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The Nazarene, 1939.

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"THE NAZARENE"
Sholem Asch's Great New Work on the Life of Jesus of Nazareth



By
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At
The Temple

On
Sunday, November 5, 1939

Only quite recently have Jewish writers come to write about the life of Jesus of Nazareth as if he was truly one of their very own. Sympathetic and objective treatment of his life is rare. The reason for it, of course, is not hard to see. Mutual toleration among religions was generally wanting throughout the ages. Theologians were given more to apologetics and polemics and fierce defense of their own religions rather than to exploring the universal elements common to all of them. Bigotry and fanatism were never the monopoly of one faith. Religious disputations both written and oral are among the most hateful and venomous in the world. Again, the unending persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Christian Church and the Christian governments, and the humiliation at their hands naturally embittered the Jewish attitude towards Christianity and its Founder. Wherever they expressed themselves, and such opportunities, as you may well imagine, were few and far between, they treated the subject not very friendly.

In the category of such books speaking of the life of Jesus and of the theology of Christianity are such works as

The attitude of Christian scholars towards Judaism was of course with very few exceptions even worse. Scorn, mockery, hate were heaped on Judaism - not the Judaism of the Old Testament which was sacred to the Christians, also, but upon the Judaism of the Talmud, the Rabbinic Judaism, and on the Jews themselves.

With the growth of the intellectual and spiritual tolerance of the world, this mutual attitude perceptibly changed and thoughtful Christian scholars began to look at Judaism through unprejudiced eyes. They began to

study Jewish sources critically and to trace Christianity back to its Jewish origin. Many came to discover that this period was not at all the degenerate, particularistic, formalistic religion that was portrayed by old-time Christian apologists but that it was ^avery noble and spiritual faith which Jesus shared both in faith and practise.

And simultaneously there set in a change of attitude on the part of Jewish scholars towards Christianity. They made a more sympathetic study of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament began to be studied in a more dispassionate manner without bias and prejudice by Jewish scholars. The personality of Jesus began to intrigue more and more Jewish students and writers. Very important works appear in the last century, an excellent study by C. G. Montefiore, and more recently, that remarkably comprehensible work "Jesus of Nazareth" written in Hebrew by the well known scholar Dr. Joseph Klausner, now at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Of course, the life of Jesus began to appeal to Jewish novelists. Quite a number of gifted Jewish writers began to reinterpret the life of Jesus, the story of Jesus. There appeared a book by Joseph Jacobs called "As others Saw Him". About ten years ago there appeared from the pen of Emil Ludwig, "The Son of Man".

And now Sholem Asch has brought his great talents and his gifted pen to the same task of interpreting anew the life of this Palestinian Jew of the first century from whom there stemmed a spiritual movement which has swept through the world, and whom great sections of humanity to this day call Master. Sholem Asch is altogether equipped for this difficult task. He has both the scholarship and the imagination. He has deep human sympathy. He is free from all prejudice. Better perhaps than any Yiddish writer of our day, he

has been able to portray sympathetically non-Jewish characters in his books. He is at home in Jewish literature. He has made a careful study of Christian literature on his subject. Above all, Sholem Asch is a prophetically spiritual man - one whose eyes have become opened so that he is able to see far and deep, to see beneath the surface and into the heartbeat. Few writers in the world today have grasped the mystical in human experience - that borderland between Reality and that which is beyond as has Sholem Asch. He has shown in his book, "Salvation" which perhaps many of you have read, how spiritually aware he is of the enchanted world of pious mysticism, that world of religious fervor and ecstasy, that super-natural, super-rational world wherein men are exalted and transfigured and become "just a little lower than the angels". In his other book, "Sabbatai Zevi", the story of Jewish Messianism of the seventeenth century, he has revealed how much he was intrigued by the beauty and the tragedy of the Messianic idea itself.

His book, "The Nazarene" is in very truth "Salvation" all over again. The "Tehillim Yid" ^{is} -/the "Psalm Jew" of "Salvation" all over again, but this time he is no longer the Polish Tsadik, the "Wunder-Rebbi" of the nineteenth century, the head of a Chassidic group. This time he is the same "Psalm Jew", the same "Wunder-Rebbi". The same group of disciples follow him. This time he is "Wunder Rebbi" of Palestine of the first century and we see ^{him} within his prescribed setting.

"The Nazarene" is not a purely imaginative life of Jesus. Quite the contrary. Sholem Asch has been very faithful to the Gospel narrative. He takes amazingly few liberties with the recorded facts of the thought and life of Jesus. He did not select from the Gospel narrative whatever might suit any preconceived notion of his own about what Jesus was and what he ~~x~~ really did, and reject all else. Sholem Asch is extremely orthodox in this regard -

more so than many a Christian biographer of Jesus. He takes the story as he finds it, as it has been read and worshiped by the Christian world for hundreds and hundreds of years. He does not even attempt to rationalize the numerous miracles in that story. He writes in complete consonance with the spirit and the motive of the narrative of the New Testament and he writes a remarkably tender, illuminating commentary - a sort of "midrash" on the New Testament.

But his rich and creative imagination nevertheless has full play in probing deep into the meaning of the text, in revealing the motives behind the acts in this drama, acts which are frequently reported very succinctly, cryptically in the text, in reconstructing living characters and living environments in the historic background of the story, and in coordinating that distant part with the life of the present. And so, as you read that story already familiar to you from childhood, as you read the almost seven hundred pages, you never grow weary, so freshly is it retold and with such color, passion and with such penetration and such wisdom and such compassion. There is only one other book I know of in modern times that has succeeded with a similar task in a similar way. And that is Thomas Mann's great work, "Joseph and His Brethren".

Sholem Asch in this book, "The Nazarene" has succeeded in my judgment more than anyone before him, in making this story a completely Jewish story. Of course, the story is that and has always been that. Yet, while all the characters of the story, nearly all the characters of the story are Jews, the country, the locale, the theme of the story is a Jewish Messianic episode, all the stories through those historic years always seem distant and foreign. The very names of the actors of the story, because of the alien garb, did not seem like Jewish names at all - Jesus, Peter, John, James. And Sholem Asch does more than restore their original names - Yehudah, Shimon, Yochanan. He

restores the Hebrew names to the cities and towns of Palestine, thereby restoring the authentic Hebrew flavor, as it were. He restores the actors themselves, fully and completely, to their Jewish spiritual home. He puts them into a Jewish Palestine, a Jewish synagogue. He gives them a Jewish speech, a Jewish dress. He gives them a Jewish background and he gives them a Jewish way of life and a Jewish loyalty. And when you read the story as retold by Sholem Asch, you get the feeling that you are not deal with so to speak the Scotch Priests, or Italian Catholics or Nordic Evangelists who somehow strangely found themselves lost in Judæa or Galilee, but that they are of the race of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who become the actors in a great spiritual drama built on a Jewish mystical theme and intended not for the outside nations as much as for Israel itself.

Thus, in the "Nazarene" of Sholem Asch, Jesus is represented as a Jewish mystic in the authentic Jewish Messianic tradition. There were other such mystics before his time and since his time. He was the greatest of them.

In faith and in practise, Jesus was an orthodox Jew, an orthodox Jew of his day. He lived the life of an observant Jew. He did not denounce either the moral code or the ceremonial code of the Jews of his day. He obeyed the ritual. He accepted the Temple worship, the Temple sacrifice. Of course he subordinated the letter of the law to the spirit. Of course he taught men as did all the spiritual leaders teach men, to think not of laws themselves but of the principles, the heart of law - justice, love, humility. And he did not want law so rigorous as to defeat the very purpose and objective either of moral or ceremonial law. In some matters of law he was more lenient than some of the Pharisaic teachers of his day: the question of ritual purity - between clean and unclean; the question of healing on the Sabbath. On the other hand, there were other matters such as of divorces, and the putting of oaths on which he was less lenient than some of the Pharisaic leaders of

his day. And these differences brought him into conflict. In all basic ethical teachings he was in complete agreement with the Judaism of his day. When he was asked what was the first and most important commandment, he answered: "Thou shalt love Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy might". And when he was asked what was the second commandment, he would answer: "Love thy neighbor as thyself". The first he quoted from Deuteronomy and the second from Leviticus. Except as to one doctrine did he differ radically - that was on the question of non-resistance to evil, to the pacifist attitude. He advocated turning the other cheek to the smiter. "Resist not evil!" That was not the teaching and is not the teaching of Israel to this day. It was the teaching of Jesus as we shall see because he was persuaded that evil and all wrong would come to cease with the coming of the new order which God would usher in.

And so Sholem Asch reveals this Jewish patter of the teachings of Jesus. He makes them a part of, as they are a part of, a long Hebraic tradition and he matches purposely the words of Jesus with the words of other Rabbis from other Jewish sources, and by so doing, he completely domesticated the teachings of Jesus.

Sholem Asch renders a great service to his people and to the cause of truth in drawing a full length picture of what Jewish civilization built on the teachings of the prophets, sages and rabbis was, and contrasting it with a picture of what the pagan civilization of that day really was - a pagan civilization built upon polytheism, idolatry of that era.

Seizing upon the opportunity offered by the brief reference in the Gospels to Jesus' visit to the non-Jewish cities of Tyre and , Sholem Asch paints in unforgettable colors the surface brilliance of the

pagan civilization of the first century, and at the same time he reveals the inner core of corruption of that same civilization, a civilization, as he puts it, "filthy with the sweat of men and their tears", a civilization of slave markets, of the branded, of the blinded and the lashed, of a civilization which shows so little of compassion and so much of brutality and cruelty, of women and children broken as on the wheels of industry, of bloody arenas, torn by wild beasts, a civilization of licentiousness and religious . That was the civilization of the non-Jewish world of the first century of the Common Era.

Contrast with that the picture of Jewish life as it was lived at that time with its high regard for the sanctity of human life, even if he were a slave, with laws not to oppress the workers, the widow, the orphan or the stranger, with its provision for a day of rest for everyone, the laborer, the slave - even the cattle, with its high standards of Holiness, with its amazing concern with problems of the spirit, with questions of man's relationship to his God. When you see this amazing contrast between the pagan civilization of the first century and the Jewish civilization, you come to understand this bitter relentless war which Judaism raised against polytheism, why they were determined to build walls around them - not because they thought themselves better than other men, not out of exclusiveness. They didn't want their little world also engulfed by the muddy, putrid waters of the morally corrupt, though brilliant on the surface culture of the Hellenic civilization. They didn't want to become just another "Levantine nationality".

No abstract or digest of "The Nazarene" will do justice to the book or to the story. When you read it, you will find it it stirring descriptions of Jerusalem at the heights of its glory, of colorful population, of the Temple worship and the festival celebrations, of religious and political struggles of

that day, of plots against Rome, of party strife. You will find in that book full length portrayals of matchless artistry of men and women who have marched down the centuries through the pages of the New Testament and are still in the world today - of Herod and Pontius Pilate, of the High Priest , of Judas Escariot, of Rabbi , of Miriam of Migdal, and the other Miriam, the mother of Jesus. You will find in this book a startlingly new gospel, the gospel according to Judas Escariot, why Judas betrayed his Master, a man whom he loved more than anyone else in the world. You will find here an amazing psychological study,^{of} a visionary enthusiast who betrayed the one he loved most and destroyed himself. You will find in this book the story of Jesus as told also by the centurion of the Government of Fortress of Antonia, a typical Roman officer who arrested Jesus and directed his execution, who tortured him before his death - and this story is told through the mouth of a twentieth century aristocrat, a Polish anti-Semite into whom he has been reincarnated.

And again, the same story is told by another eye-witness, a disciple of this Rabbi who, too, is reincarnated in a Jewish youth who acts as the scribe or translator for the Polish aristocrat.

The character of the Nazarene itself as portrayed by Sholem Asch appears to me as perhaps the most accurate one that has yet been portrayed. Some have sought to represent him as a great teacher only, or as a wise sage. Some have sought to represent him as an ideal man, a model for men to follow. Others have sought to represent him as a social reformer, a radical, a socialist. Jesus had profound sympathy for the poor. He had great fear of what great wealth does to people but he never proposed a new economic system. Some represented him as a great revolutionist, a man who challenged the power of Rome, and yet it was Jesus, in answer to a question that was put to him ^{the} said: Give to Caesar things that are of Caesar, and give to God the things

of God." Some spoke of him as a prophet. Yet while there was much of the spirit of the prophet in him, there is much that is different. The prophet of Israel was interested in a continuing society and in an ethics which would help men to live in a world that had to be perfected through the labors of men. The prophets were not mystics. Jesus was a great mystic that was possessed of a rare personality, of irresistible charm and attractiveness. He was a "Wunder-Rebbi". He spoke as mystics frequently do, with authority, with profound inner fortitude, and the major theme of his mysticism revolved around the idea that the world was approaching the end, that a new age was come, and that the times prophesied by Daniel were already fulfilled. A new age was about to be ushered in by God. Men of his generation were on the threshold of a new era. At the time of Jesus and John the Baptist they announced: "Prepare ye, for God is at hand!" And this proclamation carried with it the appeal to repent, to do what was known as "Tshuvah", so as to be spared the birth-throes of the messianic saga. The wicked would be destroyed and the absolutely righteous only would be allowed to enter into this new world.

The reason why just at that time the idea became so dominant in the minds of the people is that their calendar seemed to point that they were on the threshold of the year 5000, and that year was to usher in a thousand years of perfection, of goodness in the world...The years 5000 to 6000 were to be the millennium, the thousand years of justice and righteousness and peace ~~in~~ which only the good and true would ^{be} permitted to enjoy....

Jesus did not regard himself as the Messiah. He looked on himself as just one of those missionaries who apprise men of the impending great day. There was a moment in his history when he became persuaded, or when his disciples persuaded him that he himself was the Messiah or that the Messiah was to come soon. You read in the Book of Daniel: "And behold, there came with the clouds of heaven, one like unto a son of man....And there

was given him dominion, and glory and a kingdom." But as soon as Jesus became persuaded that he was the Messiah, he also became persuaded that he must suffer and die in order to hasten the day of the millennium. And according to the Jewish tradition of his day, the messianic tradition which drew its inspiration from the Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah, which I read to you this morning, the Messiah was to suffer for the sins of mankind, to atone for them, so that they may be purged of them so that they be permitted to enter this new era. There was a tradition too that the Messiah ben Joseph must suffer and die in order to fulfil his messianic role, and when Jesus becomes persuaded that his mission of the Messiah means suffering and death, he decides to go to Jerusalem and consummate this drama. And he goes there just before the Festival of Passover.

And his death was not hard to find. He was welcomed in Jerusalem by his followers, whether many or few, as the Messiah. And the Messiah was to become the King of the Jews. The Messiah was to destroy the power of Rome. The Romans were fearful of Jewish agitators who preached rebellion. Jesus also angered the priests of Jerusalem because he had dared to purge the Temple of the money-changers. He angered the priests because he challenged their prestige and their authority. And he prophesied the destruction of the Temple even as Jeremiah had prophesied it. They felt that he had blasphemed. Either the priests persuaded Pontius Pilate to charge him with blasphemy and thus have him executed - a charge which it would have been very difficult to substantiate on the basis of Jewish law, or, as Sholem Asch suggests, and as have many before him, it was Pilate who demanded the arrest of Jesus and ordered Jesus' examination by the Jewish authorities for the government so as to have some warrant for putting this man to death, seeing that he had incited no one to political rebellion. Jesus was crucified.

Sholem Asch portrays these days in the life of Jesus, the Crucifixion, at the foot of the Cross, with consummate art and pathos that truly tears one's heart.

Those that believed that Jesus was the Messiah did not accept his death as final. They expected his return to usher in this new era. Some even thought they saw him alive again, and they propagated his faith. And soon there began a movement which has swept through the world for some nineteen hundred years. What that same Christianity has come to be, and how it developed, is another story. In many ways it branched away from being a Jewish messianic sect. It became a separate, and at times, even a competitive religion.

But "The Nazarene" was and remains a member of the Household of Israel. He recited the "Sh'ma". He accepted the concept of One God. He observed the law and he died confessing the name of God.

I think it was a beautiful thing that Sholem Asch has done in rediscovering for us and for Christians the true contours and the spiritual outline of this amazing, this amazingly attractive, this amazingly moving Jewish mystic Rabbi of the first century whose life was carved out of the spiritual life of man. Perhaps this rediscovery of Jesus of Nazareth will some day prove a bridge between Christians and Jews who have up to now found so much to disagree on and who may discover so much that they can forgive. One thing is certain - that in those lands where the Jew is persecuted today, Jesus and his teachings are also being persecuted...

It is a great service which Sholem Asch has done in bringing us anew this fresh and warming message of guilelessness, charity and justice of Jesus of Nazareth.

1. Only recently - as if he was one of their very own. Sympathetic or even ob-
 jective treatment of him was rare. Reason not far to seek. Neutral
toleration among rels. was generally wanting. Theologians were given more
 to apologetics and polemics than to exploring common universal elements
 common to all rels. Bigotry and fanaticism as the microscopy of no one
 faith exclusively. Rel. disputations, both oral and written, are among the most
 hateful and venomous in the world. Again - the unending persecutions of
 the Jews at the hands of the Chr. Church & Chr. ^{degrad. at their hands} ^{quite naturally} ^{found it safe to} ^{the J. att. held}
 towards Chr. & its founder, and wherever they could express ess in writing -
 and the opportunities, as you may well imagine, were few. Their treatment of JSK
 was unfriendly. In this category (1) 1st 13/12 (2) the primary (15c) 103 to 120
 and (3) Isaac Trakt - 15th c. 15th c. and (4) Fanissols (16th c. 15c) 103 to 120
 (5) Durand ~~14th c. 7c.~~ (14c. 7c.) - 15th c. 15th c. - the

attitude of Chr. scholars towards Jnd. was, with few rare & noble exceptions -
 even worse. Scorn, mockery, shame heaped upon Judaism, not J. A.T., but
 & Public J. - and upon Jews. neutral
with faith in 19c. attitude perceptibly changed. Chr. scholars
 began to look at J. thru unprejudiced eyes. Began to study J. sources
 critically. Traced back Chr. to its J. origins. Discovered in Phar-Jws.
 the founder of Jns - not at all the degenerate formalistic rel. from which
 J. came to rescue his people. But a very noble & of faith which J.
 shared in faith and practice - and almost simultaneously, from the
 J. side, there set in a more sympathetic study of Chr. of the life of
Jesus & his founder. The N.T. was studied in a dispassionate and
 sc. manner, without bias or prejudice, by J. scholars, and the personality
 & message of J. began to unravel more clearly to J. students & writers.

- C. G. Montefiore - "Synoptic Gospels" - impartial event
 (1) Joseph Jacobs - "As others saw him" - 45c - Reconstruct -
Joseph Klausner - J. & Naz - Hebrew - event -

In Novel Form
 (2) Emil Ludwig - Son of Man - 10 yrs ago.

2/ And now the 1st - lost his great talents & gifted pen to the task of reconstructing (2) among the life, this Pol. Jew who set in motion a sp. movement which swept thru the earth - whom 1/4 of humanity calls Moslems. -

1st is altogether egregious for the difficult task. (He has both scholarship & imagination. He has deep human sympathies. He is free from all prejudices. ^{He is} any Golden writer. He has been able to portray sympathetically & convincingly non-Jewish characters. He has studied He is at home in J. literature and has made a careful study of Chr. literature bearing on his subject. [Above all he is a profoundly spiritual man, who has opened the spirit, the spirit without his eyes have been opened to see far and deep. He can see beneath the surface and can look into the heart, things. Few writers in the world to-day have probed the mystical, ~~the~~ in human experience, the hidden - land heart depth and that which is beyond, as has 1st. (He has shown in "Tabatras" how sp. aware he is, that enchanted world of mystic pictures, of rel. fantasy, poem and ecstasy, of that supernatural world wherein men are exalted & transfigured, and become "just a little lower than the angels". And in his 123 vol. - the J. Mus., the 17c - he revealed how much ~~the~~ he was impressed by the beauty and the tragedy, the M. idea.

The "Nazarene" - is the 3rd p. to d. - all over again - this time no longer in the past, as 1st vol. p. 35 of the 19c. but of a Pol. "wunder-Rebhi", the 1c. - and with in it a presented historical setting.

Not a purely imaginative life of - (Faithful) to Gospel narrative. Takes analogies from literature with recorded life and acts of J. as found in synop. gospels - He is not eclectic - selecting ^{from that narrative} what might suit any pre-conceived notions, his own about who J. was or what he did - & respecting all else. He is far more orthodox in this regard than many a modern Christ. biographer, J. - He takes the story as he finds it - ^{- He does not even radically the unusually wonder Rebhi} and writes, & in complete conviction, with its spirit and

motion, a remarkably reverent, tender, illuminating and amplifying
commentary - a sort of poetic Exposition on N.T.

His ^{rich, creative} imagination has full play, however, in probing into the ^{which} meaning, the Text before him, the characters behind certain acts, ^{as} only very cryptically or briefly recorded, in reconstructing living characters & living environment, in fitting in the historical back-
ground, and in connecting that distant past with the ^{from childhood} life of the present, you read a story already very familiar to Jew-
than 700 pages, and you never grow weary - so freshly is it
retold - with rich color & passion, with rich ^{what} penetration, and
with ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{own} wisdom and compassion. There is ^{an} ~~only~~ ^{one} ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ
the book in modern times which has succeeded in this
noble task - Thomas Mann's - "Joseph and his Brothers"

2/ If he succeeded in making the story a completely Jewish story
of course, it is that, and always was that. And yet, while the characters, the N.T.
were mainly all Jews - and their country was Pal. - and their story was a J.
mess. story - still they it all seemed strange, distant, foreign. The very
names, the actors in this drama he. & their alien ^{forms} seemed
non-Jewish - Jesus, Peter, John, James. 11"2 does more than
restore their original Hebrew names - Yeshua - 11"10, 11"11,
and 27"11. and the Hebrew names for the twelve & others, Pal. which
figure in the narrative, thereby restoring their authentic Heb. flavor -
He restores these actors to their sp. home - a J. Galilee - a J.
Galilee - a J. Hebrew and dress - a J. broth-spirit - a J. way of
^{the Jew. & Jewish spirit, Galilee, Rome, Galilee etc, etc} life and a J. loyalty. They are not Scottish Irish - or Italian Catholics
or Arabic Evangelists - unaccountably lost, ^{in Jesus's story} amidst the Jews, 11. Pal.
They are Jews, & the same, Abraham, who became actors in a great
sp. drama lived as J. in Galilee ideas, and intended not for outside
markets but for Israel.

Then J. - a J. Mythe, is this ^{the} authentic J. mystical, mess tradition. Then
were others. He was the greatest.

I in faith & practice - an orthodox Jew, that day. He lived the life of a
~~shameless~~ ^{devout} observant Jew. He did not ~~challenge~~ ^{defiance} either the moral or ceremonial
law of Ph. Judaism. He was obedient to the ritual and advised men to do
^{accomplish Temple worship & sacrifices} the same. He subordinated of course the letter to the spirit, the law. He
taught men to think, the purpose, all laws, of the heart, not further
^{love} ~~love~~ ^{humanity}. On some matters, I saw he was more lenient

~~His teaching~~ ^{was} ~~more~~ ^{than} the prophets. ^{lawful & reasonable} ~~showed~~ ^{showed} the Pharisee teachers, his day, ritual purity, and
his day, ^{associated with} ~~his day~~ ^{with} ~~the Sabbath~~ ^{the Sabbath} ~~other~~ ^{other}, such as divorce and the
taking of an oath - he was more strict. These diff. brethren into
In all basic ethical teaching - complete agreement with Jrd.

his day - Phar. Prop - except his doctrine, con-
stantine to Exile - ^{removes the Jewish pattern of and Pharisee}
1. I'll very distinctly ~~weaves~~ ^{weaves} his teachings. He makes them part of
a long and a continuing Heb. tradition. - J's words
are matched with others, all in part from other J.
sources - they are, as it were, 'domesticated'.

4. I'll give a reader, his people and the law, with a great
service in drawing a full breadth picture of what J. civilization
meant upon teaching, & habits, sage & habits - upon ethical
matters - really was & in contrasting it - with pagan
civilization - meant upon poly. & idolatry - of that era.

Seizing upon the pharisees ^{found by the brief reference}
in scripture to J's visit to the city of Tyr & Sidon -
I'll - paint in unforgettable colors paganism - the myths
bullheaded & the mines corruption as few men
have ever painted it -

(5)
"filthy with the sweat, men and their Tears"

Slave markets - branded - blinded - lashed

Women & children - broken on the wheels of industry -

Cruelty - Brutality - Bloody arenas -

Franklinism and rel. prostitution

Sacrifices & children

Civilization devoid of Compassion

Contrast - Sanctity / human life

- not oppress - hidden oppression - stranger

- Rights / weak - even / slaves - Day & Rest -

- Purity of family life - Standards / Whites ^{convey with} Christ - God

No wonder ^{1) 13. The man on the wall} trust walks about evs - the our non-pagan

'Dissent' people to keep their life from being engulfed

by the muddy, putrid waters, the morally -

corrupt Hellenic civilization - "Exclusiveness"

just another "European naturalist"

5/ No abstract a digest will do further to book - and the story

you know - you will find in it striking descriptions

Jerusalem at the height, its story - of its colorful populations,

of the Temple machips and the festivals celebrations, of the rel.

pol. struggles, the day - of party strife - of plots against

Rome - you will see full of the pathos / realities

artistry of the men who have marked down

the centuries thus the pages, the N.T. and as well as -

of Herod and Antony Plato, of the blunt Emperors

of 2/1, 7/2 1/10 called Peter, of the blunt Emperors

Kabel - of the blunt Emperors called Wendy Margaret of the other 1/10 his mother

"And, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven,
One like unto a son of man,
And there was given him dominion, and glory and
a kingdom,



(6)

- Typh. Roman Officer -

Time!
Wire Page

AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
FOUNDER

- win

follow

Drumhathy -

no prepared to

"Fins unto Casa

7. "Times are afeels" too.
22/10

222 (Daniel)

17/11/19

way —
Stultification
No. 53 —
"to give his life a ransom
for many"

"to give his life a ransom
for many"

~~Then I came to the
- will not find it on - my Regis -
- first English and die -~~

900 to Jerusalem - just before P.O.D. - reluctantly
His death was not hard to find.

"King of Jews" - ^{Hail} Romans

Angered Priests - Purge of Temple - ^{money-changes}
^{chaffered} ^{merciless}

Whether priests persuaded ~~J. authorities~~ Pilate to have
him executed ^{after having found him guilty} for blasphemy - a very diff. charge to sub-
stantiate - or

whether, as R.L. or others suggest, Pilate demanded ^{his}
arrest at hand, J. authorities by then for the sent
so as to have warrant for putting him to death since
J. incited to no rebellion.

He was put to death - Government out-tearing at Jerusalem.

Those who believed that he was M. did not accept
his death as final - Expected his return -
to usher in new Age - Saw him alive again

Faith, they propagated - movement began - 19C.

What that Faith came to be - developed it -
a another story - In many ways it branched
away - and from being a J. Mess. sect. it
became a separate & finally a competition
religion -

But in Nazareth remains a member, the
Anointed, Jesus - He visited the Temple -
unleashed on Jer - observed the Law -
did confessing the name of God

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
From the

~~ABSTRACT OF~~ ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER AT THE TEMPLE
ANSEL ROAD AND EAST 105TH STREET ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 5, 1939 *on*

Sholem Asch's new work

"THE NAZARENE"

With the growth of intellectual and spiritual tolerance, there has come about a perceptible change in the attitude of thoughtful Jews and Christians to each other's faith. In place of apologetics and polemics, there has set in an earnest effort to explore the common basis of both faiths. Christian scholars are tracing back Christianity to its Jewish origins and are discovering more and more that the pharisaic Judaism of that day was not a legalistic and particularistic religion from which Jesus came to deliver his people, but a very noble and spiritual faith which Jesus shared in doctrine and practise. And simultaneously, Jewish scholars are studying the New Testament in a dispassionate and scientific manner without bias or prejudice. And the personality of Jesus and his immortal story are intriguing more and more Jewish students and writers.

The most recent effort by a remarkably gifted Jewish writer to interpret anew the life and teachings of Jesus has been made by Sholem Asch in his book, "The Nazarene". Sholem Asch is altogether equipped for the task. He has both scholarship and imagination and deep human sympathies. Above all he is a profoundly spiritual man who has eaten of the fruit of the spirit so that his eyes have been opened to see far and deep. Few writers in the world today have grasped the mystical in human experience and have explored the borderland between Reality and that which is beyond, as has Sholem Asch. He has shown in his earlier work, "Salvation", how spiritually aware he is of that enchanted world of mystic pietism, of religious fantasy, ^vperfor and ecstasy, of that super-rational world wherein men are exalted, transfigured, and become "just a little π lower than the angels". And in other works of his he has revealed how much stirred he is by the beauty,
  ~~the~~ pathos and ~~the~~ tragedy of the messiah motif. ^R"The Nazarene" is not a purely imaginative life of Jesus. Asch has been very faithful to the Gospel narrative.

He takes amazingly few liberties with the recorded text. He is, in fact, far more orthodox in this regard than many a modern Christian biographer of Jesus. He takes the story as he finds it, and writes, in complete consonance with its spirit, a remarkably reverent, tender and illuminating commentary - a sort of poetic "midrash".

The author's rich creative imagination has full play when he probes into the meaning of the text before him, into the motives of cryptically reported acts, ~~and~~ ^{and} when he reconstructs living characters and living environments. There is only one other book in modern times which has succeeded so well in a similar task, and that is Thomas Mann's "Joseph and His Brethren".

Sholem Asch has succeeded in making of the story a completely "Jewish" story, and a completely human story. He has restored the authentic Hebraic flavor to it all. The actors in this great spiritual drama move against a Jewish background. And the drama, itself, is built on historic Jewish mystical ideas. The Nazarene, himself, moves within an authentic Jewish messianic tradition. He is in all things an observant Jew who rejected neither the moral nor ceremonial law of pharisaic Judaism. In his basic ethical teachings he was in complete agreement with the pharisaic-prophetic Judaism of his day. In some matters of law, he was more lenient than the prevalently accepted norm; in others, he was more rigorous. At all times he subordinated, as did all great spiritual teachers of mankind, the letter to the spirit, and sought to reveal to men the inner intent and purpose of ^{all} law - justice, love, compassion and humanity.

Sholem Asch portrays the Nazarene, unlike many others who have seen in him ~~only~~ a great teacher, a wise sage, an ideal man, a social reformer, a revolutionist or a prophet, ~~He portrays him as~~ ^a ~~the~~ profound mystic, possessed of a rare and compelling spiritual personality, capable of attracting, influencing and ennobling men, who lived at ^a ~~the~~ time of cosmic crisis, when men were expecting the end of the old order, and the approach of a new age. He gave men an exalted code of spiritual conduct and exercise by which ^{to} ~~to~~ prepare themselves rapidly for the approaching

*(applied to the Messiah
ben Joseph)*

according to a Jewish tradition

Kingdom. Sholem Asch carries the story of the Messiah who must suffer and die
in order to fulfil his messianic role to the foot of the Cross.



"THE NAZARENE"

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"The Nazarene" is the "Tehillim Yid" all over again - this time no longer in the garb of a Polish "Tsadik" of the nineteenth century, but of a Palestine "Sunder-Rebbi" of the first century, and his group of Chassidim within a prescribed historic setting.

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crisis, when men were expecting the end of the old order, and the approach of a new age. He gave men an exalted code of spiritual conduct and exercise by which to prepare themselves rapidly for the approaching Kingdom. Sholem Asch carries the story of the messiah who, according to a Jewish tradition, applied to the Messiah ben Joseph, must suffer and die in order to fulfil his messianic role, to the foot of the Cross.



The age was on the threshold of that Kingdom which God was about to bring to pass now that the times prophesied by Daniel were fulfilled, and the reign of the Messiah was about to begin. The message of John the Baptist and of Jesus to the men of their generation was to repent, to "purge themselves of their sins so that they would be prepared for this Kingdom and be spared the "birth-throes" of the messianic saga. Death was not hard to find. The Romans sought it because the messiah was to be the King of the Jews who would overthrow the power of Rome. The Romans had crucified others who had been suspected of rebellion. The priestly hierarch was angered because Jesus had dared to purge the Temple of the money-changers and by prophecying the destruction of The Temple even as Jesus had done centuries before. Either the priests persuaded Pontius Pilate to have Jesus executed as they had found him guilty of blasphemy - a charge which it would have been very difficult to substantiate on the basis of Jewish law, or whether as Sholem Asch suggests, as he have many others before him, that the Roman authorities demanded his arrest and ordered Jesus' examination by the Jewish authorities for the government so as to have a warrant for putting him to death, seeing that he had incited no one to political rebellion, is of great interest to scholars and historians and has been a source of much bitterness and hate but is not of great moment as far as the real messianic drama is concerned. Jesus was crucified. Sholem Asch with profound pathos and consummate art betrays those last hours of the tragedy.

Those who believed that he was the messiah did not accept his death as final. They awaited his return to usher in the new age. They propagated their faith. And that faith has moved through the centuries the lives of countless men and nations.