



DEGEL

תורה וחכמת ישראל מקהילת עלי ציון

TORAH AND JEWISH STUDIES FROM ALEI TZION

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

TISHREI 5769

תשס"ט



שנה טובת ומתוקה

RAV AVI AND DEVORAH SCHARF
& KEHILLAT ALEI TZION
WISH THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY
A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

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and Akiva Bergin

Abigail and David Citron

Rachel and Elliot Cohen

Ben Elton

Daniel Elton

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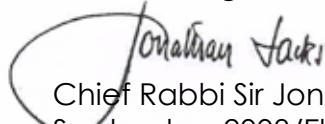
**MESSAGE FOR ALEI TZION
FROM THE CHIEF RABBI SIR JONATHAN SACKS**

I have taken tremendous pleasure in seeing Alei Tzion grow since its foundation four years ago, and greatly enjoyed the time I have spent learning and praying there. It has injected added vibrancy into the strong and energetic North West London community and I am delighted that it has now joined the United Synagogue.

The kehilla has enjoyed an extraordinary year under the leadership of Rav Binyamin Tabory, but no community can rest on its past successes. Alei Tzion is clearly striving to consolidate and build. Their new Rav, Rabbi Avi Scharf will, I am sure, provide dynamic and inspirational leadership to the kehilla as it moved forward.

This new magazine is another sign of vitality. *Degel* is an exciting new development for both Alei Tzion and the wider community. The production of this publication is a great achievement in which the kehilla can take pride. I wish it every success, and the kehilla and all associated with it a ketiva vehatima tova.

With blessings and best wishes



Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks
September 2008/Ellul 5768





Message from the President of the United Synagogue

In July, my colleagues and I were thrilled to welcome Alei Tzion as a full member of the United Synagogue. It was a great end to my first term as President and to Alei Tzion's year of expansion under the guidance of Rav Binyamin Tabory.

I am delighted that the United Synagogue is able to support the Community financially during its early years of development. This vote of confidence in Alei Tzion by other member communities will, I am sure, be reciprocated by active participation by the Kehilla and its members in all aspects of wider United Synagogue life.

The United Synagogue's core ethos is that of '*kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeḥ*' and, in that context, I look forward to Alei Tzion and the United Synagogue growing together, each strengthening the other. I am confident that will happen because Alei Tzion is a community with ambition. Degel is yet another sign of that. The Kehilla is to be congratulated on putting together this impressive collection of essays and studies from among its own members.

Alei Tzion is living up to its ideals and putting Modern Orthodoxy and Religious Zionism into action. We can all celebrate and take inspiration from its achievements, as it goes from success to success, in a new year, with a new Rav.

Wishing everybody a *ketiva vechatima tova*,

Dr Simon Hochhauser

DEGEL

CONTENTS

- 6 A Message from the Rav
RAV AVI SCHARF
- 7 Notes from the Editor
BEN ELTON
- 9 The priest, the prophet and the prostitute: The transition from Israelites to Israelis
DANIEL YOUNGERWOOD
- 19 The story of Elisha Baal Kenafayim and the obligation to give up one's life for positive commandments at a time of persecution
MD SPITZER
- 24 The definition of death in halakha
YUDIT SAMAD
- 35 What's in a Name? Names and naming in Jewish and contemporary thought
SAMUEL LEBENS
- 44 God, science and skyhooks: A critique of Richard Dawkins' *The God delusion*
DANIEL ELTON
- 53 R. Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg on R. Samson Raphael Hirsch
BEN MAY
- 63 Finding a Chief Rabbi 1911 - 1913
BEN ELTON

Cover image: The postcard on the cover of Degel is courtesy of David Pearlman and his famous 'Postcards of Palestine' collection. The publisher is unknown, but this postcard is c1910, printed in the USA. Rosh Hashanah-themed postcards were very popular at the time, and it was common to incorporate a 'flag of Israel' into the design. Although the Israeli flag was not officially designed until 1948, early variations included various combinations of the star of David with the addition of stripes, often including the word "Tsion" on the flag or star as well.

Notes from the Editor

**איש על דגלו באתת לבית אבותם, יחנו בני
ישראל: מנגד, סביב לאهل מועד יחנו**

The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family. (*Bamidbar* 2:2)

There has always been a tension in Judaism between unity and diversity. The Jewish People was founded both as one nation and a federation of twelve tribes. The Ramban addresses the apparently repetitive listing of identical offerings by each of the tribes at the dedication of the mishkan in Parashat Naso by explaining that each Nasi chose independently to bring exactly the same offering. However, these identical offerings were brought with different intentions, each related to the individual tribes' particular aptitudes and inclinations. Yehuda offered its sacrifice hoping for excellence in the attribute of kingship. Zevulun sought material prosperity, so they could support Yissakhar who prayed for success in Torah study. The Nesi'im were able to combine uniformity of action with individuality of intention.

In Sefer Hamitsvot the Rambam includes under 'lo titgodedu' the prohibition of developing a variety of different practices in a single community, yet we know that there are many exceptions to this rule, and from the Mishna onwards Hazal record and defend some varieties of practice. In each generation different Jews have taken different paths; the Jews of Erets Yisrael and the Jews of Bavel, Ashkenazim and Sefardim, rationalists and Kabbalists, Hassidim and Mitnagdim.

What ensured that despite their many differences in belief and practice all of these groups remained part of one people? They all encamped around the Ohel Moed; they all focused their attentions and energies on God and His Torah. Each was reaching out to the Divine, some through philosophy, some through the

Hassidic concept of devekut, some through lamdanut. There were disputes and disagreements, and while they raged they were fierce, but contemporary Judaism has accepted into its tradition Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai, Rambam and Ra'avad, the Gaon of Vilna and the Baal Shem Tov.

We do not need to be post-modernists to appreciate that there are different ways for an individual to realise their spiritual potential, and within certain parameters it is legitimate for each person to choose the path to which they are best suited. Indeed, we only need to read our basic texts. Our tradition tells us that to a significant extent, although not without limits, 'eilu v'eilu divrei elokim hayyim'. That is why we dare not attempt to invalidate any authentic approach within the Jewish tradition. At the same time, every group will naturally value its own approach above others; after all, it has chosen its particular path for a reason. We can celebrate others' spiritual achievements but still adhere to and take pride in our own. We can acknowledge the legitimacy of others' approach while affirming the value of ours.

Each group camped around the Ohel Moed rallies under its own banner, whether that is Morei Nevuhim or Mesilat Yesharim, the example of the Rambam or of the Alter Rebbe, the psak din of the Mishna Berura or the Ben Ish Hai. Alei Tzion has its own banner, 'Modern Orthodoxy and Religious Zionism' which we are proud to fly alongside the other standards under which Klal Yisrael is camped. Our banner is the distinctive way we live, learn and pray. We are Orthodox, but Modern Orthodox, which means that we celebrate a simhat bat as well as a brit mila. We are Zionists, but Religious Zionists, so we dance on Yom Ha'atsmaut, but say Hallel first. We learn Shas and poskim but we hold shiurim that place sha'alot uteshuvot in their historical context. We consider what the leading thinkers of the world have to say about the deepest philosophical and theological questions, not because we feel our tradition is inferior or lacking but because we have the confidence to do as the Rambam recommends in Shemonah Perakim, and accept the truth from whatever source it comes.

That is why this magazine is called *Degel*. Its purpose

is to serve as a banner to announce what we stand for, and a standard around which we can gather. It is a collection of studies from a distinctly Modern Orthodox, Religious Zionist perspective produced by members of the Alei Tzion community. It is extremely pleasing that the articles in this inaugural issue cover such a broad area of Torah and Jewish studies; Tanakh, Talmud, halakha, philosophy, makhshava and history. Daniel Youngerwood's article explores the Rahav narrative in Sefer Yehoshua using the classic commentaries and the modern literary tools currently being deployed so brilliantly in the centres of Modern Orthodox scholarship in Israel. MD Spitzer contributes what is perhaps a more traditional discussion of the sugya of Elisha Baal Kenafayim, and relates that story, and the way it has been understood by Rishonim to broader halakhic questions and disputes.

The State of Israel has recently been convulsed with controversy concerning the halakhic definition of death since the Knesset passed a law on organ donations in March 2008 based on Rav Ovadia Yosef's psak. Yudit Samad's timely analysis presents and investigates the main streams of thought on the question. Samuel Levens' study of the approach to names in Jewish sources and contemporary thought, and how the two differ and intersect, illuminates an area of aggadata of great relevance, as any parent faced with the challenge of naming their child will testify. Daniel Elton has responded to the call of Pirkei Avot (2:19) 'know how to answer a heretic' by presenting a critique of Richard Dawkins' The God delusion and dismantling his claims not through emotion or rhetoric but through dispassionate philosophical argument.

Ben May has done the Modern Orthodox community a great service by translating an important article by one giant of the Modern Orthodox world about another; R. Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg's essay on R. Samson Raphael Hirsch, which argues for the timelessness of Torah im derekh erets, which, as we know from recent furores in London and New York is an ideology under fire. Finally, to celebrate our recent transition from the leadership of Rav Tabory to that of Rav Scharf, I have written an account of the search for a Chief Rabbi to succeed Hermann Adler, which culminated in the appointment

of JH Hertz in 1913. We cannot hope that Rav Scharf will serve for as long as Chief Rabbi Hertz – 33 years would be a long shelihut – but we can hope for an impact as profound.

I am immensely grateful to all of the authors, who have all burned the midnight oil to produce their impressive contributions. Tammy Youngerwood has made an huge contribution in her expert design of the magazine. Thanks are due to Rav Scharf for his message and words of encouragement, and to the Chief Rabbi and the President of the United Synagogue for their letters of support. The Trustees have been a consistent and reliable source of help as this project was conceived and realised. The production of *Degel* has been made possible through the taking out of the back page advert by the UJIA and the submission of Rosh Hashana greetings by members of the community, to whom I am much obliged.

It is easy to begin, more difficult to sustain. *Degel* can only continue if articles continue to be written. I therefore appeal to all our readers to turn their minds to pieces they could submit for the next issue, which will appear, God willing, for Pesah. If anyone wishes to contribute in other ways I would be equally delighted to hear from them.

Shana tova!

— BEN ELTON

R. Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg on R. Samson Raphael Hirsch

The full version of this essay first appeared in the Hebrew-language journal De'ot, (ninth edition), in 5719 (1959). The author was born in Poland 1878. He studied in Lithuania's famed yeshivot of Slabodka and Mir, and at the University of Giessen. He served as Rector of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin in the 1930s and survived the Holocaust. A world-renowned posek and author of Responsa Seridei Eish, R. Weinberg spent his final years in Montreux, Switzerland, where he headed the Eits Haim yeshiva, now a Yeshivat Hesder in Kokhav Yaakov, Israel (and renamed Heikhal Eliyahu). He died in 1966.

The subject of the essay, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, was born in Hamburg, Germany in 1808, and studied under Hakham Isaac Bernays and Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger (author of the Arukh Laner). A great thinker and writer, Rabbi Hirsch's efforts in revitalising German Jewry, particularly the community he led in Frankfurt-am-Main in the mid-nineteenth century, laid the foundations for contemporary Western Orthodoxy.

This essay is a classic exposition on the turbulent period of Jewish history in which R. Hirsch came to the fore. The brilliance of the author can be seen in the way he is able to see beyond the personalities that were dominant in the Reform and haskalah movements, and to focus on the head-on collision of spirituality and society. R. Weinberg expertly analyses the Jewish soul, and what made it so vulnerable to the changes that were coursing through society; he uses this to identify what made R. Samson Raphael Hirsch so adroit in his handling of the issues of his time, and sets out why so many of these issues remained relevant at the time of writing (and indeed at the time of translation).

TORAT HIRSCH IS MORE THAN a subject for research in Jewish religious history. It requires deep study as a real and living philosophy. The words of Hirsch are important for our lives today, with the capacity to water, and to cultivate, the fields of our spiritual and religious lives.

We live in an era of change and struggle, when an ancient and holy culture is crumbling, an era of worthless attempts by rationalist dilatants to build a new culture on foundations borrowed from foreign cultures. These attempts cannot succeed for two reasons: the lack of the authenticity that comes from independent Jewish thought; and the lack of the religiosity that cries out and rises from the depths of the Jewish soul. Therefore, we must return to the teaching of Hirsch, and to draw out from it the values that can renew and revive national spirituality. We are not sufficiently rich in religious thought to skip over a thinker of the greatness of Rabbi Hirsch, whom the entire world considers one of the great innovators in the field.

TRANSLATED & ABRIDGED BY
BEN MAY

The approach of Hirsch and his Torah to Judaism. What is the substance of Torat Hirsch and its approach? What is its innovation, both in content and in form? Hirsch's Torah gave a new strength to those who had erred, those that were weary and perplexed. It created a path for those standing at the crossroads; its strength was its ability to draw back to the religion, as though with magical cords, those who had distanced themselves from it. But how was it able to achieve this?

It would be easy to argue that Hirsch's success came from his special ability in public relations. It is true that Hirsch astounded by his enchanting words, both spoken and written. It is true that his personality, which was loftier than that of his contemporaries, was able to exert a great influence. It is true that his listeners felt that his was a personality that gave of itself for its faith, with the power of a holy flame; that he was a prince, a great man. However, this is not even remotely sufficient to explain Hirsch's success; for we do not speak here of winning over hearts to a new idea, nor of creating a unique spiritual path and preparing hearts for absorbing new thoughts.

In those days, there was still a wide knowledge of Judaism. People knew about Judaism; they alienated themselves from it intentionally and knowingly. Such a generation did not belong to the halakhic category of *tinokot shenishbu*. On the contrary, many of them were pained by their disengagement from *netsah Yisrael*, but the intense desire to leave the walls of the ghetto for the outside world overpowered them, a world that seemed to them to be filled with the light of freedom and wisdom. They saw the 'Jewish street' surrounded by a wall that separated its inhabitants from the other citizens of the land. In their desire to knock down this wall, they raised an axe to an unseen wall, that of the religious and cultural individuality of Judaism. They wished to enter into the modern, cultured society, and for them 'antiquated' Judaism and cultured society were opposing poles. The current of the time was directed towards the exchange of ancient Torah Judaism, which bound its adherents in the hated prison cells of the ghetto, for a new 'Torah', more appropriate for the *zeitgeist*, which could fit in with the culture of the dominant nation.

It seemed to them that they needed to reject the old in order to enter the world they longed for. Hirsch's battle was not against Geiger and his comrades, but against the spirit and storminess of the times.¹ How could the persuasive force of a single man, even the greatest of men, stand up to such a mighty current, a current that came from the non-Jewish world and engulfed the Jews in the West? What is the explanation for Hirsch's successful project of salvation?

The explanation can be found in the spiritual construction of the Jewish religion. Rabbi Hirsch renewed the religious experience. He observed the ways of our Torah and fought a battle for the faith and Jewish tradition. He did not overlook even one of the customs that had been sanctified in the nation. He built and established a new life of the spirit, in the spirit of 'they forgot them, they returned and they re-established them'.

Contraction of the ambit of religion. Little by little the ambit of religion has been gradually reduced. Wickedly, and cruelly the broader aspects of life with all their important roles and elements were removed from the nation and its religion. The Hebrew soul was torn into pieces. Complete joy, which had its source in the connection of the soul and life, ceased in Israel. Religion

1. Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) was a contemporary of Rabbi Hirsch and fellow student at the University of Bonn, who ultimately led the Reform movement in Germany.

stopped being an aspect of life, so life, inevitably, ceased to be an aspect of religion. Real life cast off its religious form, and became a secular matter.

The phrase 'secular life', which is foreign to the spirit of Israel, was born in the darkness of those days. Religion was no longer nurtured by life, it was sustained only by the fear of death, and the punishment that would follow. The belief in reward and punishment is certainly one of the fundamental principles in the religion of Israel, but making it the central element of religious feeling and experience, and the single driving force in the observance of mitsvot, plunges man into the depths of pain and grief, and causes a spiritual weakening – something that the leaders of *Hassidut* fought against.

The fall of the walls of the ghetto. The separation from life inside the walls of the ghetto led, inevitably, to a negative attitude to worldly possessions. The spirit of Israel dressed in black, it adopted a monk's cloak and an asceticism foreign to the spirit of Judaism. The ghetto stood for many centuries, and gave rise to great men, pious and holy, who invested their strength, their intellect and their vitality in the study of Torah, the observance of its *mitsvot*. They reached great spiritual heights and merited a Divine presence which raised them above the darkness of the exile and its bitterness; they benefited from the radiance of the Torah, and its holy presence rested on their words and deeds.

However, within the walls of the ghetto there also arose many people with a consuming thirst for life. The closure of the path to such a life depressed their spirits. They descended into melancholy. Until the day came when new, powerful winds blew through the world. The walls of the ghetto fell and a wave of hope, for light and freedom, life and creativity, honour and social standing flooded distant corners and their inhabitants. The thirst for a full, healthy life, which comes so naturally to Jews, and which had been repressed for centuries, was awoken again. In the footsteps of these revolutionary events, the Jewish people reached a crisis. One-dimensional religiosity, which negated life and its possibilities, collapsed. It could not continue to hold sway amongst the rebellious youth determined to avenge the repressed life they had been forced to endure. The elders, the guardians of the tradition, defended the prevailing, life-denying, form of the religion with all their might, and they attacked those who had left the ghetto, and who, drunk on freedom wrought havoc, without mercy, on the beauty and sanctity of traditional life.

The appearance of Rabbi Hirsch. At this dangerous time, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch appeared, and stood at the breach. He stood up and announced the ancient truth of Judaism: it is both religion and life. The religion of Israel is fundamental to, and a pre-condition of, life. The commandments were not given as a substitute or compensation for the delights of life. Rather, the commandments are active ingredients in our life. *Joie de vivre* is a boon; the commandments came to adorn it, to endow it with the spiritual pleasure that is the greatest of all pleasures. This was found in Hirsch's educational philosophy, which set out that the foundation of the observance of commandments is the love and joy which comes from satisfying the religious urges that are so natural to the Jewish soul. The *mitsvot* are the channel for receiving Divine outpouring; the thread that ties and binds the soul with its Creator, with the spiritual foundation that is above physical reality. In his books and his speeches, Rabbi Hirsch repeats one strong demand: religious feeling must be sustained from the soul's vitality, not from fear of death and the punishments that follow.

Rav Hirsch's stance on secular studies. The name Hirsch is tied to the motto "Torah im derekh erets". This slogan has many faces. One particular student of his (who stood at the head of the Haredi camp), who sought to defend his teacher, and to kasher his name, claimed that Rabbi Hirsch only permitted secular study for those living in Germany, since the economic conditions that prevailed in his time could not sustain living other than by engagement in commerce. As German commerce was particularly sophisticated this required a high level of professional training. In other words, Rabbi Hirsch's heter was born out of legal requirements and the need to "put food on the table".

This explanation is a perversion of historical truth. The truth is that Hirsch sought, from the bottom of his heart, Torah im derekh erets in the broader sense of the phrase. Separation from the world, distancing oneself from the studies necessary to participate in the development of the world, had caused the name of Judaism to be associated, in the eyes of the masses, with cultural poverty. That caused many Jews to flee from Judaism after tasting the flavour of secular enlightenment. They believed Judaism and culture to be incompatible, an oxymoron that would require them to choose one or the other. It is well known that the leader of the Reform Movement, Holdheim, stressed this point in his declaration 'there is only one question in front of the Jew – either to remain in the four *amot* of Orthodox Judaism and live outside his era, or to live in his era and cease to be an Orthodox Jew'.² At this point, the gateways to Judaism and to social and national participation were both open, and many chose the latter. We know what effect this decision had. It gave German Jewry a bad name, and led virtually all of its youth away from the religion of their parents. A mere few survivors remained faithful to their traditions.

Judaism and modern culture in the teaching of Rabbi Hirsch. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch placed as his cornerstone the ancient truth that Judaism and culture are not irreconcilable but rather that they complete each other. Judaism does not merely permit and tolerate culture; Judaism is the highest form of culture. There is not only a need, but an obligation, to explain Judaism according to its spiritual foundations and to prepare those that delve in it to improve its relationship with world culture.

Only through a broad and thorough explanation of the content of Judaism and its spirit is it possible to save those that err by chasing after foreign culture due to their misconception that Judaism is nothing but demands without reason and reason without spirit, and that Judaism is nothing but prayer and festivals (*The Nineteen Letters*, letter 18). Hirsch's conclusion is that it is not merely possible to stand at the pinnacle of the culture of the day and to be simultaneously an observant Jew, but rather that an enlightened person, one who is able to evaluate matters of spirit and culture, is compelled to admit the superiority of the culture of Judaism. Furthermore, Torah culture is the most appropriate for the people of Israel. In his comment to verse 11 of the first portion of the Torah, which states that God created all vegetation to its type (lemino), Hirsch explains that the lemino of the nation of Israel is the Torah. The Torah lives in the essence of the soul of Israel, and one who departs from it denies his nature.

2. Samuel Holdheim (1806-1860), a leader of the German Reform movement. One of the more radical leaders of reform, Holdheim moved the day of rest to Sunday.

A critique of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. In the eighteenth of *The Nineteen Letters*, Hirsch criticises the philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn for his attempts to prove that ‘it is possible to be a religiously-observant Jew, and with this, to be accorded great honour, as a German Plato’. Hirsch points out with his characteristic sharpness, that the phrase ‘and with this’ is critical, because it leads those who follow this outlook to a duality of the soul. For reasons of politeness, Hirsch did not attack Mendelssohn harshly, and merely stated in neutral language that we must forget the mistakes some of the wise men of Israel have made. Rather, we must turn to the sources of Judaism, which are Tanakh, Talmud, and Midrash, and draw from them the correct Jewish approach to God, the world, humanity and Israel. Only few, says Hirsch, managed to investigate and understand the spirit of Judaism, from within. Amongst others, the lights of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, author of *The Kuzari*, and the Ramban, shine brightly.

Another Jewish philosopher, S.L. Steinheim, criticised Mendelssohn with greater ferocity.³ He wrote that Mendelssohn searched for God outside Jewish texts, and left Judaism as nothing but law and deed. He brought Judaism out of the arena of faith, and into a different arena. This contraction of Judaism emptied it of its religious and ethical content. In this regard, Hirsch writes in the eighteenth letter that we must understand Judaism from within. He sums up this outlook with an aphorism: it is our duty to acquire life from within Judaism, and to grasp Judaism as an institution of life. In other words, the Torah guides man through life, and the word of God inspires man’s soul and endows it with its creative abilities (see his commentary to Genesis 26:5). This is Hirsch’s view of the relationship between religion and culture.

A critique of Dr. Isaac Heinemann⁴. At this point, I must mention the words of Dr. Isaac Heinemann who, in his introduction to the new publication of *The Nineteen Letters*, writes that ‘the difference between the path of Mendelssohn and the path of Hirsch, it seems, is not so great. Is not the word ‘with’ (im) (the word to which Hirsch objected in Mendelssohn) found also in the motto “yafe talmud Torah im derekh erets”, upon which Hirsch based his educational methodology...? In his later years he taught that “we shall prove that man is not required to neglect the Torah in order to make a name for himself in the sphere of culture and civic activism”? In other words, according to Heinemann, Hirsch’s approach is very similar to that of Mendelssohn.

Yet Heinemann has confused the issue. It is not the word ‘im’, on its own, that is important, but the meaning it conveys. In Mendelssohn the phase ‘and with it’ implies there are two different cultures battling each other. Mendelssohn restricted his Judaism to the observance of mitsvot. He viewed his cultural status as the ‘German Plato’ as existing separately and independently. Hirsch advocated passing contemporary culture through the furnace of the Torah. By the phrase ‘derekh erets’, Hirsch meant both the practical preparation of man for civic life, and the academic study needed to fight for authentic Jewish culture, which alone is able to protect the spiritual and ethical nature of Am Yisrael. Culture must serve as a weapon in the battle against destructive elements, and as a shield against attacks on our culture.

In his great works, especially *The Nineteen Letters*, Rabbi Hirsch explains that one need not choose between Jewish culture on the one hand and practical knowledge, technical know-how, the study of language and training in the professions on the other. On the contrary, these disciplines are necessary

3. Solomon Ludwig Steinheim (1789-1866), German-Jewish physician, poet and philosopher.

4. Isaac Heinemann (1876-1957), was a leading scholar of Jewish thought in the early twentieth century.

for life. It is impossible for a God-fearing Jew to avoid them if he desires a livelihood that brings him credit and does not force him to rely on the mercy and benevolence of benefactors. Withdrawal from secular studies is permitted only for those of great ability and spirit who wish to devote themselves to Torah and service of God, through abstention from wealth and luxury, the pleasures of the life of academia and business, and the possessions that broaden a person's mind.

The word 'culture' includes all those intellectual possessions and values that set the tone for the life of the spirit. They are integral to the man who knows how to find his place in the world, and to arrange his life according to spiritual and ethical principles. Above all it is in Judaism, with its purity and greatness that it is possible to find this culture. This culture alone is capable of saving mankind from descending into arrogance and love of power, possession, and physical pleasure. Therefore, it is incumbent upon *Am Yisrael*, the carriers of this culture, to maintain its distinctiveness and preserve its purity in order to educate mankind. This is the mission of *Am Yisrael*, for which they were chosen at Mount Sinai. The progress of mankind as part of the mission of the Jewish religion is central to Hirsch's thought.

Progress. Heinemann quotes Hirsch's words on the main difference between his approach and that of the advocates of 'progress' as 'one small detail'. For the latter progress is absolute, and religion is conditional upon it. For us, religion is absolute, and progress is conditional upon it. That is the difference, and it is enormous. The connection between progress and religion can only be understood in the context of Hirsch's outlook on the renewal of Torah in Israel, which placed belief in God at the centre of history.

In his commentary on the Torah, Hirsch writes that the first sentence in the Ten Commandments – 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt from the house of bondage' – comes to teach us that God is known not only as the Creator of the world, but principally as the God of history. Divine intervention guides and directs the process of history. All that occurs in human history in general, and in Jewish history in particular, stands under the watch of the Creator. The national history of Israel is important for all of mankind due to Israel's special mission. Israel therefore needs special Divine assistance.

According to this conception, every person and mankind as a whole have the ability to bring about tikun olam. Each and every individual of Israel is capable of contributing to this, through doing good. Man's deeds are decisive factors in the process of history. Accordingly, the concept of the progress of humanity is utterly connected to the religious concept of the understanding of God, who is the ultimate Judge and determines the fate of the individual and the world. Understanding God's role in historical events gives history meaning and purpose. Denying His intervention renders history a mere recitation of chance events, without connection or purpose, a whirlwind of nothingness, a battlefield of man and beast.

Critiques of Rabbi Hirsch. There were those that claimed that Hirsch felt a special fondness for German culture and held that modern philosophy was necessary to complete Jewish culture. I have not found a source for this opinion in the writings of Hirsch. On the contrary, Hirsch fought against any attempt to measure Judaism by the philosophical yardstick. In fact, he sought the opposite, to measure philosophy by the yardstick of *Torat Yisrael*. Rabbi Hirsch did not refrain from criticising sharply the greatest of the philosophers of Israel, Rambam, for basing the reasons for mitsvot

on foreign philosophy. Dr. Isaac Breuer, the illustrious grandson of the illustrious Rabbi, has already dealt with this point and said that those who make these claims have not understood the historical basis for Hirsch's stance.

Emancipation led, inexorably, to contact between the Jewish people and other nations. Hirsch encouraged those that were faithful to the word of God to address the problems that contact created with tools borrowed from the foreign cultures Jews encountered. He called on his contemporaries to engage in the struggle of spirit and ideas, to maintain their commitment to the Torah in the new areas of life social emancipation had opened up to them. At the centre of Rabbi Hirsch's religious outlook was the conviction that world events hinged around Am Yisrael. His ultimate ideal was for all nations to recognise the truth of the religion of Israel, as it is written: 'All the inhabitants of the world will recognise and know...' (taken from the second paragraph of Aleinu). This is the deepest sense of the mitsva of Kiddush Hashem.

Enhancing the community, improving the synagogue service and the service of God. Rabbi Hirsch did not just deliver *drashot*, he took action. He invested his greatest spiritual powers and the beauty of his soul into building the community in Frankfurt and its educational institutions. Rabbi Hirsch's Frankfurt community was beautiful from all perspectives. No community in Europe was as well organised as the Hirschian community of Frankfurt. It was built from its earliest foundations on the principles of true democracy. Every member had the right to vote, without distinction between rich and poor. Baron Rothschild, the righteous and famous philanthropist, had no greater rights than any other member. Everyone was equally eligible to be elected the leader of the community. There were institutions for the study of Torah for boys and girls, old and young, for charity and *hesed*, for visiting the sick, burying the dead and comforting mourners.

Frankfurt's efforts to return the Torah to its former splendour, and the design of its communal life in accordance with tradition served as a wonderful example to other communities in Europe and America. Rabbi Hirsch instituted a pleasing synagogue service, which beautified the mitsva of prayer and moved the hearts of worshippers. The singing of the hazzan and choir and the participation of the entire community in song elevated the soul. The beautiful Frankfurt tunes for the Shabbat hymns, Birkat Hamazon, and Birkat Kohanim have spread and become loved by the entire Jewish world, and accepted even by haredim in Eastern Europe.

Rabbi Hirsch was concerned that the synagogue should be endowed with an aesthetic form which would satisfy even the most modern man. Some might say that the religious sphere is no place for an aesthetic experience, for the religious experience must come from internal enthusiasm, from the love and fear of God. But for most people, aesthetics helps their religious feelings to warm up. The beautiful customs of the synagogue, its adornment and enhancement leads the heart to value religion. Hazal expressed this in the classic statement: ' "This is my God and I shall adorn Him" –adorned through mitsvot: a beautiful lulav, beautiful tsitsit, beautiful tefillin' (Shabbat 103). This does not elevate beauty over religion, rather it states the importance of beauty and adornment when they are used for the sake of holiness.

A beautiful song and a pleasant singer are able to enthuse the soul. We know this from the hasidim, and their great founders. The verse 'false is grace and empty is beauty' (Proverbs 31:30) derides only beauty that is separated from morality and religion. Hazal certainly preferred moral beauty but they

did not disparage physical beauty. They held that ‘a Torah scholar who has a stain on his clothing is worthy of death’, since he causes a *hilul Hashem* and distances people from Torah. Beauty and *hiddur* were not the central element in the teaching of Hirsch, but he did not disparage them, and to his credit, used them to make authentic Judaism appealing.

Relations between high society and Hirsch. It was said that Hirsch sought a compromise between religion and the values of high society, and that he wanted to arrange religion so that it would be acceptable in the salons. It is true that religion and the salon have always loathed one another. The salon saw itself as a foe of Judaism, while the elders of the previous generation fought to preserve the partition between religion and the decadence of the salon.

Hirsch was right to reach out to the patrons of the salon, who were immersed in the worship of beauty, to turn their attention towards religion and arouse religious feelings in their hearts. It is wrong to say that Hirsch sought to open the doors of the salon to the observant Jew. He sought only to show the patrons of the salon the path to religion and to the synagogue, which Hirsch had made beautiful, with the beauty of holiness.

When I visited to Frankfurt, I saw Jews from the East who took pleasure in seeing modern men still laying tefillin and observing mitsvot. When I saw young boys and girls riding on bicycles, rushing to tefilla betsibur at the synagogue, I said to myself: ‘this is something unique, a synthesis of religion and life’. This outpouring is the work of Rabbi Hirsch.

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. In Lithuania Rabbi Yisrael Salanter founded a similar approach, albeit in a more traditional style.⁵ Rabbi Salanter fought against the Enlightenment which the Jewish maskilim sought to force upon the Jews of Russia with the assistance of the Russian government, but even he claimed that the sole defence against the danger of the secular Enlightenment was a Jewish enlightenment, drawn from the depths of the Jewish soul. He created the Mussar movement to deepen this religious enlightenment, to refine the character and elevate the spirit.

Like Rabbi Hirsch, Rabbi Salanter criticised the masses who neglected to deepen their understanding of religion and ethics, and only observed mitsvot out of habit. He even told the great scholars, who toiled day and night in Torah, to engage in the education of the spirit and the heart, to ensure that knowledge of the Torah should be a tool for spiritual enlightenment that would be imprinted in their personalities and actions.

Rabbi Salanter was first and foremost a Talmudic genius, and he drew the power of his thought from the classical Jewish sources – Talmud, halakha, aggada, and the ethical treatises of our great sages. He did not leave the walls of the study hall for the world of philosophy. However, the spiritual impact of the Mussar movement was great, and the world of learning has been led and is led today by its adherents.

In cultured Germany, the spiritual condition of the generation was far more complex than in Lithuania. In Germany, Hirsch was embroiled in a difficult struggle against the confusion that engulfed the Jewish camp. He was compelled to seek a new approach, and give religious enlightenment a new form, which would be accepted by his contemporaries. However, one goal permeated these two leaders of Israel

5. Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin (1810-1883), legendary founder of the Mussar movement. He is known as Salanter after Rabbi Yosef Zundel of Salant, one of his primary influences.

of the East and the West: to make the Torah the source from which a Jew draws his worldview and determines his lifestyle. Rabbi Hirsch, like Rabbi Salanter, claimed that a superficial knowledge of *mitsvot* is insufficient to develop fully the Jewish personality. Rather, one must delve into *mitsvot*, and absorb the spiritual depths within them. In particular, the religious Jew must turn the rich material that he has acquired from the treasury of the Torah into a tool for strengthening the spirit and the heart.

Rabbi Hirsch used sharp words against the masses of the previous generation who had turned our religion into a type of superstition against evil spirits, or who saw the observance of *mitsvot* as a piggybank for storing ‘coins’ of good deeds, in order to receive their rewards, with interest, in the next world. Judaism, contended Rabbi Hirsch again and again, is the highest form of enlightenment; it develops the natural abilities of the Jewish man through the spirit of God and His holy Torah.

As a result of his religious thought, Rabbi Hirsch acquired permanent fame. He was the first in Germany to give Judaism a new life force, and he allowed Judaism to speak with a loftiness and eloquence, which had been in slumber and in hiding for many centuries. Through his approach to religious problems, with spiritual understanding and watchful eyes he saved the survivors of his generation; through his vast wisdom and his great teaching ability, he succeeded in fashioning a new type of Jew, who knows how to live a traditional life, and has a thirst to participate in the activity and creativity surrounding the spiritual and scientific developments of Western Europe. This thirst for a modern life could not be quelled by force. It was not possible to send the Western Jew back to a life of isolation and segregation. Rabbi Hirsch enabled the Western Jew to build a life of Torah in the midst of non-Jewish society.

There are few who through their personality and their teachings changed the life of Israel. Rabbi Hirsch was one of those few. At the time of crisis for Jews in Germany, when people felt they had to choose Judaism and reject all the delights the world had to offer, or choose the modern world and betray the holiness of Israel, Rabbi Hirsch came and showed them the way. This path was a source of blessing and salvation for Israel. An Orthodox Judaism, armed with the tools of world culture, prepared to withstand the test of modern life and engage in the struggles of the spirit, was born.

Hirsch and the problems of our time. Hirsch’s solution to the contradiction between Judaism and the secular Enlightenment, and his new stance regarding Jewish culture and religion, was an effort to revive the spirit of Israel, and to renew its creativity from the everlasting wellsprings of Torah and tradition. The problems with which Rabbi Hirsch struggled in his time stand before world Jewry today, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. The Jew of our time is no longer the Jew of Eastern Europe who lived on the troubled border of material prosperity and independent spirituality. Religion did not survive the storminess of the new age intact. For the masses in Eastern Europe, religion was only able to survive as long as its adherents were holed up in primitive conditions.

The Jews of the East did not have inadequate faith. Their religious principles had been passed down by the Tannaim, Amoraim, and the Rishonim, and are eternal fundamentals of the world and of religion. However, one crucial element was missing: deep religious enlightenment. Consequently, there were some whose traditional faith evaporated upon encountering the new world. A Jew of the old world was not equipped to survive the struggle with the new spirit of the age. The Jew of our times stands in a world full of spiritual creativity and scientific advancement, with a high quality of life, rich in music,

literature and philosophy, all of which enchant and attract Jews whose religious consciousness lacks depth and foundation.

The Jew in our times is linked by a thousand cords to this new world, whether in fields of commerce, community, education, profession or academia. This is an indisputable fact, which no amount of sobbing can nullify. The ‘solutions’ proffered by certain small-minded individuals will not succeed in building a bridge and a passage for saving this confused, wandering generation. My advice is to listen and take a lesson from the great teacher in Israel, who stood up to this challenge with great success. It is certain that his approach and path in education requires adjustment that would better reflect contemporary issues and spiritual needs of the Jewish soul, which thirsts for absolute mastery and deep knowledge of the Torah. But the direction and the purpose fashioned by the great teacher remains relevant.

In the State of Israel. In the re-invigorated land of our forefathers, where the new generation wants to build its home and establish its culture, the situation is not much better. The great majority of youth is not educated in our tradition. The government announced that the state was to be secular, and it was not embarrassed to declare publicly that the State of Israel is a state of ‘law’, not of halakha. We understand the meaning of this ‘law’, which is nothing more than an opening of the gates to all winds that sail in from Europe and America. The language employed by the State regarding its great, eternal heritage is no more than empty semantics, even if it uses verses taken from the words of the Prophets, as long as this not combined with concrete action.

The State of Israel is a Jewish state, and must preserve and cultivate Judaism. This is necessary for the continuity of the State, and a pre-condition for its spiritual establishment and independence. A state cannot survive unless it is built on the spiritual foundations of its national independent culture. A state that is based only on administrative control and the strength of the army and the police will eventually crumble. We know this from world history. We have no culture other than that of Dat Moshe veYisrael.

Judaism, says Rabbi Hirsch, is not a religion in the normal sense, precisely because it is the religion of all religions. The religion of Israel is more than a religion. It forms the being of a Jew, the blueprint of each day, a life of national festivals and familial and communal celebrations. It is the basis of morality, and the life of Jews who comprise the spiritual existence of this unique nation. Anyone who removed our religious foundations takes away the soul of our national culture. The result of the development of secularism, and the desertion of halakha, will be a separation, a split, a division, and a tearing of the nation into pieces.

No one wishes religious coercion in a democratic state, but it is the responsibility of a cultured state to accept voluntarily the role of spiritual leadership to influence and nurture the spiritual character of the life of the nation, a character that should symbolise Jewish independence in all its aspects. If the Hebrew State learns to uphold and preserve its unique independence, it can be assured that the entire Jewish world will recognise and salute its leadership.

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Finding a Chief Rabbi 1911 - 1913

BEN ELTON

ON 14 APRIL 1913 Lord Rothschild stood in front of the Ark of the Great Synagogue and handed the newly elected Chief Rabbi, Joseph Herman Hertz, a Sefer Torah with the words 'I give into your care and safe custody our ancient law and our religious guidance'.¹ It was the culmination of the search for a Chief Rabbi that had taken almost two years, and just as Rothschild that day stood alone and handed Hertz the Sefer Torah, so too a few weeks before he played the crucial role in handing Hertz the Chief Rabbinate.

When Hermann Adler died on 18 July 1911 he had been Chief Rabbi since his father's, Nathan Adler's, death in 1890 and Delegate Chief Rabbi, carrying out the functions of the office, since Nathan retired to Brighton in 1880. In 1890 Hermann's succession was inevitable and unopposed, but in 1911 the situation was different. Hermann's son, Alfred Adler, whom his father had begun to train up and who had served in a couple of small communities, died a few months before his father.² There was therefore no obvious successor. For the first time since Nathan Adler defeated a field of candidates in 1845, including Samson Raphael Hirsch, there would be an open competition. In an age when there was no retirement age for the Chief Rabbi, and the last three incumbents had served 40, 45 and 21 years respectively, Anglo-Jewry faced a decision that would have an enormous influence on the religious nature of the community for one or maybe two generations. As many scholars have observed, the process of appointing a new rabbi is a catalyst which brings to the surface the strains within a community and forces some resolution, or at least accommodation of latent tensions.³ During the selection period aspects of a community usually hidden are brought to light and many truths revealed. They are therefore very fruitful periods for study.

Abolition, reform or status quo? Whenever the Chief Rabbinate has become vacant, voices have been raised in Anglo-Jewry to reform or abolish the institution. On each occasion the most powerful lay leaders, the men who funded the community, determined that the Chief Rabbinate should continue.

On the death of Hermann Adler in 1911 a particularly concerted effort was made to abolish the Chief Rabbinate, by both the highly Anglicised and the rabbinical leaders of more traditional, immigrant

1. D. Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis 1664-2006* (London 2007) 349

2. See Alfred Adler's posthumously published volume of sermons: *The discipline of sorrow* (London 1911)

3. The importance of analysing the events surrounding rabbinical succession has been recognised in a burgeoning literature, for example the articles contained in special issue of *Jewish History* 13:1 (Spring 1999) which featured articles by Mordechai Breuer, 'Appointment and succession among yeshiva deans,' (11-23); Simon Schwarzfuchs, 'The inheritance of the Rabbinate reconsidered,' (25-33); Shaul Stampfer, "Inheritance of the Rabbinate in Eastern Europe in the modern period - causes, factors and development over time," (35-57); Jay R. Berkovitz, 'Patterns of Rabbinic succession in modern France,' (59-82); Yaron Harel, 'The controversy over Rabbi Ephraim Laniado's inheritance of the Rabbinate in Aleppo,' (83-101); Gershon Bacon, 'Warsaw-Radom-Vilna: Three disputes over Rabbinical posts in interwar Poland and their implications for the change in Jewish public discourse,' (103-126); Adam S. Ferziger, 'The Lookstein Legacy: An American Orthodox Rabbinical dynasty?' (127-149). See also Jonathan Helfand, 'The Aborted candidacy of Rabbi Asher Ginsburg: A failed attempt at modernization,' *Jewish History* 15:1 (Spring 2001): 41-57. I am grateful to Menachem Butler for drawing my attention to these sources.

population. Both had chafed under the rule of Hermann Adler. He was respected, even loved, by many, but his administration was described as an autocracy, albeit a benign dictatorship.⁴ Over the 30 years during which he was the religious authority of the United Synagogue Adler had refused a number of proposed reforms to the liturgy supported by the more acculturated members of the United. He had disciplined erring Ministers, such as Joseph Hochman of the New West End who gave a series of radical sermons in 1910, and excluded from the United Synagogue ministry entirely men whose attacks on tradition were yet stronger, such as Morris Joseph, whom Hampstead Synagogue dearly wished to appoint as their first Minister. Adler clashed with the immigrant community, primarily over the issue of shehitah.⁵ Both traditionalists and the Anglicised used Adler's death to call for profound changes to the office.

In 1912 the Association for the Furthering of Traditional Judaism in Great Britain, led by the leading immigrant rabbis of the country including Rabbi Yisrael Daiches, Rabbi Shmuel Hillman and Rabbi Victor Schonfeld, declared that 'there was no room for a Chief Rabbi' that the appearance of Chief Rabbis led to the disappearance of orthodox Judaism, and that every local rabbi should exercise his own authority over his community. However, the Association stated that if there must be a Chief Rabbi, he should be 'a man of great piety, strict orthodoxy a rigid observant of the Shulchan Aruch and a great Talmudist' who did not interfere with the decisions of local rabbis, especially of shehitah as Hermann Adler had done, clashing with the rabbis of Liverpool in 1904 and Manchester in 1907. The Chief Rabbinate Sub-committee led by Albert Jessel, which had been set up by the Chief Rabbinate Conference, to find a new Chief Rabbi responded by asserting that it sought a Chief Rabbi of the qualities the Association identified, and more besides. They wanted a man who would command the respect of East End Jews but would also be a suitable leader for the West End, and who was able to represent the community to the nation as a whole. The Sub-committee made no reference to curtailing the Chief Rabbi's powers.⁶

The body representing the clergy of the United Synagogue, the Conference of Ministers, led by Joseph Hochman and others with whom Hermann Adler had battled, provided more detailed and more radical proposals. Under Adler and his predecessors the Chief Rabbi was both *de jure* and *de facto* Rav and Av Bet Din. The dayanim were his junior colleagues on the London Beth Din, which literally was 'The Court of the Chief Rabbi'. In practice, from the 1880s onwards specialist halakhists were appointed to the Beth Din to provide expertise, but the Chief Rabbi at its head, remained the supreme religious authority in the community. Individual synagogue ministers had little or no autonomy. They could not serve without the Chief Rabbi's approval and any decision they made about the religious conduct of their own synagogues could be appealed to the Chief Rabbi. This naturally caused resentment. After Hermann Adler died the United Synagogue's ministers were determined that the situation should change.

In early January 1912 they presented a plan for a Consistory, that is a religious committee, to assist the Chief Rabbi. The Chief Rabbi was to be its President, and its membership to be composed of the dayanim and elected representatives of all ministers accepting the Chief Rabbi's authority. This Consistory, and not the Chief Rabbi or Beth Din was to act as the community's religious authority and decisions were to be made by a simple majority. The Chief Rabbi would hold the casting vote,

4. Letter from Redcliffe Salaman to the *Jewish Chronicle* (afterwards JC) 28 June 1912, 15

5. D. Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis 1664-2006* (London 2007) Chapter 20

6. JC 26 April 1912, 21

but no more.⁷ This plan would have turned the Chief Rabbi into a cipher. He would have lost all control over the United Synagogue's religious character to individual ministers. Had this been the constitutional arrangement in the 1890s all of the proposed reforms Adler had blocked would have been implemented and every minister he had excluded would have been appointed. Hochman's agenda was clear. As he told his congregation 'I am surely not alone in hoping that the Chief Rabbi will be relieved of the responsibility of maintaining an official religious standpoint, which can be maintained without his aid by those desirous of maintaining it'.⁸

The *Jewish Chronicle* correctly judged that under this scheme, the Chief Rabbi would 'be assisted out of existence'.⁹ A weakened Chief Rabbinate would mean that no candidate of any standing would want the position, enabling another of the ministers' aims to be achieved; the easy accession of one of their own number. The principal leaders of Anglo-Jewry, Lord Rothschild, President of the United Synagogue, and Lord Swaythling, President of the Federation of Synagogues, both wanted a Chief Rabbi on the old model. On 14 January 1912 the Chief Rabbinate Sub-committee met, and rejected the ministers' plan.¹⁰ Hochman now moved to a more radical position, and in May 1912 the journal he co-edited, *The Jewish Review* declared that the Chief Rabbinate served to 'deprive the congregation of all powers and the minister of all influence...The need for a Chief Rabbi is not urgent'.¹¹ This call to allow the office to fall into abeyance was also ignored.

Search and selection. The selection of a Chief Rabbi to succeed Hermann Adler was profoundly bruising. This should not surprise us, as Edward Shapiro has commented 'the selection of a rabbi is often complicated and contentious, and rarely pleasant'.¹² The competition between the candidates to succeed Adler was fierce, the *Jewish Chronicle* brutal and the rivalry between communal organisations intense.

Delegates to the Chief Rabbinate Conference were first invited in November 1911, and votes allocated in proportion to the contributions to the Chief Rabbinate Fund. Of 431 votes, 314 went to the United Synagogue. The whole of Manchester Jewry received seven votes and Leeds just one. Following the meeting on 14 January, the Federation, seeing how the allocation would be made, seceded from the Conference and could not be induced to return. This placed control of the process and the final selection firmly in the hands of the United Synagogue and, crucially as it turned out, with Lord Rothschild himself.¹³ It was Lord Rothschild who began the formal process by announcing the vacancy officially on 13 May 1912, and describing the rights and responsibilities of the office (including pay and other benefits – duly published in the *Jewish Chronicle*). These included the Chief Rabbi's final say over all ministerial appointments, marriages and the religious affairs of the synagogues under his jurisdiction, and the clause prohibiting the Chief Rabbi issuing a herem (excommunication), a restriction on every Chief Rabbi since Nathan Adler in 1845.¹⁴

In addition to commissioning the Sub-committee to begin an active and wide ranging search for the

7. JC 5 January 1912, 20

8. JC 5 January 1912, 22

9. JC 5 January 1912, 10

10. JC 19 January, 22

11. *Jewish Review* Volume 13, May 1912

12. E. S. Shapiro, 'Modern Orthodoxy in crisis: A test case' *Judaism* (Summer 2002), 352

13. M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain since 1913* (London 2006) 47

14. JC 17 May 1912, 12ff. Rabbi Solomon Hirschell had issued a *herem* against the West London Synagogue in 1841. This had caused great bitterness and the lay leadership were determined that there should be no repetition.

right candidate, the Conference issued an open invitation to 'any gentleman who is prepared to accept the position of Chief Rabbi to communicate' with the Secretary of the Chief Rabbinate Conference 'with the least possible delay' and set out the sort of man it wanted to apply. A few months before he died Hermann Adler had placed a message in a sealed envelope to be opened on his death. In it he called upon the community to appoint a successor 'who will be equally acceptable to the East and the West, the native and the immigrant'. The Chief Rabbinate Conference echoed these sentiments and those of the Association for the Furthering of Traditional Judaism. It declared that 'candidates must have the highest rabbinical Diplomas, so as to be competent to decide all religious questions, they must have a University degree, be able to speak and preach fluently in English, and be imbued with strong piety, deep learning and strictly Orthodox principles'.¹⁵

Early candidates. Six candidates put themselves forward for the office of Chief Rabbi: first Joseph Abrahams, Samuel Daiches and Hermann Gollanz, and then Moses Hyamson, Bernard Drachman and Joseph Herman Hertz.

Although they all had a strong claim to the position, the first three candidates fell by the wayside before even the vacancy was officially declared. They had appeared suitable because they were British, and Lord Rothschild had made clear his preference for a British Chief Rabbi.¹⁶ The difficulty was that Britain had produced very few rabbis. Jews' College trained preachers and readers who generally did not take *semikha*.

Joseph Abrahams. The lay leaders therefore had to look all the way to Australia to find a candidate. Abrahams was the most senior English rabbi of his generation. He was born in 1855 in London, the son and grandson of rabbis. His father was Barnett Abrahams, who became Av Bet Din of the Spanish and Portuguese community and Principal of Jews' College while still in his twenties. He died aged only 32, leaving a young family including the eight year old Joseph.¹⁷

Joseph Abrahams himself went to Jews' College and London University, and then studied for and received *semikha* at the Rabbinerseminar, Berlin headed by Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer, and was awarded a PhD by the University of Leipzig. In 1883 he became Minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. When Hermann Adler died Abrahams was invited to London with a view to being appointed Chief Rabbi, but he returned to Melbourne empty handed, remaining rabbi there until his retirement in 1919. Many reasons have been given why Abrahams was not appointed, in many ways a remarkable outcome seeing as he had been brought all the way from Australia and considering his impeccable British, rabbinic and family credentials. Moreover, he fulfilled perfectly the requirements that the Chief Rabbinate Committee would later set out; he had a University degree, spoke English, and possessed a 'deep learning' which he acquired at the Hildesheimer Seminary. This learning also made him acceptable to the East End.¹⁸

It has been suggested that the ill health of his wife prevented Abrahams accepting the post, but she lived for another 20 years, and presumably he knew of the state of her health when he travelled to London. A contemporary observer, Saemy Japhet, reported that the sermon Abrahams gave on his visit 'displeased the majority', and the *Jewish Chronicle* reported that many members of the community

15. Ibid., M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain*, 42

16. JC 3 May 1912, 20

17. A.M. Hyamson, *Jews' College London 1855-1955* (London 1955), 27ff

18. *Australian Dictionary of National Biography* Volume 7 (Melbourne 1979), 7-8

was distinctly underwhelmed by him during his visit, and resented the attempt by the lay leaders to bounce them into accepting Abrahams without a proper search.¹⁹ There was also the matter of Abrahams' age. He was 56 in 1911, five years older than Hermann Adler had been when he became Chief Rabbi and over 20 years older than some of the other candidates.

Another possible reason for his failure to be appointed concerns his brother, Israel Abrahams. Israel was a great scholar. He began as a teacher at Jews' College, and succeeded Solomon Schechter as Reader in Rabbinics at Cambridge in 1902, but he was also a religious radical. In 1902 he helped found the Jewish Religious Union, which held services on Shabbat afternoons with mixed seating and an organ. Hermann Adler condemned the organisation and its activities in his sermon *The Old Paths* in which he declared 'such a service cannot, I maintain, be considered a Jewish service'.²⁰ The founders persisted, founding the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in 1911. In 1908 Abrahams clashed with Adler again, over the Jews' College curriculum. Jews' College was funded by all sections of the community and that had implications for its management. Even after the founding of the Jewish Religious Union, and Adler's condemnation of it, Abrahams remained on the College Council. When Jews' College applied to become part of the University of London, the University required that the New Testament be added to the curriculum. Adler, the Chairman of the Council refused. Abrahams complained bitterly to a College committee about Adler's stance, and soon after Adler resigned the Chairmanship.²¹

Although Joseph Abrahams had permitted a mixed choir to be established at the Melbourne Synagogue, he was essentially a traditionalist. He had even resigned briefly as Minister in protest at some conversions. He was, in short, a man of very different opinions to his brother. With one brother in London and another in Australia, and without any institutional connection between the two, conflict was unlikely, if Joseph Abrahams became Chief Rabbi it would be almost inevitable. It is possible that either the lay leaders did not want to place the two brothers at loggerheads, or feared Joseph would be unwilling to defend the United Synagogue's corner against Israel, or Joseph himself did not want to become Chief Rabbi only to spend his time fighting his brother.

Daiches and Gollancz. The two other early candidates, Daiches and Gollancz, though highly suitable in terms of learning, both Jewish and general, were more clearly disqualified on grounds of age.

Daiches was from distinguished stock, his father was Rabbi Yisrael Chaim Daiches, Rav of Leeds and the author of *Netivot Yerushalayim*, the commentary on the Yerushalmi. Samuel was taught by his father, and went to the Universities of Koenigsberg and Berlin and the Hildesheimer Seminary. He served as Rabbi of Sunderland from 1905 to 1907 before joining the faculty of Jews' College. He was, however, only 32 in 1911, somewhat young to be Chief Rabbi.²² His father, although distinguished, had been an opponent of Hermann Adler and of his office, and it certainly did not help that in June 1911 Samuel had advocated the abolition of the Chief Rabbinate, declaring 'the Chief Rabbinate in its present form has outlived itself...The Chief Rabbinate has crippled the community, has destroyed the sense of community in congregation and minister alike'.²³

The problems of age and of perceived hostility of the Chief Rabbinate as an institution also afflicted

19. A. Newman, *Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph H. Hertz C.H.* (London 1972), 5; JC 5 April 1912, 7

20. H. Adler, *The Old Paths* (London 1902), 7

21. London Beth Din papers, London Metropolitan Archives 2712/15/1392

22. A. Levy, *History of the Sunderland Jewish Community 1755-1955* (London 1956), 225-226

23. JC 16 June 1911, 27

Hermann Gollancz, who was 59 when Hermann Adler died. There was no doubting his credentials. He also came from an Anglo-Jewish rabbinic family, obtained *semikha* from Europe, took a PhD and was appointed Professor of Hebrew at University College London. He later became the first rabbi to be knighted. As the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote 'Dr Gollancz would, in all probability, have made an admirable Chief Rabbi, twenty years ago.'²⁴ He also had a history of being at the centre of communal discord. Hermann Adler would only recognise the *semikha* of one of his ministers if he had conferred it himself. Hermann Gollancz went to Galacia in 1898 to receive *semikha* but for a decade afterwards Adler would not allow him to use the title. Gollancz was immensely aggrieved, so much so that until 1908, when Adler relaxed his policy, Gollancz refused to be accept an aliyah as he could not be called up as *harav*.²⁵

Hyamson, Hertz and Drachman. Two serious candidates emerged in response to the invitation to apply for the Chief Rabbinate, Moses Hyamson, a Dayan of the London Beth Din, followed a few months after by Joseph Herman Hertz. They were joined later by Bernard Drachman, in a strange semi-candidacy, which looked at one point as though it would win the day. They were all educated at modern rabbinical seminaries, all possessed PhDs and none was born in England. They were all Zionists and all adhered to what would today be described as Modern Orthodoxy, influenced strongly by Rabbi S.R. Hirsch and the modern methods of Jewish study employed by figures such as Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and Rabbi D.Z. Hoffman. It was perhaps just this similarity which made the competition so intense.

Moses Hyamson was born in Suvalk, then in Russia and now in Poland, in 1862 but came to England at a young age and attended Jews' College and London University, he was therefore as British as Hermann Adler, who also came to England as a child and fulfilled the desire for a British Chief Rabbi. He served as Minister in Swansea, Bristol and then Dalston, before being given *semikha* by Hermann Adler in 1902 and joining the Beth Din. He threw himself into communal work including visiting the poor, organising kosher hospital meals, mikvaot and the Board of Guardians. In 1911 he was elected by his fellow clergy President of the Conference of Anglo-Jewish Ministers. Towards the end of Hermann Adler's life, Hyamson deputised for him, for example on provincial tours, and when he died Hyamson jointly took on the duties of the Chief Rabbinate with his fellow dayan Asher Feldman. He was a scholar, who was later appointed Professor of Codes at the Jewish Theological Seminary by Solomon Schechter. Hyamson, then was a talmid haham, educated in England to PhD level, and he was effectively Acting Chief Rabbi. Dayan Feldman did not put himself forward. Hyamson was for some time the only candidate, and ought to have taken the Chief Rabbinate easily.²⁶

The Jewish Chronicle's campaign against Hyamson. The most difficult question about the Chief Rabbinate campaign of 1913-1913 is therefore not why Hertz won, but why Hyamson lost. Although a number of factors told against Hyamson the crucial reason why he failed to become Chief Rabbi was the implacable and relentless opposition of the *Jewish Chronicle*, expressed either in its leader columns or through the column *In the communal armchair*, by a writer calling himself 'Mentor' who was, in fact, the editor, Leopold Greenberg.²⁷ The paper repeatedly changed its position, each time to support the strategy or candidate most likely to defeat Hyamson.

24. JC 5 April 1912, 8

25. O.S. Phillips and H.A. Simons, *The Bayswater Synagogue 1863-1963* (London 1963), 29ff

26. *American Jewish Yearbook* 1950, 521; JC 16 June 1911, 26

27. M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain*, 200

As one correspondent wrote, the *Chronicle* ‘pilloried’ Hyamson, moving from one potential or actual candidate to another ‘only to keep Dr Hyamson out’ but as *The Moment* newspaper in Warsaw noted, this strategy was successful, and prevented Hyamson’s election.²⁸

The *Jewish Chronicle* began relatively gently. In April 1912 it stated ‘the very fact that he [Hyamson] is so excellent a dayan is exactly why he is so abundantly lacking in the qualities necessary for a Chief Rabbi’ because his specialisation had prevented him from obtaining the breadth of knowledge a Chief Rabbi needed.²⁹ In other words, there were no defects in Dayan Hyamson, he merely lacked the necessary qualifications, and that through no fault of his own. Yet even this mild criticism does not stand up to scrutiny. As B.M. Benjamin wrote in January 1913, Hyamson possessed ‘vast Hebrew and Talmudical learning, general scholarship, judicial capacity’ was ‘an eloquent and a skilful and tactful administrator’ furthermore, he had been all anointed by Hermann Adler as his successor and after Adler’s death as Acting Chief Rabbi had helped calm the fraught situation in South Wales which had led to anti-Jewish disturbance in Tredegar. Hyamson’s qualities were recognised in February 1913 when Hertz’s own New York Synagogue, *Orach Chaim* elected Hyamson their rabbi for life, on the highest salary (\$5000) ever paid by an Orthodox synagogue.³⁰

J.M. Jacobs later argued that ‘had Dr Hyamson been elected to the Chief Rabbinate soon after the late Chief Rabbi’s death, his appointment would have met with the approval of the community generally’.³¹ However, there was to be no swift appointment. Joseph Abrahams’ unsuccessful visit slowed the process down, and by the time he left the *Chronicle*’s campaign was in full swing. First the paper backed the Haham of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, Dr. Moses Gaster. Then it called for Rabbi Dr Poznansky of Warsaw to be invited to enter his name as a candidate, but neither was interested. Hyamson thus remained the only candidate and had many strengths. Why then was he not simply elected? The Chief Rabbinate Conference, it was reported, was ‘riven with dissension’. Should this be attributed entirely to the influence of the *Jewish Chronicle*?

There seem to have been at least two other considerations. First, Hyamson’s election as President of the Conference of Anglo-Jewish Ministers in 1911 had caused resentment. He had defeated A.A. Green, Minister of Hampstead and Hermann Gollancz and therefore earned their opposition, especially as they were by far his seniors. It was felt that Hyamson had campaigned for the Presidency rather too enthusiastically, and that he wanted to use the Presidency as a springboard to the Chief Rabbinate, which was expected to become vacant sooner rather than later. Hermann Adler was ailing. He himself discussed the qualities required of his successor, and others debated the future religious governance of the community.³² Secondly, Hyamson had begun the London section of his career badly. His appointment to the Beth Din in 1902 had been met with protests in the East End, who wanted an experienced European rabbi appointed, not a relatively young man educated at Jews’ College. Hyamson’s work on the Beth in the succeeding decade had turned some of the immigrant community into his supporters. J.M. Jacobs wrote that ‘we East Enders are grateful to Dr Hyamson for his successful labours amongst us’.³³ Yet this was not enough, and Lord Swaythling, President of the Federation of Synagogues informed the Chief Rabbinate Conference privately that Hyamson would

28. JC 10 January 1913, 21

29. JC 12 April 1912, 7

30. *New York Times*, 8 May 1913, 4

31. JC 10 January 1913, 21

32. JC 16 June 1911, 26ff

33. JC 10 January 1913, 21

not be acceptable to the East End. It appears that this prevented a unanimous selection. That did not mean, of course, that if there was an election Hyamson would lose, and he continued his campaign by embarking on a tour of London and provincial synagogue where his sermons were well received.³⁴

Enter Hertz. By April 1912, however, there was a second candidate, Joseph Herman Hertz. Hertz was born in Slovakia in 1872. His father was a musmakh of R. Esriel Hildesheimer, a plum farmer and teacher and Hertz's first instructor in Bible and Talmud. The family left Europe for New York in about 1883 and in 1887 Hertz entered the newly established Jewish Theological Seminary, then the bastion in America of Modern Orthodoxy. He left in 1894 with a double rabbinical ordination. The President of the Faculty, Morais, and the President of the Trustees, Joseph Blumenthal, signed one ordination, while another, the traditional hattarat horaah, was signed by six rabbis, including some Seminary teachers, but also by more traditionalist figures. Hertz was also awarded a PhD in philosophy from Columbia University. The Seminary arranged Hertz's first pulpit, at Congregation Adath Jeshurun, in Syracuse, where he took up office immediately after graduation.³⁵

At Syracuse, Hertz became a founder member of the Orthodox Union, a mixture of highly acculturated and more traditional synagogues. Hertz represented aspects of both groups: he was trained at a modern seminary but he had been born in Hungary and spoke Yiddish. Only three or four years into his rabbinate Hertz's principles were put to the test. In late 1897 or early 1898 Syracuse introduced mixed pews. By April 1898 Hertz had already applied to a new synagogue in South Africa and was collecting references.³⁶ It was at the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation that Hertz first made his name as a great preacher, eager to use the pulpit to propagate his message. Hertz's continuing commitment to the world outside the Jewish community is evident from his appointment as professor of philosophy at the University of the Transvaal, and his pro-British anti-Boer political activity, which led briefly to his expulsion from the country.

Hertz left Witwatersrand in 1911 to become rabbi of Congregation Orach Chayim in New York, a synagogue of German Jews based on Hirsch's community in Frankfurt. It was committed to *Torah im derekh erets*.³⁷ This was no theoretical commitment; a requirement of membership was observance of the Sabbath. It was from this pulpit that Hertz applied for the position of Chief Rabbi in 1912.

At first the *Jewish Chronicle* was sceptical, but kept an open mind pending his arrival on a preaching tour in May.³⁸ Like Hyamson, his sermons were well received, indeed they were favourably compared with Hermann Adler's, especially in their power and because they were delivered extempore. Others commented on Hertz's 'energy, his mentality, his wide knowledge of affairs, and his strong Jewish spirit' and his 'energy...force..."go".'³⁹ The *Chronicle* was unconvinced, but was still opposed to Hyamson, describing him as 'a bitter pill to swallow'.⁴⁰ It therefore called for further delay, to give a third candidate, Rabbi Dr Bernard Drachman, who was known to be considering standing, time to enter the contest. Otherwise, insinuated the newspaper, Hyamson's ruthless electioneering would secure him the Chief Rabbinate. For good measure the *Chronicle* called for the new Chief Rabbi to be a unanimous recommendation and not the result of an election. In other words, the newspaper argued

34. JC 24 May 1912, 24

35. M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain*, 23ff;

36. Hertz Papers, Southampton University Library, 175 37/2

37. E. Levine, 'Memoir' in I. Epstein (ed) *Joseph Herman Hertz, 1872-1946: In Memoriam* (London 1947), 4

38. JC 5 April 1912, 7

39. M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain*, 48-49

40. JC 28 June 1912, 12

that there should be no vote to choose one of Hyamson and Hertz, but that the office should be simply offered to Drachman if he put himself forward.

Drachman decides. Bernard Drachman was born in America in 1861, he attended Columbia University and then the Breslau Theological Seminary, founded by Zachariah Frankel, where he received his semikha. In 1887 he began teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary where he conducted classes in Bible, Hebrew grammar and composition. In 1889 he became Dean of the faculty and ten years later published the first English translation of Hirsch's *Nineteen Letters*. In 1902 the new President, Solomon Schechter, appointed him reader in Codes. However, Schechter was unhappy with him, considered him fanatical and his teaching as below standard. In 1908 the Seminary board asked for his resignation on grounds of economy. He transferred his allegiance to the Orthodox Union and continued by rabbi of an orthodox but acculturated New York congregations Zichron Ephraim and then Oheb Zedek.⁴¹

Unfortunately for the *Jewish Chronicle* Drachman did not immediately throw his hat into the ring, and by July 5 1912 the newspaper's earlier misgivings about Hertz evaporated, and they threw their support behind him.⁴² For good measure the newspaper combined its support for Hertz with a swinging attack on Hyamson, writing of Hertz that 'he is free of the many painful defects which render it eminently desirable that of the two gentlemen it is h, not Dr Hyamson, who should become Chief Rabbi'.⁴³

Rather embarrassingly, Drachman entered the race three weeks later, at which point the *Chronicle* returned to its call for delay and proper consideration of Drachman.⁴⁴ By October, before Drachman's preaching tour had even begun, the *Chronicle* had solidified its position into a firm appeal for Drachman to receive a call from the Conference, to prevent a vote which the newspaper argued would be divisive and indecorous, but which, more importantly, they thought Hyamson would win.⁴⁵

The *Jewish Chronicle's* plans were thrown awry as it became clear that Drachman's candidacy was a disaster. Although his sermons were praised - it was suggested that if he lacked Hertz's drama and force he made up for it in warmth and dignity - he made at least three major mistakes which obliterated his chances.⁴⁶ First, he never formally put his name forward as a candidate. He merely let it be known that were he to receive a call to assume the office of Chief Rabbi he would accept. He was not prepared to stand in an election, which he felt would undermine the authority of the office and its incumbent, as the *Jewish Chronicle* had long argued. That meant that unless a clear consensus emerged that he was the right man he could not succeed. His performances, although creditable, were not so outstanding that this was likely.

What chances Drachman had were diminished by two further misjudgements. First, when he visited the East End he refused to speak in Yiddish. When he was asked to do so he replied 'I do not consider Yiddish a language, in the true sense of the term. It is, at best, a dialect of the German. It is an incorrect and ungrammatical German. Since I can speak a correct German, I see no reason why I

41. Y. Levine, *Dr. Bernard Drachman* (1861-1945). A forgotten champion of American Orthodoxy. http://personal.stevens.edu/~llevine/drachman_v2.pdf

42. JC 5 July 1912, 9

43. Ibid.

44. JC 26 July 1912, 8

45. JC 25 October 1912, 8

46. JC 15 November 10

should myself corrupt and spoil the language I speak.⁴⁷ We have seen how the opinion of the East End was considered important, for example Hyamson's candidacy suffered because he was unpopular in parts of the East End. Drachman's attitude towards Yiddish can have only done his campaign damage. By contrast Hertz was enthusiastic to use Yiddish, and told the Chief Rabbinate Conference in his application that he spoke the language.⁴⁸ His South African congregation contained both Yiddish and English speakers, he preached and lectured in both languages had gained the support of both sections of the community.⁴⁹

Having alienated the traditional, Drachman went on to make himself unpopular with the more Anglicised. He was invited to dine at the home of the highly influential A.A. Green with a group of ministers and lay leaders. Drachman, however, was unsure of the kashrut of the dinner, and did not eat anything. This was noticed, and Green said to him 'I presume you are not eating because you think my food is not kosher. I assure you it is as kosher as the Board of Shechitah permits it to be'. Drachman assured Green that this was not the case, but as he later recorded 'the atmosphere had become distinctly chilly, and when I left I felt that the Rev. Mr Green could hardly be numbered among my friends'.⁵⁰ It was also suggested that Drachman suffered from being considered too orthodox, as he had resigned an early pulpit when it introduced mixed seating.⁵¹ This seems unlikely to have had a great impact, as Hertz, as we have noted, had left a synagogue for the same reason, yet this did not hinder him.

A final blow to Drachman came from another source, Solomon Schechter in New York. In the 1890s Schechter had lived in England, teaching at London and Cambridge Universities. He was a distinguished and respected figure. In 1902 he had left Britain to become President of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Albert Jessel asked Schechter for his opinion of both Drachman and Hertz. Schechter knew both, but while he was a friend of Hertz as we have seen, he disliked Drachman. It is therefore unsurprising that Schechter's response was anything but equivocal. He wrote 'Hertz is decidedly the greater scholar, even in rabbinics, the greater gentleman and the greater preacher... The difference between the two candidates is so greatly to the advantage of Dr. Hertz as to exclude all comparison...I know of no greater calamity that could happen to British Jewry than the election of Dr. Drachman to the chief rabbinate. Even the extending of an invitation to him is humiliating to English Jewry in the eyes of those who know the man and his position here'. Schechter also wrote publicly 'Dr. Hertz is a fine Hebrew scholar...[has] a large experience in pastoral work...an industrious student, an omnivorous reader, and endowed with a fine philosophic mind...I believe that unless you have a man of his oratory, able to present the ideas and ideals of ancient Judaism in an intelligent and lucid manner...Traditional Judaism will soon be a matter of the past...Dr. Hertz is the man able to accomplish this great task'.⁵²

Lord Rothschild chooses. In the light of all of these developments it was impossible for the Chief Rabbinate Conference to select Drachman by acclamation. At most they could include him as a candidate in the election against Hertz and Hyamson. Drachman still refused to compete, he withdrew and the contest returned to being a straight fight between Hertz and Hyamson. The *Jewish*

47. B. Drachman, *The unfailing light* (New York 1948), 301-302

48. Hertz Papers, Southampton University Library, 175 70/3

49. A. Newman, *Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph H. Hertz C.H.* (London 1972), 3

50. B. Drachman, *The unfailing light* (New York 1948), 303-304

51. Ibid., 316

52. H. Meirovich, *A vindication of Judaism: The polemics of the Hertz Pentateuch* (New York 1998), 195, 17

Chronicle rediscovered its enthusiasm for Hertz and campaigned in his favour, but it appears that Hertz remained far from certain of victory.⁵³ Although he had the support of the *Jewish Chronicle* he was opposed by the United Synagogue's London ministers. As he wrote to Solomon Schechter 'all the metropolitan clergy are against me'.⁵⁴ As late as February 1913 they were trying to prevent his election by issuing public statements declaring him unqualified to be Chief Rabbi.⁵⁵ By that time, however, another development had rendered these objections moot.

While rabbi in Witwatersrand, Hertz had been an enthusiastic supporter of Britain in the Boer War, and had even been expelled by the Afrikaner authorities for a period. This made him very popular among the British community, not least the Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, Lord Milner. The lay leader Saemy Japhet recorded in his diary how Milner's view became decisive: 'it happened that Lord Milner, in the course of a conversation, mentioned to Lord Rothschild that Dr. Hertz...was a most desirable candidate. Lord Milner reported that during the Boer War Dr. Hertz, then at Johannesburg, was openly pro-British. He had suffered for his convictions. This was sufficient for Lord Rothschild. He declared the campaign at an end, and proclaimed Dr. Hertz as the sole candidate of the United Synagogue'. Hyamson's supporters protested but Rothschild was adamant: 'Stop!' he ordered 'I know all you have to say but I have made up my mind. The election shall take place and unless Dr. Hertz is elected I shall resign the chairmanship of the United Synagogue... Go away; leave me alone, I am sick and tired of you all! Out you go!' It seems likely that Rothschild was so relieved to have found a reason to end the eighteen month impasse he was not going to allow anything to divert him.⁵⁶

In January 1913 the Chief Rabbinate Sub-committee, dominated by the United Synagogue recommended Hertz to the equally dominated Chief Rabbinate Conference. The *Jewish Chronicle* called on Hyamson to withdraw and allow Hertz to be elected unopposed, but Hyamson refused.⁵⁷ When the election came on 17 February 1913, Rothschild's intervention ensured the bulk of the United Synagogue's votes went to Hertz won by 298 votes to 39.⁵⁸ On 21 February Hertz cabled from New York: 'Prayerfully I answer *Hineni* to the summons extended to me, under the guidance of Providence, by the Electoral College of British Congregations...my life and my strength shall be consecrated to the upholding and maintaining of the sway of Torah over our lives, and the sanctification of the Divine Name, both within and without the ranks of Anglo-Jewry'.⁵⁹

Aftermath. The results of the 1911-1913 campaign for the Chief Rabbinate had major implications both personal and communal. The battles over the choice of Chief Rabbi provide interesting evidence about the changing power relations within the community, between Lord Rothschild and the United Synagogue, the Federation of Synagogues, the Conference of Ministers and the Association for Furthering Traditional Judaism in Great Britain. The story is of assorted groups challenging the power of the United Synagogue and being pushed aside. The Federation left the Chief Rabbinate Conference over the allocation of votes, but this made no practical difference. The Federation never declared

53. JC 17 January 1913, 8

54. Schechter papers, Jewish Theological Seminary Library 4/15

55. JC 7 February 1913, 30

56. A. Newman, *Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph H. Hertz C.H.* (London 1972), 5-7

57. JC 17 January 1913, 8

58. M. Freud-Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain*, 49

59. J.H. Hertz, *Early and late* (Hindhead, Surrey 1943), 200

that the successful candidate would lack legitimacy; indeed they said they would accept him. The Federation's leader, Lord Swaythling, continued to be involved behind the scenes, and his views on Hyamson were very important to the final outcome. The Federation was therefore dissatisfied and restive, but ultimately held back and in so doing failed to establish itself as a major political force. The Federation withdrew from the Conference that selected Israel Brodie in 1948 for the same reasons and with an equal lack of impact.⁶⁰

The United Synagogue's ministers tried to upset the process by calling for the abolition or reform of the office and specifically by opposing Hertz's election. They were swept aside by the United Synagogue's lay leaders. The ministers of the United Synagogue had the will to make their voice heard, but they lacked the power. Any doubt that this was the case was extinguished after Hertz's election when they dutifully threw their support behind him, at least in public.⁶¹ The events of 1911-1913 showed just how weak their position was. This was confirmed in the early 1960s when many United Synagogue ministers sympathised with Louis Jacobs in his dispute with Israel Brodie, but though they wrote letters of protest, not a single minister could persuade his synagogue to join Louis Jacobs in a new synagogue organisation, although some tried.⁶²

On first sight, it appears that the Chief Rabbinate campaign also demonstrated the weakness of the Association for Furthering Traditional Judaism in Great Britain, the body representing the most traditional religious groups in Anglo-Jewry. It too was swept aside by the United Synagogue when it called for reform of the office, and it too submitted to the final decision. In fact, the highly orthodox were merely testing their strength. The Association's rabbinical leaders had squabbled with Hermann Adler since the 1890s on an individual level over local issues. In 1911 they had united and held their first conference. In 1912, as we have seen, they went a step further and made representations to the Chief Rabbinate Conference. They were growing in power and sophistication and they would go on to form an ever stronger block within Anglo-Jewry. The London congregations formed the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in 1926, much to Hertz's displeasure, as the name implied that the United Synagogue was not Orthodox, but neither he nor his lay leaders could prevent it.⁶³ The congregations outside London did not form a single body, but took less and less notice of the Chief Rabbi. The spiritual successors of the leaders of Association have become increasingly assertive, less deferential and more powerful over the past century. The 1912 intervention was the beginning of that process.

The most immediate effect of the 1913 election was that Anglo-Jewry was led for the next 33 years not by Hyamson or Drachman, but by Hertz, with all that implied for the development of its religious character. It was without doubt an enormous impact, which cannot be discussed fully here. Hertz used his position in a myriad of ways to mould Anglo-Jewry as he saw fit, for example by the appointments he made to the ministry and Jews' College. He published his *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* and other writings, and campaigned for Zionism. London's gain was New York's loss, but it was compensated by the return of Bernard Drachman and the arrival of Moses Hyamson in late 1913. They became two leaders of Modern Orthodoxy in America. Drachman was elected President of the Orthodox Union

60. M. Freud-Kandel, Orthodox Judaism in Britain, 96-97

61. JC 13 March 1913, 12

62. L. Jacobs, *Helping with inquiries* (London 1989), 201

63. United Synagogue Papers London Metropolitan Archives 2712/15/1161

in 1913 and began to teach at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, now part of Yeshiva University. He died in 1945.⁶⁴

The *Jewish Chronicle* urged Moses Hyamson to remain on the London Beth Din, but his humiliation was too great to remain in the country. He left for America a few months later, taking over as rabbi of Hertz's synagogue, Orach Chaim. He served there until his death in 1949 and was Professor of Codes at the Jewish Theological Seminary from 1915 until 1940, remaining practically its only link with its Orthodox roots, being simultaneously a member of the Rabbinical Committee of the Orthodox Union.⁶⁵

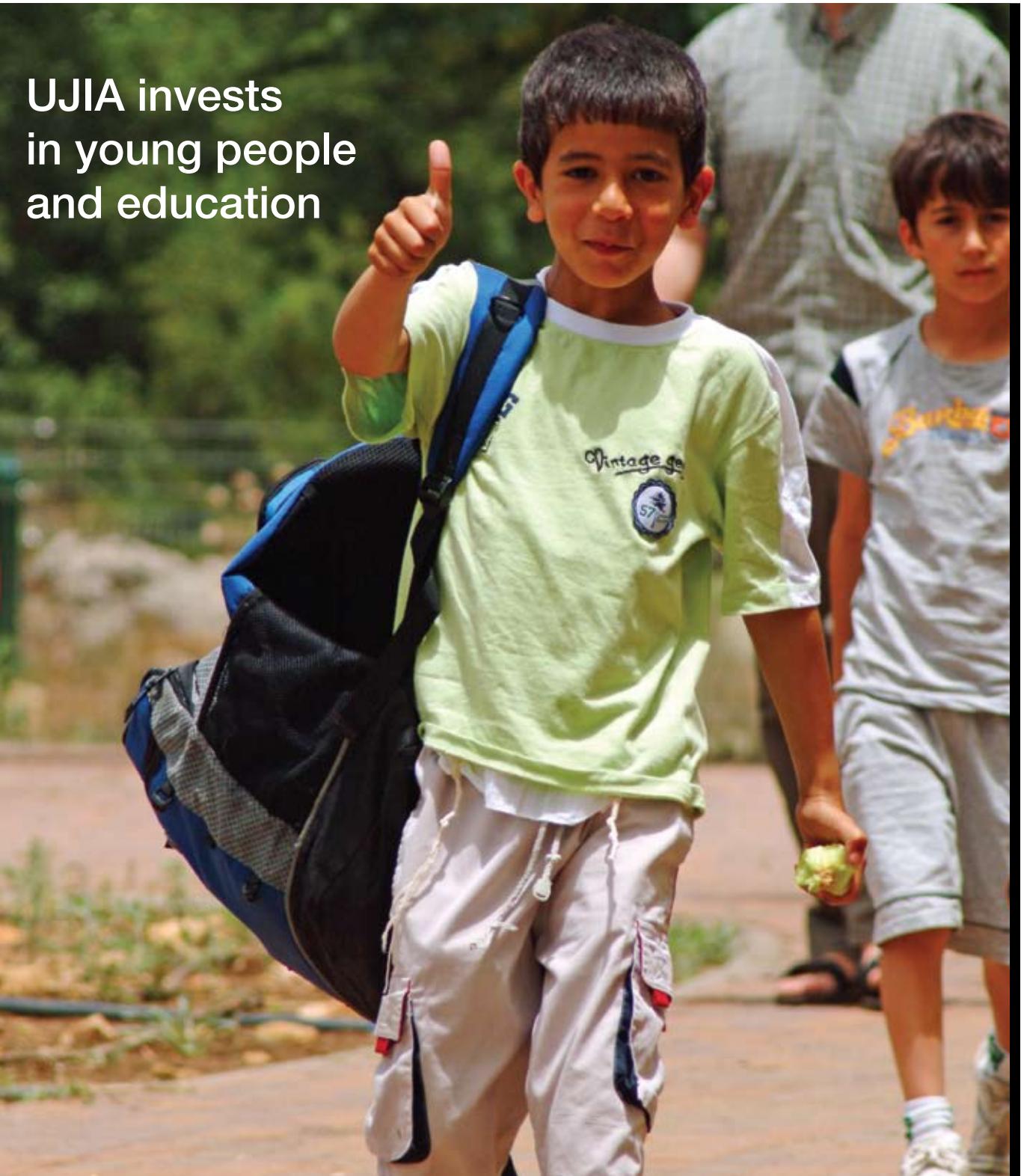
By the time of Hyamson's death Britain had a new Chief Rabbi again, this time Israel Brodie, but there had been no campaign and no contested election. 1913 was the last time that there was an open competition for the Chief Rabbinate. In 1946-48, 1965-67 and 1991 the lay leadership came to its own private conclusion as to who should be the Chief Rabbi and made a single recommendation to the Chief Rabbinate Conference, which simply approved it. Just as the battle in 1845 prevented a competition in 1891, so the events of 1911-13 have put an end to contested elections for the Chief Rabbinate ever since.

If, in one way the election that led to Hertz becoming Chief Rabbi prevented further discord in Anglo-Jewry, in another it may have led to more. The *Jewish Chronicle* could rightly consider that its interventions had been decisive. Through a protracted eighteen month effort it had displaced Hyamson, the presumptive candidate with excellent qualifications and ample support, and achieved the selection of a candidate, Hertz, who, although possessed of many excellent qualities started as an unknown and did not at first receive overwhelming support, even from the *Chronicle* itself. The newspaper's appreciation of the influence and the power of its interventions may have made it bolder and contributed to the vehemence with which it supported Louis Jacobs and opposed Israel Brodie at the time of their confrontation in 1959-64. On that occasion it did not achieve its objective, nor did it prevent the appointment of Immanuel Jakobovits in 1967. However, it seems likely that whenever the next Chief Rabbi is appointed, the *Jewish Chronicle* will make sure its voice is heard.

Ben Elton is a civil servant at the Ministry of Justice and the editor of Degel. His first book, a revision of his PhD thesis, will be published by Manchester University Press in summer 2009 as Britain's Chief Rabbis and the religious character of Anglo-Jewry, 1880-1970.

64. Y. Levine, *Bernard Drachman* http://personal.stevens.edu/~llevine/drachman_v2.pdf

65. *American Jewish Yearbook* 1950, 521



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