Transforming Israel's Chief Rabbinate

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Our Rabbis taught: A certain Heathen once came before Shammai and asked him, "How many Toroth have you?" "Two," he replied: "the Written Torah and the Oral Torah." "I believe you with respect to the Written, but not with respect to the Oral Torah; make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the Written Torah [only]." He scolded and repulsed him in anger. When he went before Hillel, he accepted him as a proselyte. On the first day he taught him, Alef, beth, gimmel, daleth; the following day he reversed [them] to him. "But yesterday you did not teach me thus," he protested. "Must you then not rely upon me? Then rely upon me with respect to the Oral Torah too."

On another occasion it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, "Make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Thereupon he repulsed him with the builder's cubit which was in his hand. When he went before Hillel, he said to him, "What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is commentary thereof; go and learn it."

On another occasion, a certain heathen…went before Shammai and said to him, "Make me a proselyte on condition that you appoint me a High Priest." But he repulsed him with a builder's cubit which was in his hand. He then went before

Hillel who made him a proselyte. Said he to him, “Can any man be made a king but he knows the arts of government? Do you go and study the arts of government. When he came to, and the stranger that cometh nigh be put to death, he asked him, “to whom does this verse apply?” “Even to King David of Israel,” was the answer. Thereupon the proselyte reasoned within himself a fortiori: if Israel, who are called sons of the Omnipresent…yet it is written of them “and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death,” how much more so a mere proselyte, who comes with his staff and wallet! Then he went before Shammai and said to him. “Am I then eligible to be a High Priest; is it not written, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death?” He went before Hillel and said to him, “O gentle Hillel; blessings rest on thy head for bringing me under the wings of the Shechinah!”

Some time later the three met in one place; said they, Shammai’s impatience sought to drive us from the world, but Hillel’s gentleness brought us under the wings of the Shechinah.”

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a; Soncino translation

When there is no acceptance of the Mitzvoth on the part of the convert the conversion is not valid even after the fact; and the convert remains a non-Jew.

Supreme Rabbinical Court for Appeals, Case (4 Adar 5768/2008) #5489064-1, page 2.

In early 2007, a Danish-born female convert and her Israeli husband appeared before the Ashdod Beit Din (Rabbinical Court) to process a get (Jewish divorce). There were no outstanding issues as the couple had already agreed to the terms of the divorce. During the course of their appearance, Rabbi Avraham Attiya, a Dayan (Judge) of the Ashdod Beit Din, queried the woman about her religious observance and, on determining that she was not observant, ruled on February 22, 2007 that she was not Jewish because her conversion had not been valid. He therefore concluded that no get was necessary. In so doing he also determined that, by extension, the couple’s children either, and that, therefore, in order to marry a Jewish spouse, they would have to undergo conversion. In the course of his ruling retroactively nullifying the conversion, Dayan Attiya strongly criticized Rabbi Haim Druckman, under whose authority the conversion had taken place over a decade earlier.

Two months later, on April 22, the couple appealed the ruling to the Beit Din Harabani Hagadol, the Supreme Rabbinical Court for Appeals. The couple’s

advocate argued that Rabbi Attiya had exceeded his authority, by nullifying the conversion when the only issue before him was that of the get. Moreover, in so doing, he had, as a single Dayan, overturned the ruling of the three Dayanim of the Rabbinical Court that had converted the woman. Initially, the Beit Din Harabani Hagadol granted the divorce without prejudice to the question of the propriety of the conversion. In February 2008, however, during a rabbinical conference, Rabbi Avraham Sherman, the presiding Dayan in the appeal of the Ashdod case, distributed a draft of a 50 page ruling, subsequently released to the public in April, that upheld Dayan Attiya's position. [1] Rabbi Sherman wrote that the Jewishness of the woman and her children was uncertain and needed to be verified; that the family should be added to a list maintained by the Rabbinical Courts of people who could not marry a Jew until their status as Jews was finally determined; that all of Rabbi Druckman's conversions since 1999 should be retroactively invalidated; and that marriage registrars not register a convert whose external appearance, for example, a woman wearing pants, did not appear to be observant.

Rabbi Sherman's ruling caused an outcry in Israel, because it invalidated some 40,000 conversions that Rabbi Druckman had supervised as head of a special rabbinical court for conversions under the aegis of the Chief Rabbinate—the same Chief Rabbinate in whose name Rabbi Sherman purportedly acted. Moreover, since the converts had married Jews, and, like the Ashdod petitioners, had started families, the ruling potentially affected several hundred thousand people.

The ruling also brought to a head an issue that had simmered for decades, the role of the Chief Rabbinate in the Jewish State of Israel. That issue remains very much unresolved, and the Chief Rabbinate remains the focus of anger, lawsuits, and calls for its reform, if not outright abolition. This paper will review some of the more recent issues that have confronted the Chief Rabbinate and will offer a preliminary approach to modifying its role and authority in contemporary Israeli society.

ORIGINS OF THE CHIEF RABBINATE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The institution of the Chief Rabbinate is far older than many people realize, dating back to medieval times. Although Jewish Law, the Halakha, does not prescribe the creation of such an office,[2] it proved to be a useful vehicle for kings seeking to maintain control, and raise revenues, from Jewish communities living in their lands. It was often the kings, or more regional rulers, who appointed the Chief Rabbis. The latter were then responsible for the management of the Jewish community, and for tax farming on behalf of the non-Jewish rulers.

Some Chief Rabbis were noted scholars, such as Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, who was appointed by the Holy Roman Emperor in the 13th century. Others were far lesser known figures. Chief Rabbis held office in both Ashkenazic and Sephardic lands, and even did so when Christians conquered Muslim territories and vice versa.[3]

Chief Rabbis functioned in Palestine after its conquest by the Ottoman Empire. Rabbi Levi ibn Habib ruled from Jerusalem during the early part of the sixteenth century, though his authority did not really extend to the rabbinate in Safed, where great scholars like Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law) , and mystics like Rabbi Isaac Luria (popularly known as the Ari) held sway. The modern Israeli Chief Rabbinate derives its origins from the position created under the Ottoman Empire, that of Rishon LeTzion ("First (or Leader) in Zion"). That office was held by the leader of the Sephardic community, and dated back, in the Palestine, to 1665, when Rabbi Moshe Galante, who resided in Jerusalem, was named chief rabbi of Palestine.
There was no equivalent chief rabbi of the Ashkenazic community, which became more numerous in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when students of the Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna, migrated to Palestine. It was only after the United Kingdom assumed mandatory control of Palestine in the aftermath of World War I that Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, who had served as Ashkenazic chief rabbi of Jaffa under the Ottomans, was appointed first as chief rabbi of Jerusalem and in 1921 assumed official authority over the Ashkenazic communities of Palestine as their first chief rabbi. The term, "official" is used advisedly, since the long-time ultra-Orthodox community, the so-called "old Yishuv," never accepted his authority, following leaders of their own, notably Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. Nor did the Sephardim view Rabbi Kook as their Chief Rabbi, instead following Yaakov Meir, who took on the role of Sephardi Chief Rabbi in addition to the long-standing title of Rishon LeTzion. On the other hand, to the extent they paid attention to rabbis at all, the secular Zionist Jewish community recognized the authority of Rabbi Kook, who had made a point of reaching out to Jews of all levels of religious belief and practice.[4] For virtually all secular Jews, Judaism was synonymous with Orthodoxy; to the extent that any of them wished to partake in Jewish ceremonies or rituals, they did so within the Orthodox context. As a result, other streams of Judaism, notably German-based Reform, Hungarian-based Neologue, and the growing American Conservative movement, made virtually no headway in Palestine at all.

EARLY YEARS OF THE STATE: RABBIS HERZOG AND UZIEL

Rabbi Isaac Herzog, who succeeded Rabbi Kook as Chief Rabbi upon the passing of the latter in 1936, had a very different background from that of his predecessor. Rabbi Kook had reached maturity in his native Poland, receiving a classical Yeshiva education with no formal secular education before entering the rabbinate in Lithuania and then emigrating to become rabbi of Jaffa in 1904. On the other hand, as a ten year old boy Rabbi Herzog had moved to with his family from his native Lomza in Poland to the English provincial town of Leeds, Yorkshire, had studied at the Sorbonne and had earned his doctorate from the University of London. Prior to his emigration to Israel he had held rabbinical positions in Belfast and then Dublin, where he was Chief Rabbi of Ireland, a far cry from the environment with which Rabbi Kook was most familiar. Rabbi Herzog's world was one of Anglo-Jewish mores—which meant congregations loyal to the Orthodox tradition but often lax in its practice—as well as involvement in the politics of the wider community, namely the turbulent period of the post World War I Irish civil war and the creation of the Irish Free State and then the Republic of Ireland. Indeed, Rabbi Herzog was more than a bystander; among his friends was Eamon De Valera, whom he reportedly hid in his home when the Sinn Fein leader, and Ireland's first President, was being hunted by the British authorities.

Despite their differences, which extended to Rabbi Herzog's top hat in contrast to the fur- trimmed streiml that Rabbi Kook wore, Rabbi Herzog's tenure as Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi first of Palestine and then of the new State of Israel, was marked by the same broad tolerance that characterized Rabbi Kook's term. In Rabbi Herzog's case, his understanding of the character of secular Israelis was buttressed by years of interaction with Jews of indifferent Jewish practice. At the same time, his ability to work with the authorities of the new State of Israel drew upon his experience of life in the fledgling Irish state.

In his role as Chief Rabbi of the first independent Jewish state in Israel in nearly eighteen hundred years,[5] Rabbi Herzog had to address issues that over the centuries were essentially of no relevance to rabbinic decisors. These included the relationship of Halakha to the management of the state, most notably on Sabbath and holidays, issues arising from Biblical and rabbinic commandments relating to the land and its produce, the religious and legal rights of non-Jewish minorities,[6] and questions regarding the Jewish law and the military. In the latter case, while strongly supporting the Israel Defense Forces, Rabbi Herzog was emphatic about the need to exempt yeshiva students from military service.[7] In addition, Rabbi Herzog, like virtually all of his Orthodox colleagues, was a staunch opponent of Reform. He opposed the construction of Reform synagogues in Israel, arguing that their introduction would destroy "the peace and unity of the nation."

[8]

Rabbi Herzog devoted considerable energy to questions regarding conversion, both those that were dealt with in Palestine and then Israel, as well as questions addressed to him from abroad, particularly Latin America. While he tended to take a strict line on the requirements for conversion, he was more lenient with respect to both the invalidating of conversions that had already taken place, and the right of local rabbis to preside over conversions—two issues that would enflame Israeli and Diaspora society decades after his passing. [9]

In contrast to Rabbi Herzog, Rabbi Ben Zion Uziel was a native of Jerusalem and scion of a prominent rabbinical family. Like Rabbi Kook, with whom he became close while serving as Sephardi Hakham Bashi (chief rabbi) of Jaffa at the same time as the latter was the Ashkenazi chief rabbi, he had no formal secular education. But early on he exhibited the classical Sephardi tolerance for those whose practice was less than perfect, but whose respect for the rabbinate and the Torah it taught was second to none.

When Rabbi Uziel succeeded Rabbi Meir as the Sephardi Rishon LeTzion of mandatory Palestine, he found himself working alongside Rabbi Herzog, whom he respected as a valued scholarly colleague. Like Rabbi Herzog, he presided over his community during the turbulent years of World War II, and the creation of the new State of Israel. And like his Ashkenazi counterpart, he demonstrated a a unique ability to work with secular Jews. Indeed, his community-wide activities, included his participation in the creation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Uziel’s greatest legacy to the modern Jewish State may not have been his organizational activities, but rather his attitude toward those outside the mainstream of Judaism. He was a strong advocate on behalf of the Bene Israel of India, who claimed that they were Jews, but had long been discriminated against by the “white” Indian Jews who had migrated from Baghdad.[10] He also was exceedingly lenient toward those seeking to convert to Judaism, and, particularly, the children of mixed marriages. (To the Orthodox, included in the category of such marriages were those between a Jewish male and a female converted by non-Orthodox rabbis.) In this regard Rabbi Uziel was even more lenient than Rabbi Herzog. Rabbi Uziel ruled that that the acceptance of all the mitzvot (commandment) was not a necessary condition for conversion. In addition, he argued that a non-Jewish woman already married to a man in a secular ceremony could be accepted as a convert and continue to live with her husband, although historically, the rabbis had frowned upon such arrangements. Finally, he ruled that any children from the marriage, even those preceding the

conversion, should be treated as Jewish. [11]

POLITICS AND THE STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED RABBI HERZOG

Rabbi Uziel passed away in 1954, and was succeeded the following year by Rabbi Yitzchak Nissim, a highly respected scion of a leading Baghdad Rabbinical family that had emigrated to Palestine in the early 1900s. Rabbi Nissim, whose prior post was that of Chief Sephardi Rabbi of Jerusalem, was well known as an advocate of outreach to left-wing kibbutzim. He did so, however, from a position of religious conservatism and he was especially outspoken in his condemnation of intermarriage.[12] Nevertheless, like his predecessor, he advocated the acceptance of the Bene Israel of India as Jews and their right to emigrate to Israel; their provenance had been challenged by many rabbinical authorities;[13] indeed, Rabbi Herzog was somewhat ambivalent about their status. [14]

The process of choosing a successor to Rabbi Herzog differed markedly from that obtaining for his Sephardi counterpart. Rabbi Herzog had long been closely associated with the Orthodox Zionist Mizrachi movement, whose political arms was the National Religious Party (consisting of the Mizrachi and Hapoel HaMizrachi movements), and which was part of the governing coalition from the founding of the State. Upon Rabbi Herzog's passing in July 1959, the NRP became embroiled in a succession crisis, with some of its leading members supporting the candidacy of the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Isser Yehuda Unterman, others supporting Rabbi Shlomo Goren, chief rabbi of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and still others that of the leader of the American Modern Orthodox Movement, Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik. Of the three, Rabbi Soloveichik was probably the hardest line on matters of personal status,[15] Rabbi Goren was probably the most lenient, and Rabbi Unterman was somewhere in between.

Throughout the remainder of the year, the succession turned into a series of increasingly bitter disputes within and between both the secular and religious parties. [16] In part because of a bout with cancer, in part because he had no stomach for internecine communal politics, which had turned especially nasty as the succession issue dragged on into 1960, Rabbi Soloveichik withdrew his name from consideration on February 15.[17] Even after his withdrawal, however, as the issue remained unresolved, and the infighting grew steadily worse, Rabbi Soloveichik's supporters implored him to reconsider his decision. He refused, however, arguing that he was uncomfortable with the entire approach of the Chief Rabbinate, and asserting that "the fate of the character and nature of the State will not be decided as a result of religious legislation by the Knesset…it is impossible to impose religion on secularists through the channels of the state."

[18]

The crisis continued for several more years, as the collection of rabbinical, lay and government officials responsible for naming the new Chief Rabbi could not reach any agreement on who should succeed Rabbi Herzog. Rabbi Unterman was finally elected in 1964. Like his predecessor, Rabbi Unterman had served Anglo-Jewry for many years, in his case as Rabbi of the flourishing Liverpool Jewish community. In addition, like Rabbi Herzog, he was active in Zionist affairs and had helped resettle refugees after World War II. And like Rabbi Herzog, he served as Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv prior to his being elected as Chief Rabbi. Finally, and importantly, like his predecessor Rabbi Unterman pursued a moderate course in matters of personal religious status.

In responding to the first major wave of immigrants from the Soviet Union, many of whom were intermarried, Rabbi Unterman advocated a lenient approach toward the conversion of non-Jewish spouses. Though he fully recognized that a convert's sincere intention to accept mitzvot was a necessary condition for conversion, he nevertheless argued that even "when the immigrants had not intended fully to live according to the mitzvoth, one should not condemn such conversions." lest the public conclude that the rabbis are intransigent when it comes to dealing with conversions."[19] It was a precedent that his immediate successors continued to follow but then was abandoned under Haredi pressure.

RABBI YOSEF, RABBI GOREN, THE LANGER CASE AND THE RISE OF RABBI ELIASHIV

Whereas Rabbi Nissim succeeded to the Chief Rabbinate after the death of his predecessor, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef assumed the position after challenging, and defeating, the then-seventy-six year old Rabbi Nissim in an election held in 1973. The election was bitterly fought and highly controversial, as many felt it improper to challenge a sitting Chief Rabbi. But Rabbi Yosef, who had been born in Baghdad but moved with his family to Israel when he was still a young child, was no stranger to controversy. During his brief tenure as Chief Rabbi in Cairo, Egypt, from 1947-49, he clashed with the local community and rabbinate over standards of kashrut. Soon after his return to Israel, while serving on the Rabbinical Court of Petah Tikva, he permitted a levirate marriage (yibum) in defiance of a ruling by the Chief Rabbinate against such marriages.

Rabbi Yosef was acknowledged halakhic decisor well before he was forty years old; he served on the Supreme Rabbinical Court—the same Court from which Rabbi Sherman would later issue his controversial ruling—until his election in

1973. His tenure as Chief Rabbi was also marked by controversy, especially his bitter relations with Rabbi Goren, who was elected Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi the same year. An unabashed political actor, whose resentment of Ashkenazi dominance manifested itself in both the public square and in many of his halakhic decisions, Rabbi Yosef was instrumental in the founding of the Shas Party, which arose in reaction to the dominance of the so-called Lithuanian Haredim in the Agudah party and its successor, Degel Hatorah.

Though often perceived as a hard-liner on religious matters, Rabbi Yosef's approach to Halakha has tended to be marked by leniency on many occasions. Moreover, while hostile to non-Orthodox movements, he has been exceedingly tolerant of the lifestyles of those who do not practice Judaism rigorously but do not challenge its Orthodox tenets. In this regard, and despite personal animosity with Rabbi Goren, his halakhic orientation was not dissimilar from that of his Ashkenazi counterpart.

Rabbi Yosef issued several lenient rulings with respect to conversions. For example, while still serving in Cairo, in 1948, he ruled that if potential young converts demonstrated that they did not intend to keep the mitzvoth when they were grown men, but nevertheless had been converted by a Bet Din, the conversion remained valid.[20] Decades later, in 1974, he ruled that despite a long-standing ban on conversions in Buenos Aires, Argentina by that country's rabbinate if a local rabbi defied the ban and presided over a conversion, the conversion could not be invalidated retroactively.[21] In yet another ruling in the 1970s, he supported the petition of a non-Jewish woman who had married a Jew, had borne children with him and subsequently wished to convert. Indeed, Rabbi Yosef not only permitted her to marry the man according to "the laws of Moses and Israel," he supported the conversion that even if it were suspected that she were doing so under pressure, which in theory should have been an invalidating factor.[22]

Equally, if not more significant, perhaps, were his landmark rulings affecting entire communities. The first addressed the status of Jews who had emigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union during the 1970s. Their arrival had prompted questions about the authenticity of their Jewishness. It was alleged that many non-Jews had immigrated to Israel for economic reasons and then sought to register as Jews. Rabbi Yosef pondered the question of whether "one who comes to register as a Jew is to be trusted, even if he has no tangible evidence to that effect, and it is enough that he declares himself to be Jewish, or whether he needs to prove his case with reliable witnesses." After reviewing all possible halakhic

precedents, Rabbi Yosef concluded that “the essence of the law indicates that those who make aliyah from Russia and declare that they are Jewish are credible, though if there are indications that a declaration is incorrect, there is a need for a thorough investigation into the case at hand.” [23]

Similarly, much as his predecessors had done with respect to the Bene Israel, in 1975 Rabbi Yosef championed the Jewishness of the Ethiopian Falashas, in contradistinction to the position taken by leading Ashkenazic authorities. In 1975 he ruled that they were Jews, descendants of the biblical tribe of Dan. In 1984, in the wake of the massive airlift of Jews from Ethiopia, he issued a second ruling in the same vein.[24]

Having been denied the Chief Rabbinate of Israel in the early 1960s, and subsequently become a major figure as a result of his role in the Six Day War, Rabbi Goren easily was elected Chief Rabbi shortly after Rabbi Unterman’s death. Like his two most recent predecessors, Rabbi Goren was a committed Zionist. An immigrant from Poland, Rabbi Goren had served in the pre-independence Haganah and then founded and led the IDF military rabbinate. He had also served as a paratrooper during the War of Independence.

By the time of his appointment in 1972, Rabbi Goren had risen to the rank of Brigadier General in the IDF. With his intimate knowledge of things military, and their interplay with Halakha, and his constant interaction with secular Israelis who comprised the vast majority of Israel’s soldiers, especially during the early days of the State, Rabbi Goren was especially sensitive to the need to minimize the divide between his secular and religious compatriots.

Rabbi Goren was a highly controversial and polarizing figure, in part because of his increasingly militant Zionist stance after the Six Day War, and in part because of his attitude toward conversions, which were bitterly criticized by the Haredi establishment as being far too lax. While still Chief Rabbi of the IDF, Goren converted an American Unitarian woman named Helen Seidman, who had fallen in love with Israel, moved to a non-religious kibbutz, married a Jew by proxy in Mexico, and then was converted by a Reform rabbi when the Orthodox authorities refused to do so. She then turned to Rabbi Goren who convened a bet din of three Rabbis and converted her, reportedly arguing that conversion in Israel differed from that in the Diaspora, since it involved both a religious and national commitment.[25]

In what was an even more controversial case, Rabbi Goren, newly installed as Chief Rabbi of Israel, overruled a decision of a rabbinical court in Petach Tikva

that forbade siblings named Langer to marry Jews on the grounds that their mother, who had married a convert in Poland, had never properly divorced him. As a result, she had rendered them mamzerim (bastards) when she bore them to her second husband; mamzerim are forbidden to marry into the Jewish community. Rabbi Goren convened a special Beit Din of nine rabbis, none of whom he would name publicly, who joined him in ruling that retroactively invalidated the original conversion and that, therefore, when the woman re-married she had not been in need of a get. As a result, the Langer siblings were not mamzerim and could marry Jews. Among those opposing Rabbi Goren's decision was a veteran member of the Supreme Rabbinical Court named Rabbi Yosef Sholom Eliashiv, son of a famous kabbalist. Rabbi Eliashiv resigned from the court and was welcomed with open arms by the Ashkenazi Haredi community. He soon became a rising force in the community, even as the Haredim became increasingly numerous, militant and politically powerful. In 1989, Rabbi Elazar Shach, leader of the Ashkenazi Haredim, asked Rabbi Eliashiv to play a major leadership role in the new Degel Hatorah party. In 2001 he succeeded Rabbi Menachem Shach as leader of the Ashkenazi Haredim; at the time he was 91 years old.

It was during Rabbi Goren's tenure as Chief Rabbi that the validity of non-Orthodox conversions became a major issue for the State of Israel as a result of the 1977 elections that brought Menachem Begin to power. As part of what proved to be his successful attempt garner Orthodox votes, Begin, a traditionalist despite not being personally religious, agreed to support legislation that would mandate recognition only of conversions undertaken according to Halakha. The legislation, which was introduced with government support in 1981, provoked a major outcry in the Diaspora, particularly in the United States, where the Orthodox constituted less than 10 per cent. of the American Jewish community. Faced with this onslaught of opposition, Begin retreated, and the legislation went nowhere. Neither Rabbi Goren, nor, for that matter, Rabbi Yosef, protested too loudly when the government backed away from the issue.

THE HAREDI TAKEOVER OF THE CHIEF RABBINATE

With the conquest of the West Bank in 1967, and particularly after the 1973 War, the Religious Zionist movement moved further to the right politically, under the influence of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, son of the former Chief Rabbi. As noted above, Rabbi Goren very much reflected this view as did his successor upon his retirement in 1983, Rabbi Avraham Shapira, who had succeeded Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook as head of the Yeshiva Mercaz Harav, the hotbed of the religious

settler movement, upon the latter's death in 1982. Rabbi Shapira was not particularly noted for his outreach to the secular Israeli world, which was becoming increasingly disenchanted with Religious Zionists' support and leadership of the settler movement. On the other hand, Rabbi Shapira maintained close ties with Haredi leaders, though they did not accept his halakhic dictat. His tenure marked the emergence of an increasingly religious trend among the formely Mizrachi Zionists. It was dubbed HarDaL, an acronym for Haredi Dati Leumi, or Haredi National Zionists, and came into vogue in the early 1990s as more and more West Bank settlers could, in many respects other than their Zionism, hardly be differentiated from Haredim.

Rabbi Shapira was succeeded in 1993 by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, after yet another bruising succession battle. Rabbi Lau in many ways was a throwback to Rabbis Herzog and Unterman, not merely because, like them, he was serving as Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv when elected to the Chief Rabbinate. Though a major halakhic decisor with close ties to the Haredi community, Rabbi Lau was far more open to the wider Jewish community, indeed the non-Jewish community as well, than his predecessor had been. Perhaps it was because as a child he had been protected in the camps by a non-Jewish Polish boy, and then rescued by Polish Gentiles—at the behest of the a young priest who later became Pope John Paul II—who made every effort to ensure that he remained true to his Jewish origins. Perhaps it was because his sole surviving sibling, Naftali, with whom he remained close, led a very different life as a senior official in Israel's Foreign Ministry. Whatever the reason, Rabbi Lau was seen as a conciliator and was a leader in inter-faith dialogue, reaching out to Christians shortly after he took office.[26] Moreover, he took a relatively moderate line on conversions, ruling that each local Bet Din had the authority to authorize a conversion, and to determine the sincerity of a convert who claimed that he or she would keep kashrut, Shabbat and family purity.[27]

Rabbi Shapira, who had been an outspoken opponent of the Oslo Accords while still Chief Rabbi, remained active in religious and national politics during Rabbi Lau's tenure. As he had done when Oslo was signed, Rabbi Shapira ruled in 2005 that religious IDF soldiers should disobey their commanders if ordered to participate in the dismantling of the Gaza settlements. The ruling infuriated not only secular Israelis, but also more moderate religious Jews, as well as Orthodox Jews serving in the IDF. As such, it further deepend the growing divide between Israel's more extreme Orthodox Jews, whether Haredi or HarDaL, and the rest of Israeli society.

Rabbi Yosef likewise remained very active both as an halakhic decisor and as the spiritual leader of the Shas Party, upon his retirement from the Chief Rabbinate. He came increasingly to be seen as Haredi, in no small part due to his Shas connection, but also as a controversial political figure because of his incendiary statements about Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. Nevertheless, his rulings did not reflect his progressively radicalized politics, and he still was a moderating influence on the Sephardi community, frequently asserting its independence from the rulings of Ashkenazi rabbis, no matter how prominent or learned they might be.

Rabbi Yosef's successor, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, was born in Jerusalem to a family whose roots were in Baghdad. As a young man he was associated with an underground organization that fought the secularization of the new State of Israel by burning cars that drove on Shabbat and butcher shops that sold non-kosher meat. For his activities he was sentenced to ten months in prison in 1951. Rabbi Eliyahu was considered a prodigy and in 1960, at the age of 31, he was elected a Dayan, the youngest man ever to hold that position in Israel. After serving as Chief Rabbi of Beersheba for four years he was elected to the Supreme Rabbinical Court, and continued to serve on the court when he succeeded Rabbi Yosef in 1983. Although Rabbi Yosef was the acknowledged leader of the Sephardim in Israel, Rabbi Eliyahu did not hesitate to challenge his predecessor on the issue of a uniform Spehardi rite, which Rabbi Yosef sought to impose on that community. Instead, Rabbi Eliyahu stressed the importance of preserving the Iraqi traditions, especially those set down by the nineteenth century sage, the Ben Ish Chai.

Rabbi Eliyahu tended to adopt a strict halakhic line on issues relating to individuals, but was rather lenient on matters relating to the State as a whole. Despite his stated preference that disputes be judged in rabbinic courts rather than the secular Israeli system, he identified areas where "the law of the land is the law," and where he acknowledged that secular courts had rightful jurisdiction.[28] Similarly, he recommended that rabbis grant certificates of kashrut to restaurants frequented by tourists, even if the restaurants were open on Shabbat. He reasoned that this approach would actually minimize Sabbath violations.[29] More generally, he emphasized the importance of outreach to secular Jews.

One area where he took a hard line even with respect to national issues was that of the leadership roles available to women. While accepting that women could be named to managerial posts in small communities organizations, he was opposed to their taking on national leadership roles, arguing that to do so was a violation

of the Biblical commandment that restricted rulership to men. In this regard he reflected long-standing Sephardi tradition the stretched as far back as Maimonides' code.

Rabbi Eliyahu was identified with the HaRdaL branch of religious Zionists. His politics were right-wing and he was closely associated with Rabbi Meir Kahane and his son. In addition, like his Ashkenazi counterpart, Rabbi Abraham Shapira, he was an outspoken opponent of the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, though he insisted that he did not encourage soldiers to disobey their orders.

Like Rabbi Eliyahu, his successor, Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron, was Jerusalem born. He assumed the Chief Rabbinate in 1993 after holding the post of Chief Rabbi of Haifa, a city long notorious for its secular leanings.[30] Like Rabbi Lau, he reached out beyond the Jewish community, seeking a dialogue with Muslim religious leaders and travelling to Arab states to do so. [31]

Rabbi Bakshi-Doron adopted what might be termed a "realistic" attitude to the conversion issue that continued to roil Israeli society during his tenure. In an article composed shortly after he left the Chief Rabbinate, Rabbi Bakshi-Doron argued that the Israeli law recognizing only Orthodox marriage and divorce had outlived its usefulness. He pointed out that secular couples were either flouting the law by marrying outside Israel, or worse still, if they married according to Orthodox ritual they did not obtain an Orthodox divorce, rending their children mamzerim. He further pointed out that the efforts by some rabbis to validate dubious conversions (he did not provide any examples, though the Seidman and Langer cases surely sprang to the minds of his readers) simply made a mockery of what was a serious religious matter. He therefore suggested that the time may have come to separate the processes of civil and religious marriage. Those who married in a civil ceremony would avoid any issue of mamzerut since Orthodox Judaism did not recognize the marriage ab initio. Another alternative was for the State to recognize co-habitation, with the same consequences for Jewish law as civil marriage. A third alternative was simply to abolish the Marriage and Divorce Law and have only those interested in a Jewish religious marriage approach the Chief Rabbinate for approval, who would inform them of their subsequent marital obligations, particularly that of granting a get in the event of divorce.[32]

The retirement of Rabbis Bakshi-Doron and Lau in 2003 led to the appointment of Rabbis Shlomo Amar and Yonah Metzger respectively as Sephardi and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbis of Israel. Both men have taken a very different approach to personal status issues than did their predecessors. In some respects, the Moroccan-born Rabbi Amar, who previously had been the first sole Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv (he

was succeeded by Rabbi Lau), has reflected the general outlook of his predecessors. While a strict interpreter of Jewish law, and a strong opponent of non-Orthodox streams of Judaism,[33] like his mentor Rabbi Yosef, and indeed Rabbis Nissim and Uziel, like them as well he has had expansive view of how to relate to the Jewish population at large. And like Rabbis Uziel and Yosef, he too, has broadened the base of the family of Jewry. In 2005, he ruled that the Burmese/Northeast Indian Kuki-Mizo sub-tribe of the Shanlung people, called the Bnei Menashe, were fully fledged Jews requiring only immersion in a mikveh (ritual bath). As a result, several thousand of these people emigrated to Israel.[34]

On the other hand, Rabbi Amar has adopted a very different approach on the question of civil marriage from that of his immediate predecessor. In contrast to Rabbi Bakshi-Doron's proposal to permit civil marriage for Jews, Rabbi Amar would restrict civil marriage to non-Jews, among whom he includes a large proportion of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.[35]

In addition, Rabbi Amar sought to restrict the applicability of the Law of Return to Jews born of a Jewish mother, in accordance with Orthodox practice. In November 2006 he submitted a legislative proposal to then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that would also ban any converts, from any stream of Judaism, from automatic eligibility under the Law of Return. Arguing that his proposal sought to prevent the creation of "two peoples " within the State of Israel, Rabbi Amar also called for the Chief Rabbinate to have sole authority over conversions, thereby negating the traditional power of local rabbis, including Orthodox Rabbis, to preside over conversions, and upending the Law of Return's provision that recognizes non-Orthodox conversions that have taken place outside Israel. [36]

Rabbi Amar's proposal was not fully implemented, and had no impact on non-Orthodox conversions performed outside the United States; non-Orthodox converts continued to be recognized as Jews for the purposes of the Law of Return. On the other hand, Rabbi Amar announced that the Chief Rabbinate would no longer accept conversions of Diaspora Jews by Orthodox rabbis, unless those rabbis were on an "approved" list. Rabbi Amar justified his ruling, which violated the historic halakhic principle that "a judge can only see what is before his eyes," on the grounds that he wanted to have "uniform standards" for conversion; in essence, he was ruling that those "uniform standards" were meant to be in line with Haredi practices. In what can be only termed a lack of backbone, the leadership of the Rabbinical Council of America acceded to Rabbi Amar's demand and identified an "approved" list of rabbis, thereby denying all other

Orthodox rabbis, including the vast majority of their own members, the right to convert non-Jews to Orthodox Judaism. [37]

If Rabbi Amar has represented a turn to the “Right” among traditionally more tolerant Sephardi Jews, Rabbi Metzger’s elevation to the Chief Rabbinate, and his subsequent actions, have taken on an even more extreme hue. Rabbi Metzger’s background actually is that of a classical religious Zionist. He was born in Haifa, was educated in the hesder Yeshiva of Kerem B’Yavneh, which provides for religious study and service in the IDF. He served in the IDF as a chaplain, though he only achieved the relatively low rank of Captain. He authored numerous books, two of which won major Israeli prizes.

As Chief Rabbi, he has been notable in his outreach to non-Jewish faiths, including Buddhists and Hindus, in addition to Muslims and Christians, notably the Armenian community. Yet Rabbi Metzger’s career has been marked both by controversy and by his exceedingly close ties to the Haredi community, and Rabbi Eliashiv in particular. Rabbi Metzger did not have a reputation as a leading scholar, nor had he ever served as a Dayan on a Rabbinical Court. He had also previously withdrawn his candidacy for Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv after an outcry arose over allegations of his personal misconduct.[38]

It was widely believed that Rabbi Metzger’s appointment as Chief Rabbi was orchestrated by Rabbi Eliashiv on behalf of the Haredi community. In some respects, that belief was a reflection of the increasing prominence of that community within the State-run rabbinate, which had long been dominated by religious Zionists. It was ironic that rabbis who did not recognize the authority of the State should be on its payroll. More exasperating to many Israelsi was the fact that local Haredi rabbis were taking a rigid stand on matters of personal status, notably conversion, which was becoming increasingly difficult for non-Jews to obtain. For his part, Rabbi Metzger did nothing to arrest these developments; to the contrary, he was seen as supporter of the Haredi line. And when Rabbi Sherman issued his controversial ruling regarding the conversion of Russian Jews, Chief Rabbi Meztger publicly supported him (though he was at pains to say his support was not addressed to the ruling per se.)[39]

RABBI SHERMAN’S RULING AND ITS AFTERMATH

Rabbi Avraham Sherman’s ruling, which drew upon numerous precedents in halakhic literature, reflected a number of strongly held presumptions on the part of the Haredi community. First and foremost was the deep distrust of converts, coupled with an intense dislike of non-Jews. As Rabbi Sherman told an

international rabbinic conference a year after his controversial ruling, “There is no logic to telling tens of thousands of goyim [non-Jews] who grew up on heresy, hate of religion, liberalism, communism, socialism, that suddenly they can undergo a revolution deep in their souls. There is no such reality." [40]

Coupled to the uneasiness with which Haredim view conversion is the belief that such conversions can be overturned retroactively if its appears that the convert is not following all the mitzvot—as the Haredim themselves would define them. Thus, for example, a female convert who wears pants, or is seen in public with her hair uncovered, would be deemed to have fraudulently converted, despite the fact that both activities have long been tolerated, if not fully accepted, in Modern Orthodox communities. While there is some halakhic basis for retroactive invalidation of a conversion, Rabbi Sherman’s ruling was revolutionary in that he invalidated conversions that had taken place decades before, despite the fact that the converts in question had long considered themselves Jewish, and raised their families as Jews.

Finally, Rabbi Sherman’s ruling also reflected his highly controversial view that a beit din (rabbinical court) could overturn the ruling of another rabbinical court. Rabbi Sherman based his case on two separate grounds. First, he argued that the Supreme Rabbinical Court had the same authority to overturn rulings of lower courts in matters of personal status as in other matters. He made no distinction between legal decisions by a lower court where litigants were involved, and conversions, which were clearly not a matter of litigation.

Second, he postulated that “general concerns and uncertainties” were enough to merit judicial review of another rabbinical court’s conversions. He based his opinion on a public reaching (hora’ah) by “the decisors of the generation and yeshiva leaders” (poskei hador ve’roshei yeshiva) [41] that prohibited the acceptance of any converts “unless [rabbinical courts] were convinced that they [the converts] were truly ready to accept the yoke of Torah and mitzvot.[42] In his view this proclamation was binding upon world Jewry as the final word on the matter.

Rabbi Sherman’s ruling reflected the Haredi community’s veneration of its leaders, termed Gedolim (“great ones”), particularly its supreme leader, the Gadol Hador (“Leader of the Generation”) who at the time was Rabbi Eliashiv—who not only was Rabbi Metzger’s mentor but Rabbi Sherman’s as well[43] —and which it endowed with virtually prophetic qualities. Rabbi Sherman explicitly addressed the question of rabbinic leadership in an article that he published some two years after his ruling.[44] In his view, if the majority of

rabbinic leaders—by whom is meant Haredi leaders—look to one man for leadership, that person assumes absolute halakhic authority over “all the communities of Israel, Torah scholars, courts and rabbis within them—whether collectively or individually.”[45] In practice this means that if the “Leader of the Generation,” takes a hard line on personal issues and conversion, there is no challenging his authority.[46] Naturally, Rabbi Sherman had Rabbi Eliashiv in mind. [47]

Rabbi Sherman’s views with respect to retroactive nullification of conversions; to the authority of the Supreme Rabbinical Court to review and if, deemed necessary, nullify the conversions of another court, notably the Special Rabbinical Court for Conversions; and to the undisputed (and undisputable) authority of a sole Gadol Hador (Leader of the Generation) has been challenged by other prominent Rabbis and Dayanim. Most notable in this regard is Rabbi Sherman’s colleague on the Supreme Rabbinical Court, Rabbi Shlomo Dichovsky. With respect to retroactive nullification, Rabbi Dichovsky has based his arguments on the halakhic rulings of leading Sephardi and Ashkenazi rabbis of previous generations, including Rabbi Kook, Rabbi Uziel, Rabbi Haim Ozer Grodzinski and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. The latter was the foremost Haredi decisor of post-war America, who ruled that if convert did not openly state his/her intention purposefully to violate a given set of commandments, the conversion remained regardless of what passed through the convert’s mind at the time.[48]

As for Rabbi Sherman’s “Leader of the Generation” thesis, Rabbi Dichovsky again cites many decisors of past generations, including Maimonides and Rabbi Hayim of Volozhin, the leading student of the great Gaon of Vilna, who oppose the slavish adherence to the rulings of one man.[49] In addition, Rabbi Dichovsky points out that even within the Haredi world, there is no consensus as to who might be the ultimate halakhic decisor. To begin with, Sephardim look to Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who in turn follows the guidance of Rabbi Yosef Karo and his classic Code of Jewish Law, the Shulchan Aruch. Rabbi Dichovsky cites Rabbi Yosef’s blunt rejection of the contention by the leading post-war Ashkenazi Haredi decisor, Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz (popularly known as the Chazon Ish) that Haredim need not always follow the Shulchan Aruch if its rulings were questioned by later scholars. In Rabbi Yosef’s words, “it is revealed and well-known that the wise men of Spain and France [i.e. the Sephardim] accepted upon themselves and their descendants to rule in all cases like our teacher Rabbi Yosef Karo, of blessed memory, even if all later decisors disagree with him [my emphasis].” [50]

Moreover, argues Rabbi Dichovsky, “every community and every group of people has their own ‘Leader of the Generation” and they are obligated to follow him.”[51] For that reason, he adds, “the ruling of the Gadol Hador for one or another community is binding only on those who have accepted his authority and leadership, and not on those who have not accepted him.”[52] More particularly, Rabbi Dichovsky argues first, that the each individual community is bound by the rules of its own leaders and second, that each rabbinical court can rule in light of the evidence before it, (“the judge can only rule on the basis of what is before his eyes”). [53] The clear implication is that no rabbinical court can retroactively invalidate the conversion of another Orthodox court, nor can in invalidate the conversion performed by a court in another country. The latter argument goes to the heart of yet another question that has troubled Jewish communities outside Israel, namely, the decision by the Chief Rabbinate to authorize only certain Diaspora rabbis to conduct conversions.

It should be noted that Rabbi Dichovsky has not been a lone voice confronting Rabbi Sherman. Other rabbis have likewise challenged his halakhic rationale. These have included Rabbi David Bass, a member of the special rabbinical conversion court , who rejected an effort to invalidate the conversion of a woman and her daughter when it was discovered that the mother continued to have relations with a non-Jewish male[54] and Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, a judge on the Special Court for Conversions and the head of the Zomet Institute, who agreed in part with Rabbi Bass in the case just noted,[55] but who also both challenged Rabbi Sherman’s “Leader of the Generation” thesis as well as his assertion that the Supreme Rabbinical Court could review and overturn conversions by a lower court and/or the Special Court for Conversions. [56] The latter assertion was also challenged by other rabbis including Rabbi Ya’akov Epstein, a leading decisor who heads a Torah institute in Ashkelon, and Rabbi Moshe Mestbaum of the Sderot Yeshiva.[57]

Another prominent rabbi challenging Rabbi Sherman’s premises is Rabbi Chaim Amsellem, a Member of the Knesset and the author of two scholarly books on conversion. [58] And of course, Rabbi Druckman, whose authority and integrity were both the subject of Rabbi Sherman’s critique, steadfastly has held to his position.[59]

Shortly after Rabbi Sherman’s ruling was made public Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, who has ultimate authority over conversions, announced that he would not cancel any conversion but simply return the case to the local rabbinical court.[60] Some fifteen months after his controversial ruling, but before Rabbi Amar had it

officially revoked, Rabbi Sherman retroactively voided another conversion.[61] This decision prompted Rabbi Amar to announce that he would personally decide which rabbis on the Rabbinical Court would be authorized to deal with conversions. Rabbi Sherman held steady to his views, however. He continued to assert his position in rebuttals to the critiques of his colleagues.[62]

It was noteworthy that, as Rabbi Amar's spokesman pointed out, Rabbi Amar's announcement did not name Rabbi Sherman. Nevertheless, the Haredi community made it clear that it would bitterly resist any attempt to sideline him. A Haredi supporter of Rabbi Eliashiv responded to Rabbi Amar's ruling by stating that "If reports regarding Amar's letter are true, our rabbis will come out with a very serious reaction. Rabbi Amar has crossed a red line and he is directly undermining the halakhic validity of conversions in Israel." [63]

The Haredi reaction was not limited merely to words, however. The Haredim had already achieved a major victory a few months earlier, when in March 2010 when Chief Rabbis Metzger and Amar issued a series of guidelines for determining a person's status as a Jew. [64] The guidelines, which are several pages long, were aimed at those who immigrated to Israel after 1990 and who wished to marry or divorce within the Jewish tradition utilizing the State's religious apparatus. The guidelines were meant for use by a Rabbinical Court whose investigator must determine whether the applicant is Jewish beyond a reasonable doubt. Applicants would have to present original documentation of their matrilineal descent from a Jewish woman up to the great-grandmother. The test for Ethiopians was even more rigorous: they would have to provide proof going back seven generations—a near impossibility for many of them.

At about the same time, the Haredi factions, and the parties representing them in the Knesset, were able to derail a major proposal that its proponent, David Rotem, a member of the Yisrael Beiteinu party whose major support derives from Russian-speaking Israelis, had intended as a vehicle for significantly increasing the prospects for converting the approximately 300,000 emigres from the former Soviet Union (FSU). These persons were not being recognized as Jewish by the Chief Rabbinate and thus were unable marry a Jewish spouse in an Orthodox ceremony. Rotem's plan was to increase the number of local rabbis in Israel's cities and towns who would be authorized to perform conversions, thus increasing the number and pace at which FSU émigrés could be converted.

Nevertheless, under pressure from the Haredi parties, Rotem accepted a series of amendments to his bill, that the first time granted the Chief Rabbinate authority over all conversions, whether in or outside Israel. The amended draft legislation

stipulated that only the Chief Rabbinate could certify rabbis on the expanded "list." Moreover, non-Jews whose conversions were not recognized by the Chief Rabbinate would no longer be accepted under the Law of Return, as had been the case since a ruling in their favor by the Israeli Supreme Court. The draft bill passed a Knesset committee in July 2010.

The Rotem Bill provoked an uproar in the Diaspora, as well as opposition from the Israeli government, and Rotem quickly began to back away from his own legislation. He insisted that his plan in no way affected conversions in the Diaspora, but was limited to those in the State of Israel. The legislation did not move forward. In addition, the conversion issue again reverted to the Supreme Court, which in April 2012 overturned Rabbi Sherman's ruling and instead validated all Orthodox conversions. Finally, a new rabbinical group called Tzohar (emerged on the Israeli socio-religious-political scene to oppose the Haredi hammerlock on the Chief Rabbinate and its nationwide apparatus.

WHAT TO DO: TRANSFORMING THE CHIEF RABBINATE

Writing nearly fifty years ago, Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, a leading modern Orthodox scholar and halakhic decisor, and a powerful supporter of the Chief Rabbinate, argued that despite the refusal of the Haredi community to recognize its authority, for "the majority of the Yishuv [community] of the Land of Israel, that chose the chief rabbinate and see them as their rabbis, they, as well as the rabbis that serve [individual] communities on the basis of their appointment and approval by the chief rabbinate, certainly qualify as the mara d'atra [local decisor] in the sense that their rulings and decisions are binding." [65] Yet he also recognized that the Chief Rabbinate was hardly free from external political pressure that ultimately would undermine its authority. Indeed, three years earlier, in May 1960, while the battle over the successor to Rabbi Herzog continued to rage, Rabbi Yisraeli pleaded that the choice of a chief rabbi "should be free of all external influence" and warned that "otherwise the choice will be flawed, otherwise the community will not be able to relate to honor and glorify the authority of the person chosen for that position."[66]

There can be little doubt that Rabbi Yisraeli's concerns are paramount today. The Chief Rabbinate has become a political tool of a community that recognizes neither its authority, nor that of the State of Israel. Moreover, the Chief Rabbinate is becoming further and further removed from the Israeli public. Thanks to political machinations aimed at securing the support of the ultra-Orthodox parties in the Knesset, it has evolved from a modern Orthodox institution with a tolerant, if not all embracing attitude to secular Jews to a Haredi stronghold that displays

minimal interest in Jews that do not conform to its increasingly rigorous standards. As Zev Farber, an American-born modern Orthodox rabbi now living in Israel recently wrote, “There is a pervasive feeling that the Chief Rabbinate has failed in its duties and has now become more of a hindrance to the average citizen’s relationship to Judaism as a facilitator of Israeli Jewish life.”[67] Indeed, because of the Chief Rabbinate’s views on conversion, as well as its refusal o recognize non-Orthodox marriages, it has been asserted (by an Orthodox observer, no less) that as many as one-third of secular Israeli couples are married in civil ceremonies outside of Israel.[68] This situation poses a serious threat to the cohesion of the Jewish state; there is an urgent need for the Chief Rabbinate to transform itself it is to retain any relevance to Israeli Jews who are not part of the insular Haredi community that so strongly resents them.

There is a growing clamor both in Israel and the Diaspora that it is time to abolish the Chief Rabbinate. There are even Orthodox rabbis who take this view.[69] Certainly, such a move would gratify Israel’s non-Orthodox streams who feel that the State systematically discriminates against them. Yet despite their efforts, and pressure especially from the American Jewish community, which is overwhelmingly non-Orthodox, there is little indication that the vast majority of secular Israelis would turn to the Masorti (Conservative), Reform or other movements for spiritual direction. Most secular Jewish Israelis have little if any interest in their religion, and, to the extent they do, they appear to prefer traditional Jewish ritual, that is, Orthodox ritual, but without its accompanying strictures and lifestyle.

This is not to say that non-Orthodox streams should not benefit from State support. To the contrary, it is time they were fully recognized and indeed received such support. Nevertheless, just as the reality of popular disenchantment with the rabbinate must be confronted head-on, so too must the reality that non-Orthodox Judaism commands loyalty from a rather small fraction of Israelis.

What is needed, therefore, is not the abolition of the Chief Rabbinate, but rather its transformation into a much more circumscribed, yet relevant and all-inclusive authority. This idea was not unlike that of propagated some years ago by Chief Rabbi Bakshi-Doron, as noted above. His premise is similar, though not entirely identical, to that of Rabbi Farber: so many Jews have been ignoring the Chief Rabbinate and its role that, in practice, there already is a serious division within Israeli Jewry that belies the notion of “unity” among that community; in Rabbi Amar’s words, there are already “two peoples,” if not more.[70]

A modified version of the Bakshi-Doron plan would assign to the Chief Rabbinate, and the rabbinical courts that are linked to it, a role that would be a variant of that of the United Kingdom's Chief Rabbinate and Beth Din: it would relinquish control over all matters of personal status and function alongside non-Orthodox Jewish streams, as it does elsewhere in the world. Following another British model, the Chief Rabbinate would, like the Church of England, embody the state religion, whose holidays would be publicly observed.[71] Moreover, the Chief Rabbinate's status as the "official" state rabbinate would also include other duties, such as managing the "sale" of the land during the seventh shmitta year. Finally, of the utmost importance, and again analogous to the Church of England and its spiritual leader, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi and the Sephardi Rishon LeTzion, would constitute personal role models for all Israeli Jews, whatever their preferred religious stream or degree of personal practice.

Again, following the example of the British Chief Rabbinate and the London Beth Din, the Israeli rabbinical court system, which is linked to the Chief Rabbinate by virtue of the Chief Rabbi's sway over judicial appointments, would retain authority over kashrut. While there is much grumbling over the nature of kashrut supervision in Israel, as long as this remains a state-supported function, the government could impose far more rigorous auditing and accountability guidelines than is currently the case today. Such rigor would go a long way toward preventing fraud, while the termination of control over personal status would limit the ability of the kashrut authorities to impose rules on personal behavior and dress that go beyond the strict dictates of dietary law.

This hybrid British model would enable Israeli Jews wishing to marry, divorce, and be buried in non-Orthodox ceremonies to do so, without having to endure the confrontation, and at times abuse, that often takes place far too frequently today when dealing with the Chief Rabbinate and its representatives. It would formally accept the status of non-Orthodox rabbis by rendering them eligible to perform life cycle ceremonies. It would enable all conversions to Judaism would be accepted by the State, whether for the purposes of both the Law of Return or, with respect to immigrants, for their recognition by the State as Jews. Finally, as in the UK, all religious institutions, whatever their stream, would be eligible for government funding as long as they met required standards for secular studies.

As the embodiment of the State's majority religion, the Chief Rabbinate would participate in public ceremonies, such as those associated with Jewish holidays, as well as those secular ceremonies that call for contributions by religious

leaders. Its courts would continue to offer the resolution of disputes according to the Halakha, as well as maintain a register of marriages and divorces performed under Orthodox auspices, much as the London Beth Din and other British religious courts have done for many decades. Those who care about such things will turn to the Chief Rabbinate for guidance; those who seek out non-Orthodox rabbis to minister to their life cycle events will be secure in the knowledge that those too will be officially recognized by the State.

Finally, the Chief Rabbinate and its associated rabbinical institutions would also continue to provide kashrut supervision for all government and public establishments, such as museums, as well as for the military. As in the UK, it would provide kashrut supervision services for food and beverages sold both wholesale and retail. In this way it would ensure that all Israeli Jews who accept the authority of the State,[72] including the Orthodox, could maintain their standards of kashrut anywhere in Israel. At the same time, stricter government oversight would underscore the credibility of kashrut certification while restricting the kashrut authorities' overreach into personal matters.

Needless to say, achieving such changes will be neither easy nor simple. The Israeli Haredi and secular publics both are indifferent to the Chief Rabbinate and will not press for changes. Indeed, as salaried officials of the Chief Rabbinate, many Haredim have a vested interest in its preservation. While the leadership of any effort to transform the institution must come from within Israeli itself, the Diaspora, particularly the American Jewish community, is in a position to make its voice heard far more powerfully than has been the case until now. Israeli relations with the United States are in some ways more brittle than they have been in the not-so-distant past, and the government in Jerusalem needs American Jewish support as much as it ever has.

This last point deserves further elaboration. Israel simply cannot risk losing the support of the overwhelming majority of American Jews, who happen not to be Orthodox. Already there is much concern about the growing indifference of young Jewish Americans, while those entering the non-Orthodox rabbinate are becoming increasingly restive about relations with Israel. Such indifference poses a national security challenge for the State of Israel. America is Israel's key ally, the source of critical military assistance that enables it to maintain what is called its "Qualitative Military Edge" over its enemies. Absent the active commitment to Israel on the part of the majority of America's Jewish community, and given the changing ethnic face of America's population, Israel could find that American long-standing support for its security might begin to wane. Therefore, while on its

face the link between the future of the Chief Rabbinate and the future security of Israel might seem remote, it is in fact crucial, because the support of America's Jewish community is a critical factor for Israel's long-term security, and the State cannot afford to allow that community to be alienated by the Chief Rabbinate.

Nevertheless, though overwhelmingly non-Orthodox, American Jews must be careful about framing the debate purely in terms of their religious streams, and this for two reasons. First, most Israelis are as, if not more, indifferent to the non-Orthodox streams of Judaism than they are to the Chief Rabbinate. The majority still prefer to celebrate life cycle events according to the Orthodox tradition rather than in line with non-Orthodox practice. Second, not only the Haredim, but the HarDaLim, many of the modern Orthodox, and the traditional Sephardim, all remain to various degrees hostile to the non-Orthodox movements. Moreover, given the political clout of the Orthodox, especially the Haredim, in the Israeli political system, great care will have to be taken not to be viewed as meddling in internal Israeli affairs.

The issue of personal status is nevertheless not solely an internal political matter. It affects Diaspora Jewry, especially American Jewry, and not only its non-Orthodox streams, but some of the modern Orthodox as well. There is therefore no reason for the Diaspora to remain silent, or for that matter, uninvolved. Jewish organizations that are not affiliated with any religious stream, like the American Jewish Committee, should follow the latter's lead and issue public statements calling for the overhaul of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate. Delegations visiting Israel call for the same, not only in private meetings with government officials, but in interaction with Israel's highly vocal media as well. And American and other Diaspora Jewish communities should fund Israeli organizations of all religious streams, and those of purely secular bent, that seek to change the status quo. The Israeli organizations include not only those that are non-Orthodox, but also modern Orthodox rabbinical groups such as Tzohar, and lay groups such as Kolech, the organization that lobbies for change in the religio-legal status of women.

The Chief Rabbinate of the State of Israel, the homeland of all the Jewish people, should be the Chief Rabbinate of all the Jewish people. It must be inclusive, not exclusionary. It should provide for all, and to do so, must accommodate all. It means, on the one hand, offering supervised kashrut in all public facilities so that all Israelis can comfortably partake of food with their brothers and sisters. It means, on the other hand, support for the educational institutions of all of Judaism's streams, so that all parents can bring up their children in the tradition

that means most to them.

Finally, it must follow in the footsteps of Chief Rabbi Herzog, who, upon phoning the President of the United States in May 1948 to tell him that, “God put you in your mother’s womb so you would be the instrument to bring the rebirth of Israel after two thousands years, ” caused tears to rundown the cheeks of Harry Truman.[73] In other words, like Rabbi Herzog, or for that matter, Lord Jonathan Sacks, whose writings about Torah recently were published in the prestigious journal of the national security elite, Foreign Affairs,[74] the Chief Rabbinate must serve serving as a moral beacon, for Jews as well as non-Jews, winning the respect of all, and in so doing sanctifying the name of Heaven, both in Israel and around the world. Doing anything less will justify the arguments of those who call for its abolition.

IN CONCLUSION: A PERSONAL NOTE

I am proud to call myself an Orthodox Jew. I firmly believe in the divinity of both the written Torah and the Oral Law and in the thirteen principles of Maimonides. I recognize that other streams of Judaism do not share that belief. I am convinced that they are fundamentally wrong. Indeed, three men to whom those streams have continued to look for inspiration--Moses Mendelssohn, Solomon Schechter, and Britain’s Chief Rabbi Hertz (who was the first graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary), all believed in the divinity of the Bible.

Nevertheless, I respect the sincerely held views of those with whom I disagree. I do not see them in any negative light, nor do I consider it appropriate, or indeed, mentschlich, to de-legitimate them, or their rabbis and leaders, in any way. Orthodoxy must make its case on the battleground of ideas, not behind closed political doors—and that observation applies as much to the Diaspora as to Israel.

In this regard, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate faces a crisis of confidence on the part of its multiple constituents: Jewish Israelis, and Jews worldwide. It has been hijacked by a group of intellectually dishonest extremists who deny the legitimacy of the state that signs their paychecks and who scorn those of their fellow Jews who do not see the world as they do. They exploit their power to ruin the lives of hundreds, even thousands of their co-religionists. They bring shame on the religion they profess to uphold, and on the Sacred Name whom they purport to represent.

Unless the Chief Rabbinate is transformed in a manner that enables it to retrieve its moral authority while co-existing with other streams of Judaism, its future and value as an institution will be problematic at best. The current situation simply

cannot be permitted to go on. The credibility of Judaism in general and of Orthodoxy in particular, as well as the unity of the Jewish people, both within and outside the State of Israel, are all very much at stake.

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[1] Beit Din Harabani Hagadol, 4 Adar I 5768 (10 February 2008), Case # 5489-64-1 (Hebrew).
[2] See Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Israeli Chief Rabbinate: A Current Halakhic Perspective," Tradition 26:4 (1992), p.27.

[3] Salo W. Baron, The Jewish Community Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), p. 230.
[4] In fact, Rabbi Sonnenfeld, for all his differences with Rabbi Kook, accompanied the latter in some of his outreach efforts in the secular kibbutzim and moshavim of Northern Galilee.
[5] The land of the Khazars was a Jewish state from the eighth to the tenth century CE, and there were shorter lived statelets on the Arabian peninsula and in Babylonia during the sixth century CE, but the State of Israel was the first Jewish state in the Jewish homeland since Bar Kochba's rebellion of 132-136 CE.
[6] Rabbi Herzog argued for full religious and political rights for Muslims and Christians living in Israel. See Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Halevi Herzog, "Zechuyot Hami'utimm Lefi Ha'Halakha," (Minority Rights According to Halakha), Techumin 2 (5741/1980-81), pp. 169-79.
[7] See the exchange of letters between Rabbi Herzog and Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, 16 October (12 Cheshvan) 1958 and 10 November 1958, http://www.archives.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/CA26304C-B980-4921-8E1E-ABF974B07C65/0/herzog01.pdf
[8] Letter to Prime Minister Moshe Sharett, 1 Kislev 5716/1955, reprinted in Techumin 28 (5768/2008-2009), p. 468.
[9] See Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Halevi Herzog, Pesakim U'Ktavim, vol. 4: Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot BeDinei Yoreh De'ah, nos. 87 and 95.
[10] His 1944 responsum on Bene Israel appears in ibid., vol 8: Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot BeDinei Even Ha'ezer, Appendix #2. The responsum reiterates a similar ruling that he gave seven years earlier in response to a query from the editor of the Bombay "Jewish Platform."
[11] See Rabbi Ben-Zion Uziel, Mishpetei Uziel vol. 2, Yoreh De'ah No. 14. For a brief discussion of Rabbi Uziel's views on conversion, see Rabbi Marc D, Angel, "Conversion to Judaism: Halakha, Hashkafa, and Historic Challenge," Hakirah VII (Winter 2009) pp. 42-43. As will be discussed below, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, the leading Haredi rabbic decisor of the immediate pre-World War II generation, also ruled leniently in the case of a non-Jewish woman already

married to a Jew who sought an Orthodox conversion see Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot Ahiezer,vol 3, no. 26, sub-section 6.
[12] See Rabbi Yitchak Nissim, Yain Hatov: Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot, Even Ha'ezer V'Choshen Mishpat, no. 6.
[13] See, for example, Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Waldenburg, Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot Tzitz Eliezer vol. 10, 2nd ed., no. 25, sub-section 3.
[14] Pesakim U'Ktavim, vol. 6: Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot BeDinei Even Ha'ezer nos. 15-16.
[15] He was also the hardest line on the question of relations with other faiths, see Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveichik, Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (New York: Ktav, 2005), pp. 247-68. Rabbi Nissim also took a hard line on this issue: he famously refused to participate in a reception for Pope Paul VI during the latter's 1964 visit to Israel arguing that the pope had not shown respect to the Chief Rabbinate.
[16] Rabbi Soloveichik to Rabbi Reuven Katz , no date, ibid p. 177.
[17] Rabbi Soloveichik to Moshe Shapiro,February 15, 1960 in ibid., p.174.
[18] Rabbi Soloveichik to Dr. Moshe Unna, April 8, 1960, in ibid.,p. 187.
[19] Cited in Marc D. Angel, "Conversion to Judaism: Halakha, Hashkafa and Historic Challenge," Hakirah 7 (Winter 2009), p. 44. See also J. David Bleich, Contemporary Halachic Problems Vol. 1 (New York and Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1977), pp. 294-95.
[20] Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot Yabia Omer vol. 2: Even Ha'ezer, no. 4.
[21] Ibid., vol. 9: Yoreh De'ah, no. 16. The case involved a man who was about to marry only to discover that his mother had been converted by a local Buenos Aires rabbi in contravention of the long-standing ban on conversions in that city. Rabbi Yosef did say that while the mother's conversion remained valid, if "it were not inconvenient" for the man to convert in an Argentine town other than Buenos Aires, it was preferable that he do so.
[22] Ibid., no. 24.
[23] Ibid., vol.7: Even Ha'ezer, no. 1.
[24] Ibid., vol. 8: Even Ha'ezer no. 11.
[25] For a discussion of the case, see Bleich, Contemporary Halachic Problems Vol. 1, pp. 293-294.
[26] Danna Harman, "With Peace Process Stalled, Rabbi Is Promoting Dialogue With Muslims," Los Angeles Times (May 24,1998) http://articles.latimes.com/1998/may/24/news/mn-52936
[27] Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, Yachel Yisrael, vol. 1, no. 25. Rabbi Lau cites an impressive array of decisors, both Sephardi and Eastern and Western European

Ashkenazi, upon whom he relies. These include, among others, the medieval authors of Tosefot (cf. Talmud Bavli: Yevamot); the Sephardi Rabbis Yosef Karo (Beit Yosef) and Ben Zion Uziel (Mishpetei Uziel: Even Ha'ezer no. 25); the Eastern European Rabbis Shabbetai ben Meir Hacohen (Siftei Cohen, or Sha"ch), Malkiel Zvi Tennnenbaum (Sh'eylot U'teshuvot Divrei Malkiel vol.6, no. 19), Zvi Pesach Frank (Sh'eylot U'teshuvot Har Zvi: Yoreh De'ah no. 218), Ya'akov Breisch (Chelkat Ya'akov vol. 1, nos. 13-14) and Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (Da'at Cohen, nos. 154-55); and, from the Western European tradition, Rabbi Dovid Zvi Hoffmann (Sh'eylot U'teshuvot Melamed Le'ho'il: Yoreh De'ah no. 85).

[28] Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, "Yachas Ha'Halakha LeChukei Hamedina," (The Relationship of Halakha to the Laws of the State), Techumin 3 (5742/1981-82), pp. 241-44.

[29] Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, "Gilui Eliyahu," (The Revelation of Eliyahu), Techumin 31 (5771/2011-12), p.5.

[30] For many years, Haifa was the only Israeli city where public transportation operates on Shabbat, a result of the determined efforts of its longtime avowedly secular mayor, Abba Hushi.

[31] Harman, "With Peace Process Stalled." See also Rabbi Bakshi-Doron's Opening Presentation to the World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace, that was held in Morocco, January 3-6 2005.
http://www.imamsetrabbins.org/en/publications/detail/3/10/25

[32] Rabbi Eliayahu Bakshi-Doron, "Chok Nisuin V'Geirushin-Hayatza Sechoro B'Hefsedo?," (The Law of Marriage and Divorce—Have its Liabilities Come to Outweigh its Value?), Techumin 25 (5765/2005), pp. 99-107.

[33] Rabbi Amar has vigorously opposed any official recognition by the State of Israel of Masorti (Conservative) and Reform rabbis. See Jeremy Sharon, "Amar: Stop recognizing of non-Orthodox Rabbis," Jerusalem Post (June 19,2012).
http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=274359

[34] For a brief discussion see Dov S. Zakheim, "What Happened to the Ten Lost Tribes," in Yamin Levy ed., Mishpetei Shalom: A Jubilee Volume in Honor of Rabbi Saul (Shalom) Berman (New York: Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, n.d.), pp. 607-647-648.

Shahar Ilan, "But Not for Jews," Haaretz (July 28, 2005).
http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/but-not-for-jews-1.165253

[35] Amiram Barkat, "Chief Rabbinate Prepares Bill to Remove Converts from Law of Return,", Haaretz, November 21, 2006. http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/chief-rabbinate-preparing-bill-to-change-law-of-return-converts-won-t-be-recognized-as-jews-1.201905#…

[36] For a discussion see Angel, "Conversion to Judaism," p. 29.

[37] Baruch Kra, “Bakshi-Doron Slams Metzger appointment as Chief Rabbi,” Haaretz (April 28, 2003) http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/bakshi-doron-slams-metzger-appointment-as-chief-rabbi-1.11663
[38] Yair Ettinger, “Rabbinical Judge: Most Immigrants Seeking Conversion are Misguided,” Haaretz (June 18, 2009). http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/rabbinical-judge-most-immigrants-seeking-conversion-are-misguided-1.278291
Ibid.
[39] These were Rabbis Eliashiv, Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky and Elazar Shach.
[40] See Rabbi Avraham-Chaim Sherman, Bedika Chozeret Shel Giyur B’veit Din Acheir,” (Repeat Investigation of [a] Conversion in another Rabbinical Court), Techumin 31 (5771/2011), pp. 234-35.
[41] See, for example, Rabbi Sherman’s “Yichusam Shel Noladim Me’hapirya Chuitz Gufis Mitrumas Zara: Beirur Shitas Maran HaGaon Rav Yosef Sholom Eliashiv” (The Parentage of Children born in vitro from a Foreign [i.e. non-parental] Donor: Clarification of the Position of our Teacher the Gaon Rabbi Yosef Sholom Eliashiv), Yeshurun 21 (5769/2009), pp. 535-45.
[42] See Rabbi Avraham-Chaim Sherman, “Samchut Gedolei Hador BeNosei Ishut VeGerut,” (Authority of the Great Men of the Generation in Matters of Personal Status and Conversion), Techumin,30 (5770/2009-2010), pp. 163-173.
[43] Ibid., p. 165.
[44] Ibid., pp. 170-71.
[45] It is noteworthy that Rabbi Eliashiv himself, at least in his earlier years, did not always take a hard line on personal status. For example, in 1986 he ruled leniently in favor of two sisters who were about to marry but discovered that their late maternal grandmother was a divorcee, and had their mother by her second husband, but there was only family oral history to substantiate the belief that she had obtained an Orthodox religious divorce from her first husband. Rabbi Eliashiv permitted the weddings to go ahead. See “Eey Amrinan Sfek Sfeika Lehakel Bema’alas Yuchsin,” (Whether We Rule a Compound Uncertainty Is Permissive in Matters of Geneology) Yeshurun 18 (5767/2006), pp. 644-46). He also ruled leniently in a complex 1978 case of a woman seeking to marry who had converted as a child and now sought to marry a Cohen, normally forbidden to a convert. “Giyores LeCohen” (A Convert Marrying a Cohen), ibid., 17 (5766/2006), pp. 451-53.

[46] See Rabbi Shlomo Dichovsky, “Bitul Giyur Le’Mafreya,” (Retroactive Invalidation of Conversion) Techumin 29 (5769/2008-2009), pp. 267-280, who discusses and rebuts Rabbi Sherman’s position at some length. Rabbi Dichovsky

could have cited other major twentieth century halakhic decisor—notably Rabbi Dovid Zvi Hoffmann, Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot Melamed Leho'il: Even Ha'ezer Nos 8 and 10, and Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, Sh'eylot U'Teshuvot Sridei Eish: Yoreh Deah no. 66—but he may have chosen not to do so because these rabbis reflected the more liberal German Orthodox tradition that was not fully accepted by the East European rabbis whom contemporary Ashkenazi Haredim venerate.
[47] See Rabbi Shlomo Dichovsky, "'Daat Torah' Ba'Halakha," (The Place of "Torah Outlook" in Halakha), Techumin,30 (5770/2009-2010), pp. 174-91.
[48] Ibid., p. 177-78. Rabbi Yosef's statement appears in Yabia Omer, vol. 1: Orach Chayim, introduction.
[49] Dichovsky, "Da'at Torah," p. 184.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., p. 191.
[52] Rabbi David Bass, "Tokfo Shel Giyur Bediavad Eem Hager Ayno Shomer Kol Hamitzvot," (The Post-Facto Validity of a Conversion When the Convert Does Not Adhere to all the Mitzvot," Techumin 23 (5763/2002/2003), pp. 186-98).
[53] Rabbi Rozen agreed that the daughter's conversion remained valid, but that the mother's behavior clearly indicated that she had never been serious about converting according to Jewish standards.
[54] See ibid.,30, appendix to Rabbi Sherman's article, p. 173 and ibid. 31 appendix to Rabbi Sherman's article, p. 236.
[55] Rabbi Ya'akov Epstein, "Lo Nitan Levatel Giyur She'na'ase Kedin" (There is no Provision for Annulling a Conversion Conducted according to the Law), ibid. 32, pp. 332-36; Rabbi Moshe Mestabum, "Giyur Einehul Chizui He'atid" (Conversion is not a Forecast of the Future), ibid., pp. 337-39.
[56] See Chaim Amsellem, "Acceptance of Commandments for Conversion," Conversations No. 14 (Autumn 2012/5773), pp. 91-113.
[57] The Sherman ruling also prompted discussion among American rabbis. See Rabbi Chaim Jachter, "Nullification of a Conversion," Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society LXII (Succot 5772/Fall 2011), pp. 5-27.
[58] See also Angel, "Conversion to Judaism."
[59] Kobi Nahshoni, "Friedmann: Israel Must Allow Marriages for All Citizens," ynetnews.com (May 19, 2008)
http://www.ynetnews.com/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3544997,00.html
[60] Matthew Wagner, "Amar Moves to Bar Controversial Rabbinic Judge from Conversion Cases," Jerusalem Post (June 25, 2009)
http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=146773
[61] See, for example, "Teshuvat Harav Avraham Chaim Sherman Lehasagat

Harav Yisrael Rozen b'Techumin 31 v'Hearot Mechaber Ma'amar Teguva Zeh (Response of Rabbi Avraham Chaim Sherman to the Critique of Rabbi Yisrael Rozen in Techumin 31 and to the Comments of the Author [Rabbi Epstein]of this Response), Appendix to Rabbi Epstein's article, Techumin 32, p. 336.
[62] Rabbi Nahum Eisenstein quoted in ibid.
[63] Shlomo Moshe Amar and Yonah Yechiel Metzger "Hanchayot Bebirur Yahadut 5770/2010" (Guidelines for Establishing [One's] Judaism (17 Adar 5770/March 3, 2010).
[63] Author's translation from the Hebrew in Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, Amud Hayemini 3rd. ed. (Jerusalem: Machon Hatorah Vehamedina, 5760/2010), no. 6.
[65] Author's translation from the Hebrew in Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, Harabanut Vehamedina: Asofet Ma'amarim, Ne'umim, Sichot, U'reshimot al Rabbanut Eretzyisraelit, Hatziyonut Hadatit, Medinat Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael (Jerusalem: Avraham Kohen, 5761/2002), p. 73.
[66] Zev Farber, "Reform, Restore or Rescind: What to do with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel," The Times of Israel (September 27, 2012) http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/reform-restore-or-rescind-what-to-do-with-the-chief-rabbinate-of-israel/. Rabbi Zev Farber should not be confused with Rabbi Seth Farber, likewise a critic of the Chief Rabbinate, who is the founder of Itim, an organization devoted to helping Israelis navigate the complexities posed by interaction with the religious authorities. See, for example, Seth Farber , "The Challenge: To marry in the Rabbinate," Jerusalem Post (August 11, 2012) http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=280881
[67] Matti Friedman, "A Battle for the Rabbinate, and for Israel's Soul," The Times of Israel (September 11, 2012) http://www.timesofisrael.com/a-battle-for-the-rabbinate-and-for-israels-soul/
[68] Zev Farber, "Reform, Restore or Rescind."
[69] Bakshi-Doron, "The Law of Marriage and Divorce," pp.
[70] The British Chief Rabbi does not formally represent the Reform and Liberal Jewish streams that are active in the UK and elsewhere, but he does represent the Jewish community on State occasions as well as on the international stage. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a much more formal role as the leader of England's established church.
[71] The Haredim do not accept the authority of the State. Even if they do, their determination of what satisfies their standards is often peculiar to Haredi sub-groups (e.g. some Hassidic sects will not accept shechita (ritual slaughter) by anyone other than their own shochtim) and therefore cannot be fully accommodated.
[72] David McCullough, Truman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992)

[73] Jonathan Sacks, “God’s Politics: The Lessons of the Hebrew Bible,” Foreign Affairs 91 (November/December 2012), pp. 124-28.

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