A Bridge across the Tigris: Chief Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz

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Our Rabbis tell us that on the death of Abaye the bridge across the Tigris collapsed. A bridge serves to unite opposite shores; and so Abaye had united the opposing groups and conflicting parties of his time. Likewise Dr. Hertz's personality was the bridge which served to unite different communities and bodies in this country and the Dominions into one common Jewish loyalty.
—Dayan Yechezkel Abramsky: Eulogy for Chief Rabbi Hertz.[1]

I

At his death in 1946, Joseph Herman Hertz was the most celebrated rabbi in the world. He had been Chief Rabbi of the British Empire for 33 years, author or editor of several successful books, and champion of Jewish causes national and international. Even today, his edition of the Pentateuch, known as the Hertz Chumash, can be found in most centrist Orthodox synagogues, though it is often now outnumbered by other editions. His remarkable career grew out of three factors: a unique personality and capabilities; a particular background and

education; and extraordinary times. Hertz was no superman; he had plenty of flaws and failings, but he made a massive contribution to Judaism and the Jewish People. Above all, Dayan Abramsky was right. Hertz was a bridge, who showed that a combination of old and new, tradition and modernity, Torah and worldly wisdom could generate a vibrant, authentic and enduring Judaism.

Hertz was born in Rubrin, in what is now Slovakia on September 25, 1872.[2] His father, Simon, had studied with Rabbi Esriel Hisldesheimer at his seminary at Eisenstadt and was a teacher and grammarian as well as a plum farmer. He took his family to New York in around 1883, and in 1886 Hertz joined the newly established Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). The purpose of the JTS was to create an Americanized but traditional rabbinate. The Hebrew Union College had failed to live up to its promise of serving both the traditional and progressive elements of the community, which is why Sabato Morais, aided by Henry Pereira Mendes, Alexander Kohut, Bernard Drachman, Marcus Jastrow, and Benjamin Szold founded the JTS. Morais' banner was "enlightened Orthodoxy," and Hertz pithily summed up his guiding principles in reflections, penned later in his life,

we [students] were thrilled by the clear, clarion notes of his call to the Wars of the Lord; by his passionate and loyal stand that the Divine Law was imperative, unchangeable, eternal. He made rigorous demands upon him who would who would come forward as defender of the Judaism of our Fathers—piety and scholarship, consistency, and the courage to stand alone, if need be, in the fight against unrighteousness and un-Judaism. [3]

The JTS did not award traditional semikhah, and so in 1894, in addition to his ordination from the Seminary, Hertz received "yoreh yoreh yadin yadin" from traditionalist rabbis from New York's Lower East Side (Mordecai Kaplan saw these rabbis coming to the JTS to examine Hertz). The day before he graduated from the JTS he was awarded a PhD by Columbia University in the philosophy of James Martineau. Rabbi Dr. Hertz took up his first position as Rabbi of Adath Jeshurun Syracuse and was there a founding member of the Orthodox Union. Hertz faced difficulties at Syracuse, which were indicative of a deeper, structural problem. America was not yet ready for the type of rabbi the JTS sought to produce. Although there were synagogues such as Shearith Israel and Zichron Ephraim in New York and Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia, which favored a modernized Orthodoxy, they were in very short supply. Most were either strictly traditional or prepared to deviate from halakhic norms. Adath Jeshurun was no exception, and when it voted to introduce mixed pews in 1897–1898, Hertz left. This frustrated

some of his teachers. Marcus Jastrow wrote “with his conservatism there is little prospect for advancement under the conditions prevailing in this country.” [4]

II

Faced with that prospect, Hertz looked further afield, and found a more congenial context in the British Empire. To a great extent, the JTS was attempting to replicate (and to some extent improve) Anglo-Orthodoxy. The British model of Orthodox Judaism developed under Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler and his son and successor Hermann Adler, combined a commitment to traditional beliefs and the halakhic system with openness to modern learning and general culture, tolerance and leniency where necessary within halakha. This was embodied in the religious institutions and leaders of the community, the Chief Rabbinate and London Beth Din, the United Synagogue, and Jews’ College. The flaw could be found in the ministry. Congregations wanted religious functionaries rather than scholars or religious leaders, and paid them accordingly; as a result, the products of Jews’ College were often mediocre. This suited a Chief Rabbinate that favored centralized religious authority, but had a stultifying effect on the community as a whole. This was a challenge that Hertz would have to confront as Chief Rabbi.

Bolstered by a helpful letter from Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler, Hertz was appointed Rabbi of the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg. He arrived just before Rosh Hashanah 1898 and threw himself not only into internal Jewish matters, but also into agitation for greater Jewish rights under James Kruger’s Boer regime. He aligned himself increasingly with the British, and when the Second Anglo-Boer War broke out in October 1899 Hertz came under increasing suspicion. Kruger declared him an enemy of the state in December 1899 and gave him 48 hours to leave the country. Hertz took refuge in British controlled parts of South Africa until Johannesburg fell to Lord Roberts’ army in 1902. This demonstration of his British sympathies did him no harm when he sought the Chief Rabbinate of the Empire some years later. He remained in South Africa until 1909, building a reputation as a speaker and organizer. He was appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of the Transvaal, but he was increasingly frustrated by the lack of religious and intellectual scope in what was still a far-flung Jewish community, and tired by tensions and battles with other Jewish leaders. Life in Johannesburg was also difficult for his new wife, Rose, whom he had married in 1904. In 1906 he applied unsuccessfully to be Minister of the New West End Synagogue in London. He was beaten by the Rev. Dr. Joseph Hockman, who made another brief but significant appearance in Hertz’s career a

few years later.

Escape came eventually in 1911 when Hertz was called to the Rabbinate of Congregation Orach Chayim on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Orach Chayim was a congregation of German Jews who advocated Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's ideology of Torah im derekh erets. They combined secular education and interests with strict observance, like Hirsch's own congregation in Frankfurt. Hertz was delighted to serve a community that lived out his own ideals. In his inaugural sermon he lauded their piety and told them they were "men and women with convictions and not merely opinions…brooking no disharmony between your religious profession and your religious practice."[5] He celebrated their wider culture, based on the realization that "the spiritual quarantine forced upon us throughout the Middle Ages can no longer be maintained."[6] He also hit upon a powerful metaphor. He recalled the tempting call of the Sirens in Homer's Odyssey (hinting toward his broad education). In the story, Odysseus has himself lashed to the mast so he can hear the song without being led astray, while his sailors stop up their ears with cheese. Hertz regarded both of these solutions as insufficient in twentieth-century America, when the Sirens were other faiths and ideologies. He argued that the song could not be blocked out, nor could anyone be tied down. Instead, there had to be an alternative, stronger call: "We must fill the hearts of our children with the melody of the Shema and all it connotes…and then we need dread no sirens." [7]

A return to New York enabled Hertz to resume his association with the JTS, which even as late at 1911 was consistent with his leadership of a strictly Orthodox (but not anti-modern) congregation. However, his time at Orach Chayim was short-lived. In 1911 Hermann Adler died and the Chief Rabbinate fell vacant.[8] At first it seemed as though the position would go to an insider, Rabbi Moses Hyamson, Minister of Dalston Synagogue in London, dayan of the London Beth Din, and effectively Acting Chief Rabbi. A concerted campaign against him by the Jewish Chronicle eventually killed his candidacy. Another contender was Hertz's former teacher, Bernard Drachman, who had split from the JTS soon after Schechter arrived. When he visited Britain he insulted traditionalists by refusing to speak Yiddish, and the United Synagogue clergy by declining to eat in their houses. He also refused to submit himself for election, but insisted on a unanimous "call."

In his campaign, Hertz conducted himself with considerably more diplomatic skill. He spoke around the country in English and Yiddish, fraternized with the Anglo-Jewish Ministry (although he was convinced they opposed him), and was happy

for his name to go forward for a poll. He may have been fortunate that he was the most popular candidate when Lord Rothschild finally lost patience with the process in 1913 and determined that someone should be appointed. Hertz's adventures in South Africa served him well. The lay leader Saemy Japhet recorded that in a casual conversation, the Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, Lord Milner,

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. When Hyamson's supporters protested Rothschild was adamant: "Stop! 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!"[9]

Hertz responded to news of his election in a message sent 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. [10]

III

On April 14, 1913 Lord Rothschild stood in front of the Ark of the Great Synagogue and handed a Sefer Torah to the newly elected Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire. He told Hertz, "I give into your care and safe custody our ancient law and our religious guidance."[11] At the age of 41, Hertz had embarked on the longest and most significant section of his career. In addition to the United Synagogue and Federation of Synagogues in London, Hertz claimed the allegiance of provincial congregations in the rest of the United Kingdom, the British Dominions: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the colonies. At home, he was at the head of all the major Jewish religious institutions. His office had been raised to a position to great prestige by 66 years of Adlerian rule, and he was determined to maintain it, but he also represented a departure.

Hertz had not emerged on top simply because other candidates fell away or because of a quiet chat between Milner and Rothschild. He provided something which the community had sensed it lacked under the Adlers. When Nathan Adler became Chief Rabbi, British Jewry was an essentially a German community and increasingly acculturated. This began to change in the 1880s and by 1911 traditionalists from Eastern Europe were becoming powerful. Hermann Adler lacked a natural affinity for them and in some cases was outright unsympathetic to their situation. Hertz was from the East; Yiddish was a natural tongue for him and he had grown up in the old-world culture of the Lower East Side. His Seminary and university training made him suitable as the leader of Anglicized Jewry and as religious representative of Jews to the outside world. His innate traditionalism made him acceptable to the Jews of the East End of London and comparable communities around the country. The very qualities which made him unemployable in 1890s America made him ideal for the greatest rabbinic position in the world.

Over the next third of a century Hertz used all of the numerous tools at his disposal to bring about his objectives. He defined his aims in 1919: to uphold “the teachings and practices which have come down to the House of Israel through the ages; the positive Jewish beliefs concerning God, the Torah and Israel; the sacred Festivals; the holy resolve to maintain Israel’s identity; and the life consecrated by Jewish observances.”[12] This was nuanced by his commitment to what he called “progressive conservatism,” which has been misunderstood to refer to the American Conservative movement. In fact he meant “religious advance without loss of traditional Jewish values and without estrangement from the collective consciousness of the House of Israel.” He sought to strike a balance between tradition and development, commitment to classical beliefs and the halakhic system, and the possibility of gradual change.[13] In effect it was the position adopted by Modern Orthodoxy after the Second World War.

In his defense of traditional Judaism, Hertz did not hold back from attacking non-Orthodox movements. Just a year after he arrived in London he lambasted British Reform Judaism in a sermon called The Strange Fire of Schism delivered to the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Maida Vale. [14] This approach was nothing new. He had attacked non-Orthodoxy in his inaugural sermon at Orach Chayim and in his graduation sermon at the JTS. However his Maida Vale assault was gentle compared to a series of sermons he delivered against the more radical Liberal Jewish Synagogue and its associated congregations in the early 1920s, entitled The New Paths.[15] He told Liberal Jews (in their absence, of course),

“You have dethroned God; and you have put your own reason in His place. You pick and choose among His precepts, retaining only those which suit your inclination or expediency.” He argued that Liberal Judaism would lead eventually to Christianity.[16] This sort of language not only upset Hertz’s old friend Stephen Wise back in New York, it also vexed his own lay leaders, especially Sir Robert Waley Cohen, with whom Hertz would have many clashes over the years.

Hertz also used his official powers and his influence to suppress non-Orthodox ideas. He refused to allow pulpit exchanges between his ministers and those of Reform or Liberal congregations and asked the BBC not to give them air time to broadcast. Hertz exerted discipline, too, inside the United Synagogue. When his old rival Joseph Hockman began to preach and publish increasingly anti-Orthodox sermons, Hertz pressured him out of the New West End in 1915. Hockman joined the army and eventually retrained as a barrister. He ended up as legal adviser to the King of Siam. In the 1930s, in the face of the need for Jewish unity in the face of Hitler, Hertz did soften his stance somewhat. He certified the Liberal Jewish Synagogue was a Jewish congregation so they could perform marriages under British law, and in 1934 he attended the opening of a new hall at the (Reform) West London Synagogue of British Jews. On that occasion he said,

I am the last person in the world to minimize the significance of religious difference in
Jewry. If I have nevertheless decided to be with you this morning it is because of my conviction that far more calamitous than religious differences in Jewry is religious indifference in Jewry. [17]

IV

Although Hertz acquired a reputation as a harsh and vocal critic, most of his efforts were spent in positive action. There were great international campaigns. Early in his Chief Rabbinate, Hertz campaigned against the “Yellow Ticket,” which forced Russian Jewish women to register as prostitutes in order to gain access to certain cities. Just four years into his tenure, the First World War spurred Hertz to a series of initiatives, including deploying Jewish chaplains to the forces, visiting troops in France personally, arranging for religious supplies to make their way to soldiers and sailors, and arranging fasts and services of intercession at home. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook was in London from 1915, having been stranded in Europe attending a meeting of the Agudath Israel in Switzerland when war broke out. He clashed with Hertz on several war-related issues. He wanted the Chief

Rabbinate to secure exceptions from military service for all Kohanim, lest they come into contact with dead bodies. Much to Hertz's irritation he also gave out semikhah to all yeshiva students so they, as ministers of religion, would be exempt from service. The two men worked together nevertheless, and Hertz would not allow the consumption on Pesah of kitniyot (legumes, normally banned under Ashkenazic custom on the festival) without Rav Kook's agreement.

Hertz had been a committed Zionist since the 1890s. In 1917 he played his part in obtaining the Balfour Declaration, promising a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Before the British Government issued the declaration they wanted to ensure that the Jews wanted to receive it, seeing as its purpose was to rally Jewish support for the Allies. They asked eight leading British Jews their opinion. There was significant and vocal elite opposition to Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, which Hertz had publically contradicted. Hertz was one of the five who urged the Government to issue the declaration, making a decisive contribution.[18] During the years of the British Mandate Hertz was determined to hold the authorities to account for the welfare of Jews and Jewish rights in Palestine and was active in the governance of the Hebrew University, attempting to maintain a traditionalist outlook in the Bible and Talmud departments and secure jobs for European refugees.

In the 1920s Kodak sponsored a proposal to "rationalize" the calendar, which included the provision that a blank day would be added to the end each year, so that it was always 364 days long. Thus, once a year Monday would be not the day after Sunday but two days after. This would throw out Shabbat, which would no longer fall on Saturday every week but would rotate in a seven year cycle. This would be disastrous for Jewish workers, who one year would have to take off Tuesday, the next year Wednesday and so on. The proposal was very seriously considered by the League of Nations. Hertz managed to slow it down until it eventually ran out of momentum, although the idea was and is revived occasionally. [19]

Between 1921and 1922 Hertz undertook a pastoral tour of the British Empire, visiting many of the congregations around the world under his authority, and attempting to raise money for an educational fund to be known as the Jewish War Memorial.[20] Jews' College has always been underfunded and Hertz set about trying to raise £1 million, a portion of which was to be spent on revitalizing the education of ministers and rabbis. Unfortunately, only a small proportion of this amount was raised. When Hertz arrived in London the Principal of Jews' College was the austere Adolph Buchler, a great scholar but almost exclusively concerned

with Wissenschaft, although punctiliously observant of the halakha. Hertz wanted to maintain the modern element but also introduce a more traditional component. For example, in addition to the Wissenschaft classics, he encouraged the students to learn Rabbi Barukh HaLevi Epstein's Torah Temimah. He arranged for a joint examination board for the rabbinical diploma made up of himself, the Principal of Jews' College, a dayan of the Beth Din, and a representative of London's Yeshivath Etz Chaim, a more traditionalist institution where the students had greater talmudic learning. Hertz bitterly and successfully opposed attempts by some lay leaders to graft onto the Jews' College a non-denominational "Academy of Jewish Learning," which he felt would compromise its Orthodox nature. He appointed Isidore Epstein, a man as at home in the learning of the yeshiva and the academy, as a teacher and finally as Acting Principal of the College after Buchler's death. Epstein led the translation of the Soncino Talmud and worked with Hertz on other literary projects.

V

By the time of Hermann Adler's death, the London Beth Din was in somewhat weakened state. Soon after Hertz arrived he appointed a heavy weight halakhist, Rabbi Samuel Isaac Hillman, to the court. When Hillman made aliyah, Hertz replaced him with the even greater Rabbi Yehezkel Abramsky. The appointment of Abramsky followed a long period of negotiation over the regulation of kosher meat. For decades London's kosher butchers had sold non-kosher cuts (for example the hindquarters with the sciatic nerve in place, and kidney suet). Abramsky insisted that this practice cease, and Hertz acquiesced. Despite this tense beginning, a remarkably good relationship developed between the two men. Hertz would preside at meetings of the court he attended, although Abramsky was the greater scholar, and Abramsky always wrote to Hertz in respectful and friendly terms. Abramsky's attitude may be attributable to Hertz's role in securing Abramsky's release from Soviet detention in Siberia. For his part, Hertz took more pains to conciliate with Abramsky when they disagreed. This was noteworthy for a man who relished a battle. It was famously said of the Chief Rabbi that he would always seek a peaceful solution once all other options had been exhausted.

Although Hertz referred many halakhic matters to the dayanim, he was intimately involved in setting religious policy for the congregations which accepted his authority. In doing so, he worked to balance pressures for change with loyalty to halakha. Sometimes he felt he had to say "no" and on other occasions he felt

able, or that it was important, to say “yes.” For example, Hertz consistently refused to allow the organ to be played at Shabbat and Yom Tov services, even by a non-Jew, despite the fact that this was the practice in the traditional community in France. He would not allow any move toward mixed seating; however he did turn a blind eye to the existing practice of mixed choral singing, although he refused to permit new mixed choirs to be formed. In the 1920s he allowed women to vote in United Synagogue elections, although they could not take office themselves, and he permitted certain changes to the liturgy (for example the use of the Sephardic rather than Ashkenazic text of Kol Nidre) if he could find precedent. His aim was to retain as many people as possible within Orthodoxy without departing from halakhic norms. In this he was remarkably successful. Between 1912 and 1945, 34 new congregations joined the United Synagogue. The growing Jewish population was choosing his brand of Judaism, despite the existence of the Reform and Liberal movements.

VI

As he entered later middle age, Hertz was struck by two personal tragedies. His wife Rose died in 1930 when she was only 49. She had provided a loving home and been a calming influence. In 1936 there was an even greater blow when Hertz’s son Daniel committed suicide at the age of 26. Hertz became a lonely, elderly man. He remained extremely active, but he turned to an energetic young rabbi to carry out his ideas. Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld was the Rav of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (Adath Yisroel), which represented the Chief Rabbi’s challenge from the right. Solomon’s father, Rabbi Dr. Victor Schonfeld had refused to defer to the Chief Rabbi and had declined a seat on the Beth Din. He came from the Hirschian Austritt school of separatist Orthodoxy and was determined to maintain the purity and independence of his congregation. When Victor died young, Solomon took his place and there was potential for these two strong personalities to clash often and hard. Instead, the times brought them together.

From the early 1930s Hertz called attention to Nazi intentions and atrocities, rallying Jewish and non-Jewish leaders in support of European Jewry. This was the origin of the Council of Christians and Jews. In light of the growing crisis, in 1938 Hertz formed the Chief Rabbi’s Religious Emergency Council. He became Chairman and appointed Schonfeld as Director, at the age of 26.[21] Together they persuaded the British Government to grant visas to thousands of refugees, including 10,000 children and 500 rabbis of all denominations. Hertz, and more

particularly Schonfeld, used every tool and trick at their disposal to achieve their aim of saving as many European Jews as possible. This sometimes met the opposition of the highly conventional lay leaders of the United Synagogue. In one example of bureaucratic pettiness they would not allow a congregation of German Jews under United Synagogue auspices to hear sermons delivered in German. Hertz insisted upon it. The lay leaders saw Schonfeld as an eminence grise dominating Hertz, as if Hertz was a man who could be dominated. Nevertheless, they thought their suspicions had been confirmed in 1939 when Schonfeld married Hertz's daughter, Judith.

After 1939 Hertz reinstituted many of the First World War provisions for Jews in the British armed forced, and this time was faced with complications arising from the blackout, which meant that Neilah had to finish while it was still daytime on Yom Kippur. In 1943 the British State expressed its appreciation of Hertz and signalled its concern for the causes he advocated, by appointing him a Companion of Honour, one of only 65. After the award of the honor the King and the Chief Rabbi sat down to a dinner at Buckingham Palace consisting of uncooked vegetables, to avoid problems of kashrut. Leading British Jewry through the Second World War was Hertz's last task. He lived to see Victory in Europe Day, but that brought with it the full knowledge of the Holocaust. Sadly, he died in 1946, before the United Nations vote to create the State of Israel, or its Declaration of Independence in 1948. The achievement of his long-standing Zionist hopes would have brought him great satisfaction.

VII

If Hertz's reputation during his lifetime derived from his actions as a religious leader, since his death it has rested on his writings. He was not primarily an original scholar, but he was extremely well-read and a great popularizer. His best-selling volume for many years was a collection of quotations by and about Jews, A Book of Jewish Thoughts. Originally assembled for British soldiers in the First World War, it eventually went into 22 editions, was translated into at least seven languages and had sold a quarter of a million copies by 1953. Hertz published volumes of his sermons, addresses, and studies, and he wrote a commentary to the prayer book. His crowning literary achievement was the Pentateuch and Haftorahs, published in five parts between 1929 and 1936, and in the much more successful single volume in 1937.[22] Hertz's edition presents the reader with a well written and concise running commentary and copious additional notes at the end of each biblical book for further reading. It is in fact not by Hertz alone, but by

a team whose drafts Hertz edited, often very substantially.

The Hertz Pentateuch and Haftorahs was part of his wider project of promoting an intelligent, traditional Judaism. As well as being interesting and informative, it was also profoundly polemical. Its primary target was biblical criticism, which Hertz had been trained to combat at the JTS. Hertz held that “Judaism stands or falls with its belief in the historical actuality of the Revelation at Sinai” he therefore set about to demolish the claim that the Pentateuch was a composite, human work.[23] He did not merely assert his point of view, but used the methods of modern scholarship to make his claims. The Pentatuch also took aim at the idea that Greek and Roman civilization are to be admired, and that Christianity had made an important moral contribution to the world. These were ideas promoted by Claude Montefiore of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue and Hertz thought they would lead Jews into Christianity. He therefore argued that classical civilization was barely disguised barbarism, and Christianity was its bastard child. Anything positive in Christianity came, according to Hertz, from its Jewish roots.

The Pentateuch is also important for its moderate stand on many issues. Hertz was unconcerned about the theory of evolution. He was prepared to accept the possibility of two authors of Isaiah (although he did not accept such a theory himself). He happily quoted from non-Jewish as well as Jewish authors, declaring that “’accept the truth from whatever source it comes’ is a sound rabbinic maxim.”[24] This attitude is the counterpoint to Hertz’s anti-Christianity, because it reveals his respect of the spiritual and religious lives of non-Jews. As he wrote in his commentary,

the worship of the heathen nations forms part of God’s guidance of humanity…Hence the amazing tolerance shown by Judaism of all ages towards the followers of other cults…Thus the prophet Malachi declares even the sacrificial offering of heathens to be a glorification of God (Malachi 1:11)…In their religious life these heathens merely followed the traditional worship which they had inherited from their fathers before them and they could not therefore be held responsible for failure to reach a true notion of the Unity of God. Such followers of other faiths were judged purely by their moral life.[25]

VIII

When Hertz died on January 14, 1946, he was less than 74, but he was exhausted by the strains of his office, the tumultuous events of a third of a century, and the sheer volume of work he took upon himself. But over a rabbinate of 52 years and

a Chief Rabbinate of 33 years, he had achieved a huge amount. He had bridged the old and the new. He had fostered a modern, non-obscurantist but authentic, traditional Judaism. He upheld halakha and knew how to work within it to meet the needs of his community. He brought the fruits of Jewish learning to a wide audience through his sermons, lectures, and books. He fought for Jewish dignity and Jewish rights, including for a Jewish State in the Jewish Land. He was combative, and had plenty of fights with his own laity and religious leaders of all stripes. He was forceful, but he believed that he had a sacred mission to uphold the truths of his faith and to maintain allegiance to it in the modern world. In his induction sermon as Chief Rabbi, Hertz called for “loyalty in life and death to the Torah and Tradition of Israel.”[26] Joseph Herrman Hertz lived up to that charge.

[1] I. Epstein (ed.) Joseph Herman Hertz 1872–1946, In Memoriam (Soncino, London, 1947) p. 41.
[2] An essential work for information about Hertz’s biography is Derek Taylor, Chief Rabbi Hertz, The Wars of the Lord (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2014). Readers may also wish to consult the relevant chapters of Miri Freud Kandel, Orthodox Judaism in Britain since 1913: An Ideology Forsaken (London, Vallentine Mitchell, 2006) and my Britain’s Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry 1880–1970 (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009). Meir Persoff, Faith Against Reason (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2008) and Hats in the Ring (Academic Studies Press, Boston, 2013).
[3] J. H. Hertz, Sermons, Addresses and Studies (Soncino, Hindhead, Surrey) II 362l.
[4] Hertz Papers, Southampton University Library, 175 25/4.
[5] J. H. Hertz, Early and Late (Soncino, Hindhead, Surrey, 1943), 126–127.
[6] Ibid., 132.
[7] Ibid., 132.
[8] For a full account of Hertz’s race for the Chief Rabbinate see my “Finding a Chief Rabbi 1911–13” in Degel 1:1, Tishrei 5769, 63–75.
[9] Aubrey Newman, Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph H. Hertz C.H. (United Synagogue, London, 1972), 5–7.
[10] J. H. Hertz, Early and Late (Soncino, Hindhead, Surrey, 1943), 200.
[11] D. Taylor, British Chief Rabbis 1664–2006 (Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2007), 349.
[12] J. H. Hertz Affirmations of Judaism (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1927), 151.
[13] J. H. Hertz, Sermons, Addresses and Studies (Soncino, Hindhead, Surrey, 1943), I 258.

[14] J. H. Hertz, The Strange Fire of Schism (London, private printing, 1914).
[15] Included in J. H. Hertz Affirmations of Judaism (Oxford, 1927).
[16] Ibid., 175–176, 161.
[17] Aubrey Newman, Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph H. Hertz C.H. (London, United Synagogue, 1972), 16.
[18] See Samuel Landman, “Origins of the Balfour Declaration: Dr. Hertz’s Contribution” in Isidore Epstein, Ephraim Levine, and Cecil Roth (eds.) Essays in honour of the Very Rev. JH Hertz (Soncino, London, 1942) 261–270.
[19] See J. H. Hertz, The Battle for the Sabbath at Geneva (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1932).
[20] See J. H. Hertz, The First Pastoral Tour the Jewish Communities of the British Overseas Dominions (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1924).
[21] For more details on Schonfeld and the Chief Rabbi’s Religious Emergency Council see David Kranzler, Holocaust Hero (Ktav, Hoboken, NJ, 2003).
[22] See Harvey Meirovich, Vindication of Judaism (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 1998).
[23] J. H. Hertz (ed.) Pentateuch and Haftorahs Second edition (Soncino, London, 1961), 402.
[24] Ibid., vii. The quotation is from Maimonides’ Eight Chapters (his introduction to Ethics of the Fathers).
[25] Ibid., 759.
[26] J. H. Hertz, Early and Late (Soncino, Hindhead, Surrey, 1943), 182.