

The Seasons of a Rabbi Dilemmas and Suggestions for Training¹

Being a rabbi means being set apart in the Jewish community to serve as Symbolic Exemplar. Symbolic exemplarhood is crucial for all clergy and no less so for the rabbi. Jewish tradition exerts much effort to *not* portray the rabbi as a person set apart. Pulpit rabbis, struggling to deal with their symbolic exemplarhood, spend much time and energy pointing out to their congregations that they are “only human”. Yet, the fact remains that rabbis, having set themselves apart, are most certainly set apart by those they serve.

Rabbis are set apart to serve as Symbolic Exemplars of religious and moral rectitude. The resulting symbolic exemplarhood in the moral and religious realm provides the rabbi with a larger than life image. Such an image is at the very core of being a rabbi and is unavoidable. The rabbi is both designated by others and has knowingly or unknowingly volunteered to exemplify a religious, caring, nurturing, involved moral person, a paradigmatic model of what a Jewish human being should be. Choosing a profession in which it is crucial to be perceived by others to be something more than one is, while still maintaining ongoing contact with other people, the rabbi takes on being the fulfilled Jew, the spiritual savant, the willing helper, the good parent, the knowing older sibling, the parafamilial member of many families. To help rabbis maintain their symbolic exemplarhood, they are given significant protection. They are \treated with deference and formal respect, shielded at least overtly from others’ anger and vulgarity, and are not subjected to many of the stresses others face. They are treated as other than.

Without such an encompassing wall of protection, a rabbi cannot continue to maintain close almost intimate contact and still function as an Exemplar of those attributes she is expected to symbolize. Symbolic exemplarhood, endemic to the rabbinate and a major source of rabbinic power and effectiveness, is not without cost. The price of this protection for the rabbi is a sense of otherness and

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difference, of loneliness in the midst of the crowd. The barriers, erected by both laity and rabbi, made up of masks put on, words edited, and emotions held in check, create an insulated and isolated existence.

Those who become rabbis come to this calling wanting to help, support, and nurture others, but for most being a helpful supportive nurturer is not sufficient. If it had been, they might well have gone into one of the other, and, let it be said, easier helping professions. Being a professional lover/helper is not enough. Beyond wanting to help and nurture, rabbis want to transform others. Changing other's inner being, their core reality in a most radical way, is where they perceive the action to be. Such change is often in the direction of an external transcendent reality that is experienced as both benign and demanding. That reality may be God, Jewish tradition, faith, Halachah, commitment, ultimate meaning or communal destiny. It is almost always a "reality" which both supports and challenges. This combination of nurturing, supportive helper, and one who changes others inner reality leads to the rabbi's manifestation as a person both benign and demanding and is endemic to being a rabbi.

This rabbinic desire to radically transform others from who they are into someone new may be linked to the rabbi's awareness of his own psychic wounds, pain, and limitations. This may lead to feelings that he needs to transcend his own finite humanity to be healed. One can help oneself by becoming more than one experiences oneself to be. A not ignoble solution, though fraught with problems. The rabbi hopes to self transform by embodying abstract attributes and qualities, by fulfilling the "oughts and shoulds" of life, by becoming an exemplar of the good, moral and true. At his best, the rabbi identifies and empathizes with the pain and shortcomings of other people. Others' limitations compounded by the rabbi's own, rouses the desire to help oneself and others by converting both self and others. Converting others as a way to support and affirm one's own transformation is a phenomenon we have seen in the religious arena, with reformed smokers, self-help groups, Alcoholics Anonymous and on and on. Working with others in that way supports the hope that one day the rabbi might not be a person who only appears to be more than he is, but might truly *be* more than he is at present. If the rabbi can nurture, help, challenge and change others, the rabbi will be nurtured, appreciated, valued, and transformed.

What might be the self experience that could make a person seek support and nurturance by meeting the needs of others, striving to appear to be more than one is and dedicating oneself to persuading others to do the same. Let us suppose a family in which a child's perceived experience is that her own needs for

nurturance, care and affection are not met. Perhaps the child's understanding is that they are not met because the significant others are themselves in need of such nurturance and affection. The child (with cause or without, since cause is a sometimes thing) concludes that there is a role as family healer and/or exemplar of family expectations she should fill. The unspoken hope is that by filling that role, servicing others, appearing to meet their needs, being the nurturing, caring person the family seeks, she will be rewarded with nurturance, care and affection. That this entails carrying a burden that in reality a child can only appear to carry is not computed by the child. To do it, she will have to be in some radical way transformed, or invested with some transcendent power. Until such transformation happens she, only by mutual agreement of herself and her family, can be a symbol of that role, which it is hoped may heal the family's pain. The developing child has to act as if the expectations of others are really one's own. The hope is that one day they will be one's own. Though feeling herself unable to meet those demands, refusing to do so is impossible. She may at some level feel that there is no way to say no without increasing others pain, their demands on her to help, and consequently, her own pain and inadequacy. To appear to be more than one can be, to nurture, is a way, imperfect at best, of getting some nurturance. The child learns to act the role, to try and make it her own, to be sensitive to others' expectations, symbolize the good and thus help maintain and sustain the family, and also get some satisfaction for oneself.

For those rabbis who grew up in rabbinic families, this way of dealing with the world might well have been imbibed with mother's milk. The model presented in such a family was that of the helping and often suffering servant. The rabbinic father was often giving so much to others that his family did not get the nurturance it needed. The father *was* supported for helping others. The child in such a family could easily have learned that it was the same for him. One must get what one wants by giving it to others. To be helped one has to help. To support one's own way of being, one must change others. One can imagine other non-rabbi families where the same lesson was in some way taught.

However that may be, a young person chooses to be a rabbi, sensing at some level that her personality and the pulpit are a good fit. That is often true. The world wants people who will serve as an example of a more loving, caring, and "religious" person.

Yet the pulpit experience often turns out differently than anticipated. After an initial honeymoon period, disenchantment often sets in. The rabbinate supports only part of her feelings, that part that demands that the rabbi be a symbolic

exemplar. The other, more human part, which demands nurturance and care, recognition and appreciation for who one is, rather than for who one seems to be goes unsatisfied and unfulfilled. Even working very hard at being a symbolic exemplar does not elicit the response wanted. To understand why the pulpit often turns sour, we must consider how the pulpit rabbi's training and subsequent career interrelate.

Before entering the pulpit, the young person attends rabbinical school pursuing the transformation that they hope will come with being “Rabbi.” The very fact that rabbinical school offers semicha (literally laying on of hands, symbolically passing inner attributes to another generation), ordination rather than graduation implicitly promises that incorporating yet another system of expectations, a specific “religious system”, will finally result in being transformed. Enough study, enough piety, enough devotion, more sacrifice, and greater commitment, really living by the rules will lead to "the appearance of things" finally being exchanged for an authentic new reality. One will no longer be just plain folks. One will be a rabbi.

That our seminaries collude with the young candidates in their pursuit of this transformation is not surprising. They can hardly do otherwise. Seminaries in their rabbinical training capacities are not simply academic institutions, providing knowledge and tools for their graduates to use as they will. They are there to make rabbis out of regular people. In the words of one Seminary’s stated purpose, to transform students into “Jewish religious personalities”. They present, inevitably, a rabbinic ideal, a Jewish paradigm for their students to emulate. This model, no matter how benignly administered, dovetails with the students innate sense that they must transform themselves and the seminaries' implicit/explicit promise that they will help them achieve that transformation. In the past the model, from another time and place, was that of the lifetime student and pious scholar using study as the gateway to being a different kind of person. Seminaries’ updated models, affirm the hope that somehow the young ordainee will have been transformed into a “model” religious Jew. The ordained rabbi will be the embodiment and symbol of the whole Jewish tradition, a qualitatively different person from the beginning student.

Given the Divinely endowed uniqueness of each human being and the vagaries of human experience, many students find that they once again are unsuccessful in achieving transformation. The classic model, noble as it is, though woefully inappropriate for our time, only accentuated feelings of guilt and inadequacy, unworthiness, and personal inauthenticity. The newer programs, though well intentioned, always run the risk of creating a gauntlet beyond academic

achievement that students must successfully negotiate to fulfill the Seminary's specific model for what a rabbi ought to be. No matter how benign the model or how much the young rabbi may stretch to fit it, the neophyte rabbi's perception of self is often that he does not measure up to the model. The inside "being" and the one presented to the Seminary in order to be ordained and to the world are not lined up, not in sync, not in tune. Striving to incorporate the model, twisting and turning to make it fit, it often is not in keeping with who they are and therefore - impossible for most of them to fulfill. So the hope for transformation recedes into the future even as ordination is granted. Perhaps transformation will happen in service to God's people.

In the pulpit, the rabbi is in a well-reinforced role. It is a role as nurturer and healer and change agent, which has always promised a source of nurturance and affection, and provides a sense of safety, familiarity and protection. The new rabbi finds instant status, respect, and deference. She works hard at meeting laity's expectations and the expectations her seminary education has pointed to. The evanescent hope remains that transformation is just over the horizon if she meets these expectations. But integrating others' expectations and making them experientially truly part of self, (no simple task), is beyond the reach of most new rabbis. The expectations remain in a real way external to the rabbinic self perception. As the rabbi goes on in role, she becomes aware that the goal of transformation recedes even as it is pursued. The young rabbi is not transformed any more by her later incorporation of a religious position than by the earlier incorporation of family expectations or the seminary's hopes for her. The rabbi becomes increasingly aware that one is loved for being what one appears to be and not for what one experiences oneself to be. The more the rabbi is rewarded for how she appears to be, the more inadequate the rabbi feels in her ability to authentically fulfill the expectations.

Rabbis may constrict themselves even more than others expect of them. Having presented themselves to the community as more moral, caring, and religious people by the very fact of being a rabbi, and thereby a Symbolic Exemplar, the rabbi proceeds to persuade, cajole, and sometimes demand of his laity to do the same. Demanding good behavior from others is also a way in which the young rabbi can try and deal with inner feelings that are not experienced as exemplary. He may project these onto congregants, berating the congregants for having them. Urgently urging others to change their behavior may release pent-up feelings about the burden the rabbi feels that others have put on him. Anger often surfaces with those who will not do what the rabbi is trying to do and wants them to do. But the fact is that rabbis have taken this burden upon themselves. Not being clear that this is

something they have taken on themselves, and castigating others for not being all that they might be, may vent anger, but it also tightens the screws of Symbolic Exemplarhood.

The rabbi, knowing no acceptable way of dealing with those feelings attempts to solve the "problem" with more of the same, striving to be a still better exemplar and demanding of others that they follow her example. If they did, the hope is, that the gap between them would narrow, yet in reality it only expands and extends the exemplarhood further. Since most others do not demand of themselves above human behavior they most often do not follow the rabbinic example. This leads to greater disenchantment and an increase in the pressure on the rabbi. For the rabbi demanding of others that they change, only means that the rabbi must be that much more of an exemplar. The rabbi, caught in her own words, must be consistent and practice what she preaches. What the rabbi has demanded of others, the rabbi must do. Preaching against materialism limits the rabbi in the next salary negotiations. Having preached repeatedly about caring for all God's creatures, the rabbi must at least appear to care for all, few exceptions allowed. And so it goes. The rabbi gets ever more locked into her Exemplarhood. The attempted solution becomes the problem. That leads to an increase in the pressure experienced, and the cycle ratches up another notch.

The laity joins the rabbi in structuring and maintaining the rabbi's exemplar status. Ordinary people know that symbolic exemplarhood, despite being very real is a fabrication. The rabbi after all is human, possessing all the physical and emotional vagaries to which humankind is subject. Yet the myth is vitally important. Laity want Symbolic Exemplars living among them- rabbis who fulfill the "ought" of their own lives. Such persons are a portent that people *can* be what people *ought* to be. The layperson wants a helper, a nurturer, an understanding ear, but someone who would change their inner being is not number one on their list of priorities except in a very hypothetical way. So the layperson sets the rabbi apart "protecting" the rabbi in role with distancing maneuvers, keeping rabbinic humanity partially out of awareness. This keeping the rabbi in a symbolic role also isolates him. Doing this is not a problem for the layperson. The layperson is with the rabbi on a very part-time basis. The laity easily avoid the intrusion of the rabbi's symbolic role by not inviting rabbis to situations where that role would be a complication. The rabbi, on the other hand, is most often with laity. They observe the rabbi's behavior or will hear about it soon enough since gossip about the rabbi is a safe and popular community bond. To them, the rabbi is always the Exemplar and, aware or not, behaving appropriately or not, is always experienced in the prism of exemplarhood. The essence of a symbol is that it stands for something beyond itself. If it stands only for itself, it no longer functions as a symbol. A

living, breathing symbolic exemplar of the good represents the good and does not stand only for oneself. Being seen as “only” human and therefore sometimes less than a model of love, caring and general probity is hazardous to the rabbi's symbolic status. It is a danger that the laity strives to prevent, instinctively and effectively protecting the symbolic status by treating the rabbi as other and different, in essence, than other people.

The rabbi thus becomes increasingly set-apart. The young rabbi has placed herself in a situation in which she must move away from her human side in the direction of a symbolic existence. Contact with others, especially congregants, is increasingly in the symbolic role. One's own feelings must be guarded and contact with others is in an increasingly circumscribed area. As experiences pile up, the laity increasingly view the rabbi as a symbol. If the rabbi could *become* the symbol, there would be no gap between one's symbolic role and one's humanity. One's contact with others would be authentic and complete. That does not often happen and so the rabbi grows increasingly set-apart *both* from her own feelings and from others.

The rabbi, like all clergy, will always be a symbol. There is *no way* around the symbolic demands of the rabbinate. Being a set-apart person, a nurturing, caring, ministering figure can be a creative and useful way to live. Being a symbol of more than one is can also constantly reiterate to those who choose to do that, that they are less than they appear to be and certainly not what others have hired them to be. Some rabbis live with this reasonably comfortably. For some it becomes an enervating burden.

Among rabbis there is a good deal of tension around being a symbol and remaining a person. Symbolic exemplarhood is a full-time occupation for them. Rabbis often become preoccupied with how to be symbols and yet remain human. Pushed in the direction of exemplarhood, rabbis have trouble separating out and dealing with their humanity and its relation to their symbolic role. They are in a situation in which each move towards symbolhood seems to diminish their humanity, and a move expressing the vagaries of one's humanity often seems a threat to the symbolhood. This often results in the rabbis being at some distance from both their symbolic role and their human selfhood.

The struggle to maintain their human selfhood leads many rabbis to being uncomfortable with and sometimes just plain out of touch with their symbolic role and its crucial importance. The symbolic role is often belittled by rabbis, who all too often, diminish what they mean to others in this way. The rabbi is at his most

symbolic when officiating as “priest” at a life-cycle event. It is at such times that laity most profoundly experience the rabbi as what he appears to be rather than what he is. The rabbi is invested with the aura of an entire tradition and bears a message and meaning that comes not from himself, but from that for which he stands, be that God, Israel, Torah or whatever. The rabbi, whether accepting a teenager into Jewish responsibility, blessing a marriage, or eulogizing a dead loved one, does those things as a symbol. It is as a walking talking, living symbol that the rabbi gives meaning to these life transition events. Perhaps such symbolic roles pull too much to one end of the continuum. Moving too much in the symbolic direction risks losing totally the “humanity” of the rabbi. To maintain some balance between their personhood and their symbolhood, the rabbi denies the latter.

Too much movement in the direction of her own humanity is also dangerous for the rabbi. Partially because it is this very humanity and its limitations that the rabbi has been dedicated to transcending. But also because being a rabbi, the distinction between one’s public role and one’s private life, is whittled down to virtual non-existence. “Human deviations,” even in private, run the risk of discovery and consequent danger to the symbolic role. Because what the rabbi “is” is more crucial than what the rabbi “does on-the-job,” the rabbi’s humanity and symbolhood reflect on each other and each is the benchmark of the other. It is how the rabbi acts when seemingly out of public view and how that fits with the rabbi’s public image that is an ultimate test of the rabbi’s exemplarhood. Even the rabbinic family’s behavior has to be considered in terms of its affect on the public image. Thus, conflicts between the spouses, where the spouse attends synagogue and how often, whether the children go to basketball games on Shabbat, or their behavior in or outside of the synagogue, all evoke a level of concern, not present in other families. That level of concern has to do with how the behavior affects the symbolic image. Rabbis often find that friends are hard to come by. Those he has will most often be “clergy collectors”, who gravitate to anything ordained. But an intimate relationship in which one can say and do what one wants, where one can drop the mask of symbolhood, where one can share one’s own intimacies and vulnerabilities, grows increasingly difficult. Not having what Erving Goffman² refers to as a backstage area in which he can relax and be himself, the rabbi is always “on” with congregants or local lay people to whom he has presented himself in role. Some who were childhood friends, camp mates, or fellow students

² Erving Goffman. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959)

who predated the decision to become a rabbi will allow a certain amount of openness with him, but such “treasures” are not frequently found in the rabbi’s congregational life. It is no accident that rabbis maintain long friendships with their rabbinical school friends. Years after ordination, though separated by time and space, they are still the rabbi’s closest friends, with whom they can be most open. Once having appeared in a symbolic role, the editing, distancing, and setting apart process has begun. A beloved friend of the author, a rabbi who had also been beloved in the pulpit and who had worked hard to cultivate friends, pointed out that it was at best a tradeoff. For those who were his friends, he functioned less as rabbi, and those for whom he was rabbi; there was a tacit distance in the relationship. Many successful rabbis note with sadness after fifteen or twenty years in a pulpit that if they were to leave that pulpit tomorrow, they would leave town without a single close intimate friend.

Given these stresses, it is not surprising that rabbis, even as they act symbolically, will deny their symbolic exemplarhood. They accept their humanity, deny it by trying to transcend it, and then find it essential to reassert their own humanity. “Don’t forget, I’m human” is a plaintive attempt to reclaim a status that seems in danger of extinction. The pressures of the rabbinate gravitate towards the symbolic role and away from being just a person.

This combination of acceptance and denial is an attempt to deal with a situation which can be quite painful in that it alienates one from both self and others, and in which one perceives few options. Total acceptance or denial of either one’s human limitations or one’s symbolic life is perceived of as a danger to either one’s life as a rabbi or one’s life as a person. So the rabbi remains in the center pulled from both directions. But it is at the *ends* of the continuum that one must go to experience both the richness of one’s symbolhood and the fullness of one’s humanity.

The young person who wants to use Jewish tradition to transform both oneself and others, who wants to be an interpersonal helper, who chooses to do that with Jews, who cares enough to dance at many weddings, and grieve at many funerals, who wants to be a helping and changing part of many families, is a good candidate for the pulpit. The fact that the novice rabbi has drives and motivations of which she may not be fully aware, which have brought her to seek the pulpit, is not a negative factor. Such motivations can support being a good pulpit rabbi, allow her to contribute much and gain much. Such a candidate may well be attracted to the pulpit by its implicit promise to help her appear to be more than she is. The pulpit *can* deliver on that promise. It *cannot* help its occupant transcend herself.

Appearing to be more than one is, is for the young candidate only an intermediary step towards becoming more than one is. That transformation, difficult at best to actualize, leads as time goes on to the distance between symbol, *what one appears to be*, and person, *what one is*, growing greater and greater. The symbolic life can become difficult to bear.

It is *not* inevitable that a field so long prepared for, one that can provide great satisfaction, one whose personnel come to it highly motivated, must of necessity turn sour. More must be done to train rabbis to deal with their symbolhood, to live more comfortably and creatively with it.

They must be helped to know that their humanity and their symbolhood do not have to contradict and destroy each other. These two aspects of their self need to be in loving relationship. One aspect can serve to create the symbol laity want and that the rabbi, by background and training, can be. The other aspect can be comfortable in its “human” dimension, knowing its own basic non-negotiable worthwhileness despite being less than perfect. Knowing and accepting these two aspects, the rabbi can focus more clearly on what he wants and distinguish that from what others project onto him. The rabbi thus needs to simultaneously know and value the importance and usefulness of the symbol the rabbi is and his own humanity. The rabbi’s “*Self*” emanates from the ongoing relationship and dialogue between these inner parts. Helping the rabbi accept these two aspects would paradoxically allow the rabbi to be both more symbolic and more human. It will make the rabbi better at his work and more satisfied with life, professional and personal.

The transition from rabbinical school to one’s first position in the community as a Symbolic Exemplar, though filled with excitement and hope, is a drastic change. Students in seminary are in a radically different existential situation than when they enter a pulpit. In rabbinical school the student is a part of a close-knit community, striving to define itself with common purposes and with a goal to one day make the world safe for Judaism. It is a community in which being Jewish, no matter how understood, is a top priority, touching everyone. It is a community demarcated by its relationship over and against or with the faculty.

When students move to a pulpit, they go from being insiders to being outsiders to the community, no matter how successful they are or how long their stay. They are hired and expected to be Symbolic Exemplars and are in a very different situation than the seminary life they have just left. They are no longer in a peer group. The

community they serve has powerful, if often unenunciated, symbolic expectations of them.

How to teach the reality of symbolic exemplarhood and its effects to students still in seminary is one of the great conundrums of our time. They can in no way fathom what will happen. When presented with the experience, they engage in the same denial I engaged in when I first showed up in Bridgeport, Connecticut, eons ago. *It will not happen to me. I won't live behind a glass wall!* I did not then and they cannot now, understand that it is not in their choice. Their choice is how they respond to this tremendous change and how they deal with it.

Having been invited regularly to speak to the graduating class of one of our seminaries, I found talking to students about future symbolic exemplarhood was like whistling in a hurricane. Three to five years later the same students, now rabbis greet me saying, “Now I know what you were talking about back then. I wish they would just treat me normally”.

Even attempts to provide students with rabbinic experience do not do the job. Internships and Bi-weeklies, forays into the congregational world, as crucial as they are to teaching the student rabbinic skills, have the student return to home base, there to recount successes and failures in these skirmishes. Later on when pulpit and community are one and the same, the experience is radically different. The gap cannot be closed.

What to do? Reality may have opened doors for us. Our seminaries are already educating more than pulpit rabbis. The rabbi as chaplain, pastoral counselor, interpersonal helper, individual change agent, community organizer, adult educator, youth educator, moral exemplar, scholar and on and on. Implicit in this new reality is not only that there are a lot of different jobs for rabbis, but there are a *wide variety of ways in which a rabbi can be a Symbolic Exemplar*

In training pulpit rabbis specifically, our seminaries must create and encourage a more open and varied *pulpit* rabbi model to present to the student looking for transformation. That there are a *wide variety of ways in which a rabbi can be a Symbolic Exemplar* should be among the prime lessons of rabbinical school religious formation. Our seminaries will have to establish a multi-model system of exemplars. The seminary's task becomes producing many different kinds of rabbis. Not one model of religious personality, but a wide variety of models. Inscribed on the gateposts of our seminaries should be ohhj ohvkt hracs uktu ukt

Thus recognizing that the meaning of the *Mishnah* in Sanhedrin 4; 5 is that God's will for us is pluralism. Student rabbis may, nonetheless, tend to incorporate what they perceive as the seminary's model of what a rabbi should be. This might seem to make the seminary's work easier. Our rabbinical schools must help them resist that tendency. The seminary must be especially wary of the student who incorporates the institution's "party-line." or who may reverentially model oneself after a charismatic faculty figure. The student must be challenged and encouraged to evolve his or her own personal "party-line." This presumes a multi-model, open system in which the student can explore and challenge, be challenged and respond, struggle and change. If the student is not able to struggle and change while in school and does not know that their stance at ordination is temporary at best, the rabbi produced will be more "brittle." The young ordainee may have incorporated an image of a rabbi, but when the struggle to change inexorably bursts forth she will be constrained by the model taken in and will feel that to change that model is to risk the limits of one's rabbihood. After those hopefully exciting and collegial student years, the rabbi will be exposed to the congregation's projected expectations, added to those of her seminary. The rabbi will find it hard to carve out an area for one's selfhood, unless she has had training in doing that from the first day of rabbinical school. If one can test the limits while in seminary, bend them without fear of loss of status, be explicitly heretical, in the best sense of that word, one will less fear such loss of rabbinical status while pursuing later growth.

The multifaceted single image of the rabbi, which currently exists, can be split. The young rabbi can be encouraged to explore and take on himself one kind of symbolic role among the many different ones available. More important still, is that these tasks can be done by a wide variety of "rabbinic" or Jewish "religious personalities". The student can in this way explore and tentatively select which expectations of seminary and/or laity he will choose to meet. Such choosing may seem to imply rejecting others. That is only so if we take an either/or position. Students may choose a way, while not denying the validity of other ways, while affirming which are appropriate for oneself and which are not currently appropriate. This choosing happens anyway, but making it part of the educational framework, can bless it, accomplish it better, and save much pain and waste. This is a first step in helping a student differentiate oneself from colleagues and from others generally. Learning that there are a wide variety of ways one can "be" will not prevent laity from projecting their expectations onto the rabbi in later years. It will help the rabbi respond more authentically to those expectations.

A new skill will have to be added to the curriculum of the rabbinical schools. Every pulpit rabbi must be thoroughly trained in what is to be a symbol; how to do

that exquisitely well; how to be flexible in doing that; and how to shuttle back and forth between being a symbol and being plain folks. This will take teaching a both/and, rather than an either/or position, about which I have written elsewhere. (see Ch. 7) The student will have to know that being a rabbi means being a Symbolic Exemplar (it's inevitable) and must learn how to do that and still know where one's symbolic role and one's self begin and end. Because the psychological ramifications of being a symbol are so many and because being a symbol is such a crucial function of the pulpit rabbi, this task cannot be avoided.

A great deal remains to be done. Those who have chosen to serve as rabbis, to become Symbolic Exemplars carry our hopes for a vibrant Jewish future. We can do no less than help them carry that burden lightly, with grace and elegance, that they may do their holy work.