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The Jew to Jesus, 1936.

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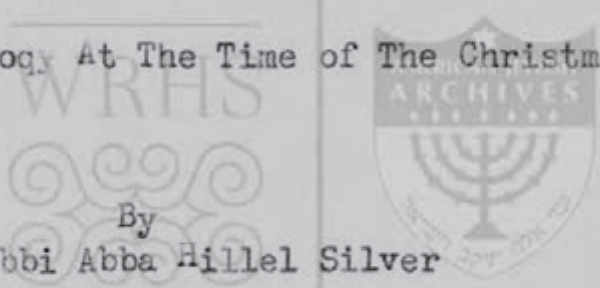
THE JEW TO JESUS

An Imaginary Colloquy At The Time of The Christmas Season

By  
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, December 20, 1936





"O Man of mine own people, I alone  
Among these alien ones can know thy face,  
I who have felt the kinship of thy race  
Burn in me, as I sit where they intone  
Thy praises -- those who, striving to make known  
A God for sacrifice, have missed the grace  
Of thy sweet human meaning in its place,  
Thou who art of our blood-bond and our own."

"Are we not sharers of thy passion? Yea,  
In spirit-anguish closely by thy side  
We have drained the bitter cup, and, tortured, felt  
With thee the bruising of each heavy welt.  
Every land is our Gethsemane.  
A thousand times have we been crucified."

This moving sonnet of Florence Frank called "The Jew to Jesus" is not inappropriate for this season of the year when the non-Jewish world begins the celebration of the nativity of its Founder. A Jew comes into this season of the year not without unmingled emotions for Jewish experience in the last 2,000 years has been inseparably intertwined with the story of Christianity. The Jew has lived much of the time in Christian lands and his history is the story of the attitude of the Christian world and his existence in his midst. To this poet, the thought which seems to be uppermost is the similarity in the fate which overtook the Founder of Christianity, Jesus, and the fate which over-took his race - the Jewish race.

"Are we not sharers of thy passion? Yea,  
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And that, of course, is too too tragically true. Our people in the last two millennia have also been forced to take the "via dolorosa", the sorrowful road of persecution, of misunderstanding,



of hatred, of suffering and our "via dolorosa" has not yet ended. The whole race of Israel because of its vision became in the language of the prophet Isaiah the "man of sorrow" and whole generations of our people agonized upon the cross of persecution. Upon the head of the man who became the Master of the Christian world they placed a crown of thorns and upon his race the clown cap of humiliation and the yellow badge of shame. True it is that Israel has been the risen people of an immemorial crucifixion.

To us this season of the year suggests another similarity - the similarity of defeat. How tragically both Christianity and Judaism have failed to redeem the world, to regenerate mankind, to build the kind of a world we hoped to build.

If a Jew were to meet Jesus on the Christmas Eve of 1936, he would greet him, of course, with the old Jewish greeting: "shalom, Shalom Alechem" - Peace be Unto you! - the only greeting that Jesus knew, the ancient greeting of ancient Israel. And soon they would both be startled to realize how strange that greeting sounded in the world of 1936.

The Jew would remind Jesus that according to the sacred legend among his disciples and followers, the Heavenly Host on the night of his nativity sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will toward men". And the Jew would ask, now that nineteen centuries have rolled by and your followers have grown from a humble little company into tens and hundreds of millions, and have mastered the whole Western World, where is this peace on earth? where is the good-will among men?



You will have difficulty, the Jew would say to his brother Joshua - you will have great difficulty in walking across the face of Europe because of the number of graves and the rows upon rows of crosses of Christians, millions of them, who killed themselves in hate and fury in the last World War.

Are you on your way, perhaps, on Christmas Eve in 1936, to Madrid Spain, Brother Jesus? There will you find no Heavenly Hosts chanting the hymns of peace. From the skies there will be raining down flaming death, bombs to kill men, women and children. You will see an old Christian city with numerous magnificent churches turn to shambles, where brother Christian is slaying brother Christian and here they will invoke your name even as they drive bayonets into each other's bodies. Some will say they kill to save your religion. Is that your religion, Brother Joshua?

Or, perhaps you are on your way to Rome, this Christmas Eve, 1936 where there is the most magnificent church in Christendom, which is the seat of the head of ~~of~~ one of the greatest Christian churches? There you will find a people celebrating, this year, the consciousness, ruthless conquests of destruction of another Christian race, where one of your churches was established more than a century ago - Ethiopia - and they will celebrate this bloody conquest and the fact that they defied the whole world and won.

Man of peace and man of sorrows, are you on your way to Rome?

Or, perhaps, you are on your way to Berlin this Christmas Eve of 1936? There you will hear the bells tolling and in numerous churches you will hear your story told - the story of how you were



born in Bethelhem in Judea of a Jewish father and a Jewish mother and they will hail your birth and hail you as the leader of mankind who saved the world. They will chant paens of praise and hallelujah. But, Brother Joshua, if you were born today, in Berlin, instead of Bethelhem where so many churches exist, you would be a marked and a branded child, forever an alien among these people. You will be regarded as a member of a worthless race. You would be born under a flag which carried not the symbol of your cross, but a crooked cross - the swastika - which is the symbol of Aryan racial purity and superiority, the symbol of the impurity and degradation of the Semetic race of which you and I are children. Brother Joshua, you love children. You said many beautiful things about children: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven". But in Berlin, Brother Joshua, they do not suffer little children to come in joy to their rightful patrimony. Our Jewish children are shunned as lepers, segregated, isolated, humiliated.

You used to love to preach, Brother Jesus, in Jewish synagogs. You were welcomed. They will not let you preach in Christian-Germany today for you are a Jew. They don't like Jews even when they turn Christian.

You remember how your followers were persecuted, how your disciples and faithful ones met with the hatred and the contempt of the people, how they were charged, the early Christians, with being enemies of the early Empire, how they were charged with practicing every conceivable abomination and violation, every virtue in the name of God? Remember the charges which were made against



your followers, many of which were crucified at stake, that they killed children and drank their blood in rights of initiation, how they performed shameful incestuous orgies in performance of their religion? Do you remember Julian who charged them with being a sect of fanatics and how all Christians of the Empire were deprived of all their professions. They were forbidden to hold office, to teach. They were forbidden employment in State, Army, Provinces. And, Brother Joshua, your followers, centuries later, said the self-same things and did self-same acts against your people.

And, today, your race is being accused, as your followers were, as conspirators against the state. You destroyed Rome, they said. We ruined Germany they say and the same measures are being enacted against our people today as were enacted against your followers centuries ago. How little the world has changed, Brother Joshua, in all these centuries!

In 1936, Brother Jesus, they really don't know what to do with the Jews. They can't forego your greatness. The world has acclaimed you. You have been so much a part of the history of the Western world and yet they would rather that you were born in Pottsdam than in Bethlehem. They would rather have had it that you were born the offspring of some Prussian corporal than of a Jew in Gallilee. They don't know what to do with your teaching, Brother Joshua. The world has hailed you as a gentle Teacher who loved peace and forgiveness. Yet in



Berlin today and in many other countries of the world these are not the virtues extolled. They adore the iron fist. It is force they love. They despise the pacifist. They love to hate. They want a God who can thunder and make their enemies quake. Somehow, Brother Joshua, you don't fit into their Valhalla. No, in Berlin, on Christmas 1936, you will hear no Heavenly Hosts preaching "Peace on Earth!" You are a pacifist. In Palestine, in the ancient days, they did not persecute you because you were a pacifist. But in Germany, you would be sent to the concentration camp and the iron heel would be dug into your face.

There was a humble and gentle disciple who lived in Germany by the name of Carl von Ossietzky, one of the true faithful ones. And they took him and placed him into the torture chambers of one of their concentration camps and kept him there until he was worn down to the brink of death, a broken frame and they left him to spend the rest of his life on the bed of suffering, facing death.

But that is how they treat pacifists in this day. They want war. They starve their people so as to have more provender for their guns.

They have rejected the Jews - men of peace.

Do you remember how you warned people against the abuses and dangers of wealth, against laying up treasures upon earth; how you warned people that you cannot serve God and at the same time and how you told them how a rich man shall hardly enter in the Kingdom of God?

You had a dream, we had a dream of a perfect society that will be ushered in by God, men preparing themselves by meekness, and righteousness and purity and you said "These people were the blessed



ones. And you said, Blessed are the poor - not the strong, not the mighty, not the rulers of the earth - but these. What has become of this dream nineteen centuries later? Everywhere they are worshiping Mannon, everywhere they are relying on force. Everywhere they despise the weak. Everywhere they wage war to conquer and to possess. Whenever the poor rise to demand justice - the rich and the mighty set about to destroy them.

They have rejected you, Brother Joshua, in the Christian world. You are an alien, a prophet not without honor but what is worse, a prophet honored but not listened to.

Now, in this colloquy, on the road this Christmas Eve, 1936, what would Jesus answer? What would he say? He would say, you are right, Brother. I know that thy road has been long and hard, harder by far than the road I once traveled to Golgotha, as hard as the road which you have traveled through these long weary centuries. Often Have I had to drink the vinegar mingled with gall as you have, oh Brother Joshua. I know that <sup>not</sup> all who prophesied in my name obeyed my word. I know that "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom."

I had a dream of a world swiftly regenerated, of a blessed new world. I proclaimed that faith. I summoned men to regenerate in order to re-enter my wonderful new kingdom of God. I failed. But have you, my Brother, have you succeeded? You, too, had a dream, the dream we shared - the dream of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah, of great Teachers, of those whose words I read in the synagog - the dream of the "coming day when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, when men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their



and theyr spears into pruning-hooks." But what of your dream, O Brother of my people? Are the Jews today all God-fearing, all peace-loving. Are they free from intolerance and hate and pride? Are they free from exploitation and the worship of Mannon? Are they unhappy because of the wrongs of manking or because of their wrongs? Are they all seeking the Kingdom?

And what would the Jew answer? You are right, my brother Joshua. We too have not lived up to our vision. And perhaps the world's redemption has so far been retarded because neither your followers nor my people have had the courage to confess their failures, the courage to be honest with themselves. Neither Christianity nor Judaism has been easy. Hard has been the road for both of us. My road begins 3500 years ago with Abraham and your road branched off fifteen centuries later. But both our roads are only at the beginning. Our work in the world is still to be done and what we both need, Brother Joshua, is some new and faithful disciples, men who will be afraid neither of hate, nor misunderstanding, nor persecution, nor death, nor torture, men to whom faith will be an exaltation, a consecration, a rising consuming passion. With such disciples our dream would conquer the world.

You uttered some great truths to your few followers in Judea. Those few you chose to follow you "feared not them which killed the body, but are not able to kill the soul" and you warned them "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." And our prophets and your prophetic forbears likewise admonished the faithful Jews "Those that put all trust in God will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be



be weary. "They shall walk and not be faint". That kind of followers we need, Brother Joshua, to make our dream come true.

Where are you going, then, on this Christmas Eve, 1936, Brother Joshua? And the answer would be - I am not going to magnificent cathedrals to listen to the pealing of the organ, to see the splendid robes of priestly functionaries. I am not going to smell incense. I am going through the byways of the world, even as once I walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee seeking a few simple folk, fine honest men to help me build a Kingdom.

So am I, the Jew would say. I, too, am seeking such brothers. Shalom - Peace be Unto you! And unto you, Brother.





## THE JEW TO JESUS

Florence Kiper Frank

Man of mine own people, I alone  
Among these alien ones can know thy face,  
I who have felt the kinship of thy race  
Burn in me, as I sit where they intone.  
Thy praises -- those who, striving to make known  
A God for sacrifice, have missed the grace  
Of thy sweet human meaning in its place,  
Thou who art of our blood-bond and our own.

Are we not sharers of thy passion? Yea,  
In spirit-anguish closely by thy side  
We have drained the bitter cup, and, tortured, felt  
With thee the bruising of each heavy welt,  
Every land is our Gethsemane.  
A thousand times have we been crucified.



1- Poem - Florence Kiper Frank - Christmas that is separate<sup>U</sup>  
this poet finds this that dominant - the similarity in the path  
"Are we not sharers of thy passion?"  
"Every land is our Gethsemane"  
"A thousand times have we been crucified".

2- True! Tragically true!  
Our Via dolorosa = 2000 yrs. - Not yet ended.  
The whole race - for its victim - became "Man of Sorrows", and  
whole generations groaned upon the Cross of Resurrection -  
upon the head, the Man - planted "a crown of thorns" - upon his  
race - a clown - peaked cap - and a yellow badge"  
True, Israel is the chosen people of an immortal crucifixion

3. We find another that suggested by the Chr. Lesson - another  
How strange similarity.  
How tragically both Chr. & Jew. have failed to redeem the  
world, to regenerate manhood, to build the Kingdom of  
a world they hoped to build;

4. If a Jew were to meet J. - Christmas Eve 1936 - "Somewhere"  
exchange with pill - suddenly both realize how strange

(a) Jew would remind -  sacred legend - heavenly host -  
"Gloria to God in the highest, on Earth peace, good will towards men"

(b) Jew would ask - for 19 c. your followers -  
But where is Peace - Good will ?

On your way across Europe - difficulty in walking  
Graves of last war - "crosses row on row"  
10 million



5. Are you on your way to Madrid, Spain this Chr-day? (2)  
- Raining bombs. planning death. - Shambles -  
~~will~~ You will hear - inside ~~the~~ your name -  
- Killing to save your religion. Is that your religion,  
brother Joshua.

6. On your way to Rome? Maryscent Church - St. Peter's -  
Seat of Church - Celebrate - in their destruction of a  
peaceful people - Christians also - one of earliest of  
your churches - Defiled whole world - & more!

7. Or perhaps to Berlin?  
Bells toll in your honor - tell story of how you  
were born - Bethlehem - of a Jewish father - of another  
Hail you both - redeemer - Chant psalms & praise.

(a) But if you were born to-day in Berlin - of a J. father -  
marked & branded - forever an alien - worthless race.

(b) Born under a Flag - whose symbol not Cross -

(c) You loved children:

"Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto  
me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"

In Berlin - of children persecuted like Jesus - persecuted

(d) You used to love to preach - by way of - They will  
not let you preach - Germany - For you are a Jew.

And they don't like Jews even if they turn Christians  
→ You remember how they persecuted - charged - enemies - (refugees)  
(e) They really don't know what to do with you - brother J!  
Can't stop your goodness -



You remember how they persecuted -  
Charged - Enemies of Empire - Most wicked  
Practiced every abomination  
Violating every moral law - unknown for  
Killing children - drinking blood - tearing asunder  
Chamfer, incestuous crimes

Julian - "sect of fanatics, contemptible to men,  
"Empire had been reduced to brink of destruction"  
"Salutary Violence against such a mad patient"  
Deprived them of all honors -  
Forbidden to hold office - to teach - Employment  
in State, Army, Province

You - followers, brother J. - did same -  
To-day - we are accused - conspiring -  
You destroyed Rome!  
We ruined Germany!  
Same weapons against us!  
How little the world has changed! brother J.

(8) They really don't know - Cant priso-Quatuor



Rather - ~~Roman~~ offspring of some Prussian corporal who lost  
Potsdam - Belshazzers -

(b) Your teaching also, don't rebuke. World hails you as  
weak, gentle teacher - Love, Forgiveness, Peace -  
But they - adore the Iron Fist -  
Despise white-livered, traitorous pacifists  
They love to hate.  
They want a God who can thunder - quake  
you don't fit into this Valhalla -  
your mother - Mary - not a Teutonic Valkyrie

(g) In Berlin - no heavenly host - Peace. You were a Pacifist  
In Palestine  
Here such doctrines -  
One - Carl von Ossietzky -  
Here they (saw) their people - providers for Jews.

(h) You warned men against abuse of power, Wealth  
"Against laying up treasures on earth"  
"A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom, Heaven"  
"Serve God & Mammon"  
You had a dream of perfect society -  
truth, mercy, purity, righteousness.  
"These were the blessed, you said - at the hour  
What has become of your dream - 19 c. later -  
Everywhere men worship Mammon - Rely on force -  
Despise the weak - Way was to



as in your day, whenever the poor rise up to demand justice<sup>4</sup>

(i) Your cross - as any - used for shameful things  
K. K. H. - Choix de Jers - litter ennemi & masses

whom you loved -

Bispey - intolerance -

(j) They have rejected you, brother J -  
for Christian world - you are an alien - a prophet  
not without honor - but what is more - a prophet  
honored, but not heeded to.

8. And what would Jesus say? Right, my brother!  
I know that my road has been long and hard - harder  
than the road I once travelled to Jerusalem - as hard as  
your road thru the world.  
Often has I had to drink vinegar mingled with gall - as  
you have, O brother, my people,

I know that not all who professed in my name  
obeyed my word - I know this - "not every one that  
says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom"

I dreamed of a quick regeneration - of a blest new  
world - I proclaimed my faith - I summoned world to  
repentance - I failed!

But have you, my brother, have you succeeded?  
Has your dream and vision, brother, of peace and unity  
come true?

Are you to-day all post-peace, just peace-loving?



Are they free - intolerance, hate, pride, envy.

" " " - Exploitation, from worship of Mammon, but 7 persons

Are .. unhappy as slaves of mankind or only

" " seeking the Kingdom?

9.) And what would the Jew say? (Right) brother Joshua!  
we, too, have not lived up to our Visions.

Perhaps the world's redemption has been delayed because  
neither Chr. nor Jew. has had the courage to confess  
failure - the courage to be honest - Church - Temples

Neither of our faiths has been purified -

Hard is our Road - and we are still at the beginning  
mine reaches from Abraham - Yours branched off 15 c.

Our work is still to be done - and we both need  
desires - who fear neither ridicule, contempt,  
torture or death - A passion - an exaltation - a con-  
secration -

10- You uttered some great & true things to those who chose  
"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not  
able to kill the soul"

You warned them

"Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake"

Our prophets - your prophetic forebears - נביאים וזוהר

"shall renew their strength - They shall mount up with wings  
as eagles - They shall run and not be weary  
" " walk " " " " " " " " " " " "



11- When are you going, this Chr. Eve - brother J? 16  
Not to hear the organ peals of <sup>mighty</sup> stately litany in <sup>stately</sup> ~~that~~ cathedrals  
Not to see <sup>the</sup> gorgeous robes of priestly functionaries -  
Not to smell incense, ~~at~~

I am going thru the byways, the world seeking out  
~~are sought by the eyes, & palpitating~~  
suffering folk - harvest folk - to come with me  
and help us build the Kingdom -

12. And so, am I - the Jew would say - in parting -  
O.K. p'd - Peace be unto with you -  
And unto you - Peace -





ABSTRACT OF ADDRESS DELIVERED BY RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE, ANSEL  
ROAD AND EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 19.

"THE JEW TO JESUS"

The Christmas Season brings home to thoughtful Christians and Jews alike the realization that both religions have failed to bring to pass the kind of a world they hoped to build. In the skies over Madrid, Spain today, the Heavenly Hosts are not chanting "Peace on Earth -- Good-will to Men" but airplanes are raining down bombs and flaming death upon men, women and children, and a city which boasts magnificent churches is being turned into shambles of slaughter. Some of the brothers engaged in that ghastly civil war proclaim that they are killing in order to save the religion of Christ. Was that the religion of Christ?

Rome, this year, celebrates the conquest and subjugation of Ethiopia in defiance of law, religion and morality - and Rome is the seat of the great religious organization which has through the centuries preached the exalted teachings of the Founder of Christianity.

In Berlin, on Christmas Eve, the bells will toll, and in numerous churches they will tell the beautiful story of the birth of a child of a Jewish father and Jewish mother who became the Redeemer of Mankind. But a Jewish child today born in Berlin, is marked and branded as alien, the offspring of a worthless race.

The Pacifism which Jesus taught is today treason in Germany. Carl von Ossietzky, who more than any mortal represented the true spirit of Christianity in Germany, was broken in a concentration camp. The Nazis do not want a meek and gentle Teacher who preaches love, peace and forgiveness. They want a God who can thunder, who can make their enemies quake and who can fit into their Valhalla.



Christianity had a dream of a perfect society ushered in by God for which men must prepare themselves by a life of meekness, mercy, purity and righteousness. The blessed were not those who laid up treasures on earth. The rich can hardly enter into the Kingdom of God. The faithful cannot serve God and Mannon. After nineteen centuries, what has become of that dream? Everywhere men are worshiping Mannon, relying on force, despising the meek, waging or preparing for wars of conquest and wherever the poor rise to demand justice, the powerful set about to destroy them.

Judaism, too, had a dream of a regenerated society - the dream of an Isaiah, ~~Isaiah~~ Micah and Jeremiah which Jesus shared. What has become of that dream in the modern world? Has Judaism succeeded? Are Jews today all God-fearing and peace-loving? Are they free of intolerance, pride and envy? Are they free of exploitation and the worship of Mannon? Are they unhappy over the wrongs of mankind or only over their own wrongs?

Perhaps the world's redemption has been so long delayed because neither Christianity nor Judaism has had the courage to confess failure. Their work is still to be done and they both need, desperately, disciples who will fear neither revilement, contempt nor death and for whom religion is a driving passion and exaltation, a consuming consecration. What they both need are some honest folk who will leave all that they have and go forth to build the Kingdom. Stately temples, magnificent cathedrals, gorgeous robes and majestic ~~and~~ rituals are not religion. When Paganism collapsed, its temples ~~and~~ and shrines were never more magnificent. We need saints and martyrs to make the dream of our faiths come true.



Sermon 466

THE JEW TO JESUS

An Imaginary Colloquy At The Time of The Christmas Season

By  
Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

On  
Sunday morning, December 20, 1936



"O Man of mine own people, I alone  
Among these alien ones can know thy face,  
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Burn in me, as I sit where they intone  
Thy praises -- those who, striving to make known  
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This moving sonnet of Florence Frank called "The Jew to Jesus" is not inappropriate for <sup>the</sup> this season of the year when the non-Jewish world begins the celebration of the nativity of its Founder. A Jew comes into this season of the year not without unmingled emotions for Jewish experience in the last 2,000 years has been inseparably intertwined with the story of Christianity. The Jew has lived much of the time in Christian lands and his history is the story of the attitude of the Christian world and his existence in his midst. To this poet, the thought which seems to be uppermost is the similarity in the fate which overtook the Founder of Christianity, Jesus, and the fate which over-took his race - the Jewish race.

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of hatred, of suffering and our "via dolorosa" has not yet ended. The whole race of Israel because of its vision became in the language of the prophet Isaiah the "man of sorrow" and whole generations of our people agonized upon the cross of persecution. Upon the head of the man who became the Master of the Christian world they placed a crown of thorns and upon his race the clown cap of humiliation and the yellow badge of shame. True it is that Israel has been the risen people of an immemorial crucifixion.

To us this season of the year suggests another similarity - the similarity of defeat. How tragically both Christianity and Judaism have failed to redeem the world, to regenerate mankind, to build the kind of a world we hoped to build.

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The Jew would remind Jesus that according to the sacred legend among his disciples and followers, the Heavenly Host on the night of his nativity sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will toward men". And the Jew would ask, now that nineteen centuries have rolled by and your followers have grown from a humble little company into tens and hundreds of millions, and have mastered the whole Western World, where is this peace on earth? where is the good-will among men?



You will have difficulty, the Jew would say to his brother Joshua - you will have great difficulty in walking across the face of Europe because of the number of graves and the rows upon rows of crosses of Christians, millions of them, who killed themselves in hate and fury in the last World War.

Are you on your way, perhaps, on Christmas Eve in 1936, to Madrid Spain, Brother Jesus? There will you find no Heavenly Hosts chanting the hymns of peace. From the skies there will be raining down flaming death, bombs to kill men, women and children. You will see an old Christian city with numerous magnificent churches turn to shambles, where brother Christian is slaying brother Christian and here they will invoke your name even as they drive bayonets into each other's bodies. Some will say they kill to save your religion. Is that your religion, Brother Joshua?

Or, perhaps you are on your way to Rome, this Christmas Eve, 1936 where there is the most magnificent church in Christendom, which is the seat of the head of ~~of~~ one of the greatest Christian churches? There you will find a people celebrating, this year, the consciousness, ruthless conquests of destruction of another Christian race, where one of your churches was established more than a century ago - Ethiopia - and they will celebrate this bloody conquest and the fact that they defied the whole world and won.

Man of peace and man of sorrows, are you on your way to Rome?

Or, perhaps, you are on your way to Berlin this Christmas Eve of 1936? There you will hear the bells tolling and in numerous churches you will hear your story told - the story of how you were



born in Bethelhem in Judea of a Jewish father and a Jewish mother and they will hail your birth and hail you as the leader of mankind who saved the world. They will chant paens of praise and hallelujah. But, Brother Joshua, if you were born today, in Berlin, instead of Bethelhem where so many churches exist, you would be a marked and a branded child, forever an alien among these people. You will be regarded as a member of a worthless race. You would be born under a flag which carried not the symbol of your cross, but a crooked cross - the swastika - which is the symbol of Aryan racial purity and superiority, the symbol of the impurity and degradation of the Semetic race of which you and I are children. Brother Joshua, you love children. You said many beautiful things about children: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven". But in Berlin, Brother Joshua, they do not suffer little children to come in joy to their rightful patrimony. Our Jewish children are shunned as lepers, segregated, isolated, humiliated.

You used to love to preach, Brother Jesus, in Jewish synagogs. You were welcomed. They will not let you preach in Christian-Germany today for you are a Jew. They don't like Jews even when they turn Christian.

You remember how your followers were persecuted, how your disciples and faithful ones met with the hatred and the contempt of the people, how they were charged, the early Christians, with being enemies of the early Empire, how they were charged with practicing every conceivable abomination and violation, every virtue in the name of God? Remember the charges which were made against



your followers, many of which were crucified at stake, that they killed children and drank their blood in rights of initiation, how they performed shameful incestuous orgies in performance of their religion? Do you remember Julian who charged them with being a sect of fanatics and how all Christians of the Empire were deprived of all their professions. They were forbidden to hold office, to teach. They were forbidden employment in State, Army, Provinces. And, Brother Joshua, your followers, centuries later, said the self-same things and did self-same acts against your people.

And, today, your race is being accused, as your followers were, as conspirators against the state. You destroyed Rome, they said. We ruined Germany they say and the same measures are being enacted against our people today as were enacted against your followers centuries ago. How little the world has changed, Brother Joshua, in all these centuries!

In 1936, Brother Jesus, they really don't know what to do with the Jews. They can't forego your greatness. The world has acclaimed you. You have been so much a part of the history of the Western world and yet they would rather that you were born in Pottsdam than in Bethlehem. They would rather have had it that you were born the offspring of some Prussian corporal than of a Jew in Gallilee. They don't know what to do with your teaching, Brother Joshua. The world has hailed you as a gentle Teacher who loved peace and forgiveness. Yet in



Berlin today and in many other countries of the world these are not the virtues extolled. They adore the iron fist. It is force they love. They despise the pacifist. They love to hate. They want a God who can thunder and make their enemies quake. Somehow, Brother Joshua, you don't fit into their Valhalla. No, in Berlin, on Christmas 1936, you will hear no Heavenly Hosts preaching "Peace on Earth!" You are a pacifist. In Palestine, in the ancient days, they did not persecute you because you were a pacifist. But in Germany, you would be sent to the concentration camp and the iron heel would be dug into your face.

There was a humble and gentle disciple who lived in Germany by the name of Carl von Ossietzky, one of the true faithful ones. And they took him and placed him into the torture chambers of one of their concentration camps and kept him there until he was worn down to the brink of death, a broken frame and they left him to spend the rest of his life on the bed of suffering, facing death.

But that is how they treat pacifists in this day. They want war. They starve their people so as to have more provender for their guns.

They have rejected the Jews - men of peace.

Do you remember how you warned people against the abuses and dangers of wealth, against laying up treasures upon earth; how you warned people that you cannot serve God and at the same time and how you told them how a rich man shall hardly enter in the Kingdom of God?

You had a dream, we had a dream of a perfect society that will be ushered in by God, men preparing themselves by meekness, and righteousness and purity and you said "These people were the blessed



ones. And you said, Blessed are the poor - not the strong, not the mighty, not the rulers of the earth - but these. What has become of this dream nineteen centuries later? Everywhere they are worshipping Mannon, everywhere they are relying on force. Everywhere they despise the weak. Everywhere they wage war to conquer and to possess. Whenever the poor rise to demand justice - the rich and the mighty set about to destroy them.

They have rejected you, Brother Joshua, in the Christian world. You are an alien, a prophet not without honor but what is worse, a prophet honored but not listened to.

Now, in this colloquy, on the road this Christmas Eve, 1936, what would Jesus answer? What would he say? He would say, you are right, Brother. I know that thy road has been long and hard, harder by far than the road I once traveled to Golgotha, as hard as the road which you have traveled through these long weary centuries. Often have I had to drink the vinegar mingled with gall as you have, oh Brother Joshua. I know that <sup>not</sup> all who prophesied in my name obeyed my word. I know that "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom."

I had a dream of a world swiftly regenerated, of a blessed new world. I proclaimed that faith. I summoned men to regenerate in order to re-enter my wonderful new kingdom of God. I failed. But have you, my Brother, have you succeeded? You, too, had a dream, the dream we shared - the dream of Isaiah<sup>b</sup>, Jeremiah and Micah, of great Teachers, of those whose words I read in the synagogue - the dream of the "coming day when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, when men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their



~~and their~~ spears into pruning-hooks." But what of your dream, O Brother of my people? Are the Jews today all God-fearing, all peace-loving. Are they free from intolerance and hate and pride? Are they free from exploitation and the worship of Mannon? Are they unhappy because of the wrongs of manking or because of their wrongs? Are they all seeking the Kingdom?

And what would the Jew answer? You are right, my brother Joshua. We too have not lived up to our vision. And perhaps the world's redemption has so far been retarded because neither your followers nor my people have had the courage to confess their failures, the courage to be honest with themselves. Neither Christianity nor Judaism has been easy. Hard has been the road for both of us. My road begins 3500 years ago with Abraham and your road branched off fifteen centuries later. But both our roads are only at the beginning. Our work in the world is still to be done and what we both need, Brother Joshua, is some new and faithful disciples, men who will be afraid neither of hate, nor misunderstanding, nor persecution, nor death, nor torture, men to whom faith will be an exaltation, a consecration, a rising consuming passion. With such disciples our dream would conquer the world.

You uttered some great truths to your few followers in Judea. Those few you chose to follow you "feared not them which killed the body, but are not able to kill the soul" and you warned them "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." And our prophets and your prophetic forbears likewise admonished the faithful Jews "Those that put all trust in God will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be



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be weary. "They shall walk and not be faint". That kind of followers we need, Brother Joshua, to make our dream come true.

Where are you going, then, on this Christmas Eve, 1936, Brother Joshua? And the answer would be - I am not going to magnificent cathedrals to listen to the pealing of the organ, to see the splendid robes of priestly functionaries. I am not going to smell incense. I am going through the byways of the world, even as once I walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee seeking a few simple folk, fine honest men to help me build a Kingdom.

So am I, the Jew would say. I, too, am seeking such brothers. Shalom - Peace be Unto you! And unto you, Brother.





An Imaginary Colloquy at the Time of the Christmas Season

Sermon ~~at~~ The Temple, December 20, 1936

O Man of mine own people, I alone  
Among these alien ones can know thy face,  
I who have felt the kinship of thy race  
Burn in me, as I sit where they intone  
Thy praises ~~to~~ those who, striving to make known  
A God for sacrifice, have missed the grace  
Of thy sweet human meaning in its place,  
Thou who art of our blood-bond and our own."

"Are we not sharers of thy passion? Yea,  
In spirit-anguish closely by thy side  
We have drained the bitter cup, and, tortured, felt  
With thee the bruising of each heavy welt.  
Every land is our Gethsemane.  
A thousand times have we been crucified."

This moving sonnet <sup>by</sup> Florence Frank called "The Jew to Jesus"  
is not inappropriate for <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ season of the year when the non-Jewish  
world begins the celebration of the nativity of its Founder. A Jew  
comes into this season ~~with~~ with ~~mingled~~ mingled emotions, for  
Jewish experience in the last 2,000 years has been inseparably inter-  
twined with the story of Christianity. The Jew has lived much of the  
time in Christian lands and his history is the story of the attitude  
of the Christian world <sup>toward</sup> and his existence in <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~ midst. To this poet,  
the thought which seems to be uppermost is the similarity in the fate  
which overtook the <sup>founder</sup> founder of Christianity, Jesus, and the fate which  
overtook his race - the Jewish race.

"Are we not sharers of thy passion? Yea,  
In spirit-anguish closely by thy side  
We have drained the bitter cup, and, tortured, felt  
With thee the bruising of each heavy welt.  
Every land is our Gethsemane.  
A thousand times have we been crucified."

And <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~, of course, is too too tragically true. Our

people ~~have~~ have ~~also~~ been forced to take the  
"via dolorosa", the sorrowful road of persecution, of misunderstanding,



"via dolorosa"

of hatred, of suffering, and our ~~"via dolorosa"~~ has not yet ended. The whole race of Israel, because of its vision, became in the language of the prophet Isaiah the "man of sorrow" and whole generations of our people agonized upon the cross of persecution. Upon the head of the man who became the Master of the Christian world they placed a crown of thorns, and upon his race the clown cap of humiliation and the yellow badge of shame. True it is that Israel has been the risen people of an immemorial crucifixion.

To us this season ~~of the year~~ suggests another similarity <sup>the</sup> similarity of defeat <sup>how</sup> tragically both Christianity and Judaism have failed to redeem the world, to regenerate mankind, to build the kind of a world we hoped to build.

If a Jew were to meet Jesus on <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ Christmas Eve of 1936, he would greet him, of course, with the old Jewish greeting: "~~Shalom~~, Shalom Alechem" - "Peace be unto you!" the only greeting that Jesus knew, the ancient greeting of ancient Israel. And soon ~~the~~ <sup>both</sup> would ~~be~~ be startled to realize how strange that greeting sounded in the world of 1936.

The Jew would remind Jesus that according to the ~~the~~ <sup>sacred</sup> legend among his disciples and followers, the Heavenly Host on the night of his nativity sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will toward men". And the Jew would ask, "now that nineteen centuries have rolled by and your followers have grown from a humble little company into tens and hundreds of millions, and have mastered the ~~the~~ Western World, where is this peace on earth? Where is the good-will among men?"



Jesus (or

The Jew would say to his brother Joshua, you will have great difficulty in walking across the face of Europe because of the number of graves and the rows of crosses of Christians, millions of them who killed each other in hate and fury in the last World War." And then he would ask:

"Brother Jesus, are you on your way, perhaps, this Christmas Eve, to Madrid, Spain? There you will find no Heavenly Hosts chanting the hymns of peace. From the skies ~~flaming death~~ flaming death raining down, bombs to kill men, women and children. You will see an old Christian city with magnificent churches turned to shambles, where brother Christian is slaying brother Christian, and here they will invoke your name even as they drive bayonets into each other's bodies. Some say they kill to save your religion. Is that your religion, Brother Joshua?

"Or perhaps you are on your way to Rome this Christmas Eve, where there is the most magnificent church in Christendom, and the seat of one of the greatest Christian communions? You will find a people celebrating not Christmas but the conscious, ruthless conquest and destruction of another Christian race, and they will celebrate this bloody conquest of Ethiopia and the fact that they defied the whole world and won.

"Man of peace and man of sorrows, are you on your way to Rome?

"Or perhaps you are on your way to Berlin, this Christmas Eve? There you will hear the bells tolling and in numerous churches you will hear your story told the story of how you were born in Bethlehem in Judea of a Jewish father and a Jewish mother. They will hail your birth and hail you as the leader of mankind who saved the world. They will chant praise and hallelujahs. But Brother Joshua, if you were born today in Berlin, you would be a marked and branded child, forever an alien among these people. You would be regarded as a member of a worthless race. You would be born under a flag which carried not the symbol of your cross, but a crooked cross, the swastika, which is the symbol of Aryan racial purity and superiority, the symbol of the impurity and degradation of the Semitic race of which you and I are children. Brother Joshua, you loved children. You said many beautiful things about children: Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the



Kingdom of Heaven." But in Berlin, Brother Joshua, they do not suffer little children to come in joy to their rightful patrimony. Our Jewish children are shunned as lepers, segregated, isolated, humiliated.

✓ You used to love to preach, Brother Jesus, in the synagogues. You were welcomed. Christian Germany will not let you preach in church or synagogue, for you are a Jew. They do not like Jews, even when they turn Christian.

✓ Do you recall how your followers were persecuted, how your disciples and faithful ones met with the hatred and contempt of the people, how they were charged, the early Christians, with being enemies of the ~~people~~ <sup>Roman</sup> early Empire, how they were charged with practicing every conceivable abomination and violation, every vice, in the name of God? Remember the charges which were made against your followers, some of whom were crucified at the stake, that they killed children ~~and drank~~ and drank their blood in rites of initiation, that they performed shameful orgies in performance of their religion? Do you remember Julian, who charged your followers with being a sect of fanatics, and how all Christians of the Empire were deprived of their professions? They were forbidden to hold office, to teach; they were forbidden employment in state, army, or province. Brother Joshua, your followers, centuries later, say the self-same things and lay the self-same restrictions against your people. Today your race is being accused, as your followers were, as conspirators against the state. You destroyed Rome, they said. We ruined Germany, they say, and the same measures are being enacted against our people as were enacted against your followers centuries ago. How little the world has changed, Brother Joshua, in all these centuries!

✓ In 1936, Brother Jesus, they really do not know what to do with the Jews. They cannot ~~forget~~ <sup>forget</sup> your greatness. The world has acclaimed you. You have been so much a part of the history of the Western world, and yet they would rather that you had been born at Potsdam. They would rather have had it that you were born the offspring of some Prussian corporal than of a Jew in Galilee.

✓ They do not know what to do with your teaching, Brother Joshua. The world has hailed you as a gentle teacher who loved peace and forgiveness. Yet in Berlin to



day and in many other countries of the world these are not the virtues extolled. They adore the iron fist. It is force they love. They despise the pacifist. They love to hate. They want a God who can thunder and make their enemies quake. Somehow, Brother Joshua, you do not fit into their Valhalla. No, in Berlin, on Christmas 1936, you will hear no Heavenly Hosts preaching "Peace on Earth!" You were a pacifist. In Palestine, in the ancient days, they did not persecute you because you were a pacifist. But in Germany you would be sent to the ~~concentration~~ <sup>concentration</sup> camp, and the iron heel would be dug into your face. There was a humble and gentle disciple who lived in Germany, Carl van Ossietzky, one of the true faithful ones. They took him and placed him <sup>in a</sup> ~~into the~~ torture chamber camps and kept him there until he was worn to the brink of death, a broken frame, and <sup>then</sup> they left him to spend the rest of his life on <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ bed of suffering. That is how they treat pacifists. They want war. They starve their people so as to have provender for their guns. They have rejected the Jews - men of peace.

✓ Do you remember how you warned people against the abuses and dangers of wealth, against laying up treasures upon earth; how you warned people that you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time and how you told them that a rich man shall hardly enter in the Kingdom of God?

✓ You had a dream, we had a dream, of a perfect society that <sup>would</sup> ~~will~~ be ushered in by God, men preparing themselves by meekness and righteousness and purity, and you said, "These people were the blessed ones." And you said, "Blessed are the poor" - not the strong, not the mighty, not the rulers of the earth, but these. What has become of this dream nineteen centuries later? Everywhere they are worshipping Mammon, everywhere they are worshipping Mars. Everywhere they despise the weak. Everywhere they wage war to conquer and to possess. Whenever the poor rise to demand justice, the rich and the mighty set about destroying them.

✓ They have rejected you, Brother Joshua, in the Christian world. You are an alien, a prophet not without honor but what is worse, a prophet honored but not listened to. ✓

Now, in this colloquy, on the road this Christmas Eve, 1936, what would



Jesus answer? What would he say? He would say, "you are right, Brother. I know that thy road through these long, weary centuries has been long and hard, harder by far than the road I once traveled to Golgotha. Often have I had to drink the vinegar mingled with gall as you have. Oh, my Brother, I know that not all who prophesied in my name obeyed my word. I know that "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom."

"I had a dream of a world swiftly regenerated, of a blessed new world. I proclaimed that faith. I summoned men to regenerate in order to re-enter my wonderful new Kingdom of God. I failed. But have you, my Brother, succeeded? You too had a dream, the dream we shared, the dream of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah, of great teachers, of those words I read in the synagogue; the dream of the "coming day when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God", when "men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their





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~~What~~ appears into pruning-hooks." ~~What~~ What of your dream, O Brother of my people? Are the Jews today all God-fearing, all peace-loving? Are they free from intolerance and hate and pride? Are they free from exploitation and the worship of ~~mammon~~ <sup>mammon</sup>? Are they unhappy because of the wrongs of mankind or because of their wrongs? Are they ~~are~~ seeking the Kingdom?"

And what would the Jew answer? "You are right, ~~my~~ brother Joshua. We too have not lived up to our vision. ~~And~~ Perhaps the world's redemption has ~~so far~~ been retarded <sup>so far</sup> because neither your followers nor my people have had the courage to confess their failures, the courage to be honest with themselves. Neither Christianity nor Judaism has been easy. Hard has been the road for both of us. ~~Our road begins 3500 years ago with Abraham and your road branched off fifteen centuries later.~~ But both our roads are only at the beginning. Our work in the world is still to be done and what we both need, Brother Joshua, ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> new and faithful disciples, men who will be afraid neither of hate, nor misunderstanding, nor persecution, nor death, nor torture, men to whom faith will be an exaltation, a consecration, a rising consuming passion. With such disciples our dream would conquer the world.

"You uttered some great truths to your few followers in Judea. Those few you chose to follow you 'feared not them which killed the body, but are not able to kill the soul' and you warned them, 'Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.'" ~~And~~ Our prophets and your prophetic forbears likewise admonished the faithful, ~~Those~~ "Those that put all trust in God will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be



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be weary. They shall walk and not ~~be~~ faint. That ~~kind~~<sup>breed</sup> of followers we need, Brother Joshua, to make our dream come true.

"Where are you going, then, on this Christmas Eve, ~~land~~<sup>Jesus</sup>, Brother Joshua?" And the answer would be: "I am not going to ~~magnificent~~<sup>the</sup> cathedrals to listen to the pealing of the organ, to see the splendid robes of priestly functionaries. I am not going to smell incense. I am going through the byways of the world, even as once I walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee seeking a few simple folk, fine honest men to help me build a Kingdom."

"So am I," the Jew would say. "I, too, am seeking such brothers. ~~Aleichem~~<sup>Shalom</sup> Peace be unto you!" And unto you, Brother.



author: is  
last line AHS's  
word to congregation, or  
should it too be  
in quotes?