

Some Jewish Views of Yahshua

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Many of our Jewish brethren react negatively to the name of Yahshua¹. They forget that the Nazarene faith² was birthed in Asia (Yisrael) not Europe. Because of the early influence from the West (Greece and Rome), the Jewishness of Yahshua was subordinated to the now popular “orthodox” Christian image of a “J-sus the Chr-st”. For over 2,000 years the implications of the Jewish Yahshua has been overlooked or shunned by both Jews and the modern Chr-stian. The average Chr-stian makes the mistake of reading the Hebrew Scriptures through the eyes of the Renewed Covenant, instead of reading the Renewed Covenant through the Hebraic eyes of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Judaism’s reluctance to accept the true Moshiach has been fortified by adverse symbolism and imagery from the church. Due to centuries of persecution by the “Church”, the “cross” has been turned into a symbol of hate, cruelty, prejudice, and murder for the Jews. So-called Christians spoke and acted in hatred in the name of Yahshua so it became difficult for the Jews to separate the acts of these imposters from the true teachings of the Messiah. A new image of Yahshua was birthed for the Jews, one that had no sanction either in the reality of Yahshua or in the teachings of the Master. This new image meant only pain and despair for the Jew; the new image was and is still being rejected by the Jewish population. It has reached the point where the name of Yahshua produces a conditioned reflex among the Jews because of its connection with centuries of persecution.

There is every reason for the Jews to lose their reluctance towards Yahshua. The true presence of Yahshua is a projection of Judaism, not a repudiation of it. Yahshua should not be held responsible for the unscriptural actions and words of those who claim to speak in His Name. Yahshua was proud to be a Jew, yet did not confine Himself to Judaism. He never practiced religious exclusivity for the Jew or the Gentile. He expressed His Jewishness within a universal context, and no other figure has had a greater impact on history than the Messiah Yahshua.

This article is a collection of quotes from various Jewish scholars, rabbis, and authors. It is our prayer that by reading the thoughts of their brethren, many Yehudim will come to know the true Moshiach, Yahshua.

- “No one before him and no one after him has bound our world with the fetters of law, justice, and of love, and brought it to the feet of the one Living Almighty Eternal One as effectively as did this personage who came to a Yisraelite house in Nazareth in Galilee- and this he did, not by the might of the sword, of fire and steel, like the lawgivers of other nations, but by the power of his mighty spirit and his teachings...I, as a Jew, whose very move is bound up with the Elohim of Yisrael, want to know nothing of any other historical wonder, of any other faith, save only the wonder and faith that radiate from the Elohim of Yisrael...Without the Nazarene faith, Jews would become a second tribe of Samaritans. The two are one...For Yahshua, the Messiah, to me is the outstanding personality of all time, all history, both as the Son of Elohim and as the Son of Man. Everything He ever said or did has value for us today, and that is something you can say of no other man, alive or dead. No other teacher-Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Mohammedan- is still a teacher whose teaching is such a guidepost for the world we live in...Yahshua has value for all of us, wherever we are. He became the Light of the world. Why shouldn't I, a Jew, be proud of it?” *Sholem Asch*.³ *One Destiny, 1945, Putnum, N.Y.*
- “Most portrayers of the life of Yahshua neglect to point out that Yahshua is in every characteristic a genuinely Jewish character, that a man like him could have grown only in the soil of Judaism, only there and nowhere else. Yahshua is a genuine Jewish personality, all his struggles and works, his bearing and feeling, his speech and silence, bear the stamp of Jewish style, the mark of Jewish idealism, of the best that was and is in Judaism, but which then existed only in Judaism. He was a Jew among Jews; from no other people could a man like him have come forth, and in no other people could a man like him work; no other people could he have found the apostles who believed in him.” *Leo Baeck*.⁴ *Harnack Vorlesungen uber das Wesen des Christentums, Breslau, 1902.*

¹ Yahshua is sometimes referred to as “ish ploni” –the unnamed one. The name Yeshu (May his name and memory deserved to perish) is also used by those not wishing to utter His Name.

² We are not Chr-stians, but Nazarenes. In this article we use the term “Chr-stian” to refer to those in the church, the Hellenized institution established by the Nicene Council. It is a religion about Yahshua, but not the religion of Yahshua.

³ Sholem Asch was born in Poland in 1880. He wrote his works in Yiddish.

⁴ Leo Baeck was a prominent Jewish theologian born in Germany. He became a rabbi 1897 and was the leader of German Jewry. He survived the camps and moved to England in 1946.

- ‘It is amazing how many Jews write about Jews and Judaism while ignoring the super-Jew and super-Judaism. I refer to Yahshua the Messiah and to the Nazarenes... What happened here? Is it only the Jew who is incapable of seeing and hearing all that others see and hear? Are the Jews stricken with blindness and deafness as regards to Yahshua the Messiah, so that to them alone he has nothing to say?... Understand, then, what we shall do: We shall bring him back to us. Messiah Yahshua is not dead for us-for us he has not yet lived: and he will not slay us, he will make us alive again. His profound and holy words, and all that is true and heart-appelling in the New Testament, must from now on be heard in our synagogues and taught to our children, in order that the wrong we had committed may be made good, the curse turned into a blessing, and that he at last may find us who has always been seeking after us.’ **Constantin Brunner⁵, *Der Judnhass und Die Juden, Berlin, 1918.***
- “We must overcome the superstitious fear which we harbor about the Messianic movement of Yahshua, and we must place this movement where it belongs, namely, in the spiritual history of Judaism. From my youth onwards have found in Yahshua my great brother. That the Nazarenes have regarded and does regard him as Elohim and Savior has always appeared to me a fact of high importance which, for his own sake and my own, I must endeavor to understand... My own fraternally open relationship to him has grown ever stronger and clearer, and today I see him more strongly and clearly than ever before. I am more than ever certain that a great place belongs to him in Israel’s history of faith and that this place cannot be described by any of the usual categories.” **Martin Buber⁶, *Two Types of Faith, 1952***
- “There is a more fundamental, a more dignified reason for the Jewish reclamation of Yahshua. A very simple, a very honest reason. And that is that Yahshua was a Jew-the best of Jews... Yahshua was not only a Jew. He was the apex and acme of Jewish teaching, which began with Moses and ran the entire evolving gamut of kings, teachers, prophets, and rabbis-David and Isaiah and Daniel and Hillel-until their pith and essence was crystallized in the greatest of all Jews... For a Jew, therefore, to forget that Yahshua was a Jew, and to deny him, is to forget and deny all the Jewish teaching that was before Yahshua: it is to reject the Jewish heritage, to betray what was best in Israel. For a Nazarene to forget that Yahshua was a Jew is to deny the Nazarene faith itself... that the time has come is indeed ripe, for the Jews to reclaim Yahshua. I am not alone... however, in arriving at that inevitable conclusion voiced throughout this book. For I know a number of Jews who believe as I do, who believe it is time that the Jews reclaimed Yahshua, and that it is desirable that they should do so. Some of them are hesitant to speak, lest their own people disclaim them... And one Jewish scholar interested in Jewish Sunday schools-if he were permitted by the elders he would include among his readings of “gems” of Jewish literature the Sermon on the Mount.” **John Cournos,⁷ *An Open Letter to Jews & Christians , N.Y. 1938***
- “The earliest Nazarenes knew neither awkwardness nor reticence over the fact that Yahshua was a Jew. Most, if not ALL, were Jews themselves. The Nazarene faith to them was not a faith apart from Judaism but an assertion of it. They never claimed to be the originators of a new religion; they were summoning men to Yahshua’s vision of moral excellence. They called for a return to the great simplicities of essential Judaism, for an awareness of the reality of Biblical prophecy, and for a response to the sense of Elohim that lay deep within man... And they affirmed the fundamentals of Judaism; the oneness of Elohim, the omniscience of Elohim, the justness of Elohim, and the reality of Elohim’s total command of the universe and history, now and forever. The purpose they saw in Yahshua was to awaken and strengthen this faith and not replace it... His coming , they believed, had been foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures... The Jews who carried this message of Yahshua carried it primarily to their own people. If, for example, there would appear in our time a figure of the same character and dimensions as Yahshua, would it be easy to find a church that would accept him?... The Apostles were Jewish... And the religious ideas in the New Testament are preponderantly and authentically Jewish in accent and outlook. Indeed, there is a consistent progression from the Torah, with its revelation of the word of Elohim, and its spiritual poetry, to the New Testament which is not based alone on the reality of the fulfillment, but on the nature of Elohim-His presence, His words, His acts on earth, and His direct teachings for man... Moreover, the early Nazarenes reiterated they were not trying to start a new religion but to

⁵ Constantin Brunner (1862-1937) was a German Jewish philosopher. He looked upon Yahshua as the representative of pure Judaism.

⁶ Martin Buber (1878-1965) was born in Vienna and educated in Germany. He was a professor of social philosophy at the Hebrew University from 1938-1951.

⁷ John Cournos (1881-1966) was born in Russia. In 1912 he moved to London and became a writer for periodicals. He regarded Yahshua as the leading Jewish prophet.

act on the revelations that Judaism had been awaiting for many centuries. In this sense, what they were espousing was a reformed or a Nazarene Judaism. In any event, a branch was breaking away and finding its deep and powerful root...And Nazarenes rest their faith on the reality of the Old Testament prophecy and its fulfillment in Yahshua. And they therefore do not question that fact that Yahshua chose to be born a Jew. Yet, it should also follow, in the same terms, that Nazarenes must not allow themselves to become separated from Yahshua's own religion? THERE IS A SINGLE WORD IN JOHN OR MARK OR MATTHEW OR LUKE IN WHICH YAHSHUA REPUDIATES JUDAISM. He practiced Judaism scrupulously. He gave constant expression to the religious and ethical requirements of Judaism. He observed all the Jewish Holy Days...Can a Nazarene, believing in revelation through Yahshua, accept him as Messiah but reject his own religion? And if it is contended that Yahshua did not believe in Judaism, why did he chose to be born a Jew? In the same sense, are not acts against Jews, solely because they are Jews, a direct repudiation of Yahshua?...Should not the Nazarene faith regard itself actually a kind of Nazarene Judaism- that is a religion accepting the mission of Yahshua as he himself defined it-namely, to simplify, purify, and rekindle the Hebrew faith into which he was born?...the essentials of the Old Testament that Yahshua himself held sacred cannot be set aside by Nazarenes. For the reforms of Yahshua were not directed to the elimination of the essentials but to the recognition of their full significance...The modern synagogue can live openly and fully with Yahshua...And the rediscovery of Yahshua can help Jews in the most vital respect of all; he can help them forgive their tormentors- including those who have done evil in his name...For twenty centuries two branches of the same religion have lived without harmony and understanding. Both have a common origin and can come together in a new attitude toward the figure of Yahshua, the Jew." *Norman Cousins⁸, The Jewishness of J-sus, American Judaism, Issue 10, no.1,1960,pgs.35-36*

- "As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene...No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Yahshua. His personality pulsates I every word. No myth is filled with such life." *Albert Einstein⁹, What Life Means to Albert Einstein, Saturday Evening Post, 26 Oct.1929.*
- "The Jew cannot help glorying in what Yahshua thus meant to the world; nor can he help hoping that Yahshua may yet serve as a bond of union between Jew and Nazarene, once his teaching is better known and the bane of misunderstanding at last is removed from his words and his ideal." *Hyman G. Enelow¹⁰, A Jewish View of J-sus, N.Y. 1920,pp.4-5,9,181*
- "There can be no doubt that the Crucified appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time...The he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, he appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus." *David Flusser,¹¹J-sus,p.122*
- "Yahshua from Nazareth" is the most famous name in the world. The Galilean teacher looms as large today as he did centuries ago...To some he is Divine, the veritable Son of Elohim, foretold by inspired prophecy, born miraculously, who lived and died in order to fulfill his Father's plan of salvation, and after death was resurrected from the tomb, and enthroned in heaven as part of the three-fold Elohim...The personality of Yahshua was such that his sonship of Elohim was magnificently evident. The Divine spirit seemed to manifest in his words and deeds...No Moslem ever sings, Mohammed , lover of my soul,' nor does any Jew say of Moses, the teacher, "I need thee every hour." *Solomon B. Freehof¹², Stormers of Heaven, N.Y. 1931, pp.205-210*

⁸ Norman Cousins (b.1912) is a graduate of Teachers College of Columbia University. He was the executive director and editor of the Saturday Review from 1940-1977.

⁹ Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was born Jewish and educated in Germany. He received the Nobel Prize for physics in 1922.He served as the professor of mathematics and theoretical science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University, 1933-1945.

¹⁰ Hyman Enelow received the Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College. He was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (1927-1929) and was the rabbi of Temple Emanuel in New York.

¹¹ David Flusser was born in Vienna and studied Judaistics and the New Testament at Prague University. He moved to Yisrael in 1939 and became one of the leading students of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1965 he was appointed head of the department of New Testament at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In his book, J-sus, Dr. Flusser accepts the account of the transfiguration as an authentic vision and seems to accept the resurrection. The Talmud teaches in Sanhedrin 11:1-2, "He who says that the resurrection of the dead is not derived from the Torah has no share in the world to come."

¹² Solomon Freehof (b.1892) was born in London. He received his rabbinical diploma and his Doctor of Divinity degree from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. From 1915-1924 he was the assistant professor of medieval liturgy and rabbinics at Hebrew Union College.

- “Yahshua of Nazareth was a product of Yisrael alone, a product of Judaism unaffected by any foreign admixture. There were many Gentiles in the Galilee but Yahshua was in no way influenced by them. In his days, Galilee was the stronghold of the most enthusiastic Jewish patriotism...Without any exception he is wholly explainable by the Scriptural and Pharisaic Judaism of his time...Yahshua was a Jew and a Jew he remained till his last breath. In all this Yahshua is the most Jewish of Jews...more Jewish even than Hillel...His disciples have raised the lighted torch of the Law of Yisrael...among the heathen of the four quarters of the world. No Jew can, therefore, overlook the value of Yahshua and his teachings from the point of view of universal history. This was a fact that neither Maimonides nor Yehudah ha-Levi ignored.” **Joseph G. Klausner¹³, J-sus of Nazareth, N.Y. 1925; The Messianic Ideal in Yisrael, 1955.**
- “No ethical system, no textbook on religion, are capable of exerting such a deep impression on us as that great personality of Yahshua, standing as none other, midway between heaven and earth, equally near to Elohim as to man. He was the ideal representative of the Essene brotherhood, no, he was the embodiment of brotherliness of all mankind...Yahshua, the most lowly of all men, the despised, beyond comparison, of the despised Jewish nation, has ascended the world’s throne to become the Great King of the whole earth.” **Koffmann Kohler¹⁴, Judaism at the World’s Parliament of Religions, Cincinnati, 1894, pp.118-120,122-123**
- “We certainly do not get in the Hebrew Bible any teacher speaking of Elohim and to Elohim as ‘Father, my Father, your Father’, and ‘our Father,’ like the Yahshua of Matthew...The sinners drew near to him-surely this is a new note, something we do not hear in the Talmud of its heroes. His teaching did not repel them. It did not palter with or make light of sin, but yet it gave comfort to the sinner. The virtues of repentance are gloriously praised in the rabbinical literature, but this direct search for, and appeal to, the sinner, are new and moving notes of high import and significance. The good shepherd who searches for the lost sheep, and reclaims it and rejoices over it, is a new figure, which as never ceased to play its great part in the moral and religious development of the world.” **Claude G. Montefiore¹⁵, The Synoptic Gospels and the Jewish Consciousness, 1904-5, The Old Testament and After ,pp.208-210**
- “A change of attitude must take place between the Jew and the Nazarenes...Mutual prejudice between Judaism and the Nazarenes must cease and Judaism must take the first step in this direction. The Nazarenes are bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh. The bearers of the Nazarene message were Jews, and they hailed from Judaism. The Nazarene faith was a Jewish movement. We oppose it on ideological grounds, but we cannot exclude it from Judaism. Judaism’s prejudice against the Nazarenes must end, and then Judaism will perceive the Nazarene’s true meaning and significance, namely, that it was sent by Elohim for the revival of Judaism, and that the Nazarenes truly fulfill Judaism’s mission, and that it is part and parcel of the salvation of Israel.” **Isaac Joseph Poysner¹⁶, The Kingdom of the Messiah.**
- “Neither Nazarene protest nor Jewish lamentation can annul the fact that Yahshua was a Jew, a Hebrew of Hebrews.” **Stephen S. Wise¹⁷, The Life and Teaching of J-sus the Jew”, Outlook, June 7, 191**“The figure of Yahshua, the Jew from Nazareth, looms large on the Israeli horizon, although not is being said about him openly and most Jews cautiously refrain from mentioning his name in public. Still h is very much in the mind of the Israeli Jew, more now than ever, and the awareness of his shadow in Israel is constantly growing...Being confronted with Yahshua in this way is a new experience to the Jew. In the Diaspora Yahshua looked alien to the Jew, an outsider, an interloper. But in Israel he is seen as the Jew from Nazareth, a native of this country, a Sabra, with claims to the land as strong as any. He cannot be brushed aside as a foreign influence...Can Yahshua the Jew be taken back to the fold where he belongs, can he be incorporated in the body of Judaism, as a genuine Israeli product?...Yahshua wanted to build out of Jewry a Temple of True Community...Firstly, the Jews are a spiritual nation with spiritual needs and aspirations...Secondly ,Israel is a new society which has been built on new foundations...Thirdly, Israel is ingathering her Tribes which need a common creed as a cementing factor...The Jewish religion seems to be at present to the large masses of Israeli

¹³ Joseph Klausner received his PH.D. degree from Heidelberg University in Germany. He was a professor of modern Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University, 1925-1949; professor of Jewish history of the Second Temple era, 1944-1949; and author of many books.

¹⁴ Koffmann Kohler (1843-1926) was educated in Germany and moved to America in 1869.He served in synagogues in Chicago, Detroit, and New York. In 1903 he became president of the Hebrew Union College.

¹⁵ Claude G. Montefiore (1858-1938) was one of the most scholarly theologians of Reform Judaism. He was educated at Oxford.

¹⁶ Isaac J. Poysner wrote in Yiddish and was published in Warsaw, Poland in 1925.Little is known concerning him.

¹⁷ Stephen S. Wise was an American Reform rabbi and a Zionist leader. He founded the Free Synagogue in New York in 1907 and served as its rabbi all his life. In 1922 he founded the Jewish Institute of Religion.

Jews uninspiring and uninspired. Could it be that Yahshua could give it a new lease of life? Could a new, Israeli stage of Jewish religion escape from the Ghetto wall made up of 613 bricks, and instead incorporate the personality and message of Yahshua, the Jew from Nazareth, as a major prophet for Israel, of course excluding all Christianized stylization of “J-sus the Christ?”” **Ferdynand Zweig,¹⁸ Israel: The Sword and the Harp ,N.J. 1969,pp.219-229**

- “The people Yisrael, bearers of the Torah: in the other case, the Peron of Messiah, one-man embodiment of Yisrael and the Torah...Even the miracles of Yahshua need not be denied by a believing Jew.” **Rabbi Herschel Matt, How Shall a Believing Jew View Chr-stianity?**

There is one Yahshua, the Jewish Yahshua, Who taught nothing He did not learn from the Torah and the Judaism of the Era of the Second Temple. The image of Yahshua from traditional Judaism is false as is the distorted image formed by the church, J-sus the Chr-st. The second and third descriptions stand as insurmountable obstacles to a real understanding between Jews and Nazarenes. If (and there is) there is a Messianic message in the Hebrew Scriptures, then it cannot be maintained that the Moshiach is for the “Gentiles only” as some are teaching¹⁹. The Good News was initially spread by Jews who believed that Yahshua was the promised Moshiach.

When the Nazarenes exhibits the true teachings and in their lives the Messiahship of Yahshua and His Mastership over their lives, then the word, and the Jews especially, will take notice. Just as we are now seeing a “Hebrew Roots wave” passing through the church, then we will truly see a “Yahshua wave” passing through Judaism. The Jewish people are our people; the Jewish Hope is our Hope; the Jewish destiny is our destiny. We follow Yahshua because we believe He is Yisrael’s Messiah and in Him Yisrael will fulfill their purpose.

Unfortunately, the determination to cut off the Jew from the knowledge of Yahshua has led traditional Judaism to adopt a severe attitude to the Jew who believes in the Messiah²⁰. A Jew does not stop being a Jew by believing in Messiah, nor does he abandon his Jewish heritage, but rather, by accepting the Jewish Messiah, he fully enters upon his heritage and truly glorifies the name “Jew” to the entire world.

“Vayomer elov, atah hu Hamoshiach.”

- “Are You the One Who is to come²¹, or shall we look for another?” **Mattithyahu 11:2**
- [7] YHWH also shall save the oholei Yehudah (tents of Yehudah) first, that the glory of the Bais Dovid and the glory of the inhabitants of Yerushalayim do not magnify themselves against Yehudah. [8] In Yom Hahu shall YHWH defend the inhabitants of Yerushalayim; and he that is feeble among them in Yom Hahu shall be like Dovid; and the Bais Dovid shall be like Elohim, like the Malach YHWH before them. [9] And it shall come to pass in Yom Hahu, that I will seek to destroy kol HaGoyim that attack Yerushalayim. [10] And I will pour upon the Bais Dovid, and upon the inhabitants of Yerushalayim, the Ruach (Spirit) of Chen (grace) and of Tachanunim (supplications for favor); and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced [DAKAR, "PIERCE THROUGH" CF. YESHAYAH 53:5; TARGUM HASHIVIM TEHILLIM 22:17], and they shall mourn for Him (Moshiach) as one mourneth for his yachid (only son), and shall grieve in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his bechor (firstborn). [11] In Yom Hahu shall there be a great mourning in Yerushalayim, as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. [12] And ha'aretz shall mourn, all mishpochot apart; the mishpachat Bais Dovid apart, and their wives apart; the mishpachat Bais Natan apart, and their wives apart; [Shmuel Bais 5:14] [13] The mishpachat Bais Levi apart, and their wives apart; the mishpachat Shimei apart, and their wives apart; [BAMIDBAR 3:17-18,21] **Zecharyah 12:7-13**

¹⁸ Ferdynand Zweig is a well-known English scholar. He served as Visiting Professor in Sociology and Labor Relations at the Hebrew and Tel Aviv Universities.

¹⁹ The dual covenant heresy was taught by Franz Rosenzweig and then passed on to his student Hans Joachim Schoeps. Rosenzweig’s mistake is that he gives to Yisrael a purely ethnic interpretation. He makes blood relationship the guarantee of Yisrael’s election. To him, to be born a Jew is to already be a son of Elohim.

²⁰ Judaism teaches that a Jew may be an atheist, and deny the divinity of the Torah and still be a Jew. But if they embrace the Messiah; he ceases to be a Jew.

²¹ The Hebrew is “haba” and is full of implications and connotations.