a number of those going now, where rabbis can get together and share the fellowship of being human beings in the

same kind of profession. You know, the kind of intimacy that a convention- might provide, if it went on for two weeks to a month, and we were able to get by the *"My Friday night service is larger, taller, stronger, than your Friday night service"* kind of syndrome. There's an appropriate place for that at conventions but to get past that, into the whole human dimension and the sharing, is a kind of thing that I think, we have to see to.

The creation of retreat environments, where rabbis and families can be just **דומים** (*regular folks*), ordinary people, where they can live-perhaps a rabbinic camp, perhaps some kind of retreat house - where rabbis can go to spend vacations together with other rabbis and have a ball, enjoy, and just be a person, without having to shift gears or grow a beard. A colleague of mine, a Conservative rabbi, grew a beard to go anonymous. And they discovered him, you know!

An immense amount of work has to be done towards helping Jewish professionals who are located in the same community, instead of their competing with one another, to support one another.

Rabbi↔Rabbi relationships are indispensable, especially between rabbis of different stripes. Conservative and Reform rabbis, rabbi-cantor relationships: these are people who should be most supportive of one another, yet what we find is that they get into this symbolic exemplarhood, so one is Mr. Rodeph Shalom, and the other is Mr. Beth El¹⁰ and the other Mrs. Temple, and they walk along at a distance from one another instead of involved in helping one another. Congregations can, to some extent, be educated as to this symbolic exemplarhood, so that they can help to ease the pressure a little bit. Our central organizations can, with the cooperation of individual rabbis, help make the pulpit rabbi less of a prisoner of The Rabbi As Symbolic Exemplar. Salary scales, protection, kinds of job definition, a whole bunch of things can be done, to free the rabbi to be the rabbi each rabbi chooses to be.

One final note and a very important one, for me, before we break. I don't want anything of what I have said to be taken as a denigration of the work of the pulpit rabbi. Let me tell you something. I did more important work during the ten years I was a pulpit rabbi than I will do the rest of my

¹⁰ Two congregations in the author's home community-Bridgeport & Fairfield, Ct.

career. Unquestionably,- I have no doubt about it. I've touched more lives, I affected more people, I made more Jews and I was a much more effective kind of person. I have no question at all about that!

What got to me was the isolation. That's what got to me. And I, in terms of my own life, couldn't live that way. That became the straw that broke my rabbinic back. I could not live that way. And for me, it was just personally impossible. There were also a couple of other things that had to do with my megalomania, my grandiosity. I discovered I wasn't going to be St. Francis of Assisi.

Symbolic exemplarhood is inevitable. And, incidentally, I do believe that it can be a vitally useful way to live. It is the symbolic exemplarhood that gives each and every rabbi the power and the ability to affect and influence others, and perhaps to transform the future of the Jewish Community. I hold that the future of the Jewish community does rest on the shoulders of the pulpit rabbi and that it is the symbolic exemplarhood that gives them their strength and their power. Know that I don't think you'll ever be free of being a symbolic exemplar. But knowing a burden, maybe we can deal with it. When the spies explored **ארץ ישראל** (*Eretz Yisrael*)¹¹ the question was whether it was **ארץ אוכלת יושביה** (*a land that devoured its inhabitants*), or **ארץ זבת חלב ודבש** (*a land flowing with milk and honey*). My suspicion is that the pulpit rabbinate, with our work and with the help of such organizations can at least exist some place in between, and we can, along with Joshua, take God's promise that;

חזק ואמץ: אל תערוץ ואל תחת.
כי עמך אדוני אלהיך בכל אשר תלך

May God support us in the work that we have to do!

¹¹ **ארץ ישראל** (*Eretz Yisrael*) Caanan; The Israelites having traversed the desert for 40 years sent scouts to evaluate the land they were about to enter.