

# Rejoinder

## Hans Ruin's review of Risto Nurmela's *Sigmund Freud und sein Bekenntnis zum Judentum*

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**ABSTRACT** • As the author, I naturally cannot object to any criticism of my work in the review of it. Nevertheless, the review of my *Sigmund Freud und sein Bekenntnis zum Judentum* in „Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion contains some elements which cannot be considered scholarly criticism but simple accusations. Since these are not corroborated by any evidence such as quotations from my book or amount to *argumentum e silentio* I consider it justified to make two corrections, since the accusations do not deal with scholarly flaws in my study and cast a shadow on my moral integrity as regards my stance in questions concerning antisemitism.

PROFESSOR HANS RUIN's review of my book *Sigmund Freud und sein Bekenntnis zum Judentum* in 'Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion' in issue 35/1 urgently calls for some corrections. He writes: 'He [Nurmela] even suggests that Freud's way of speaking about how the Jews murdered Christ brought him close to the antisemites of his time, which is a gross misrepresentation of where he stood on this issue.' Firstly, I write that Freud ended up in a dangerous closeness to classical antisemitic thought, not the antisemites of his time! Secondly, I quote Freud in my book (p. 151): 'Over and over again they [the Jews] heard the reproach: you killed our God. *And this reproach is true*, if rightly interpreted. It says, in reference to the history of religion: you won't admit that you murdered God (the archetype of God, the *primaeval* Father and his reincarnations). Something should be added, namely: "It is true, we did the same thing, but we admitted it, and since then we have been purified." *Not all accusations with*

*which antisemitism pursues the descendants of the Jewish people are based on such good foundations'* (translated by Katherine Jones; my italics). To be sure, Freud wrote 'if rightly interpreted', but I think the only right answer to the question of whether the Jews killed Christ is No, with no possibility of being interpreted away. Also, Freud's interpretation is neither understandable nor convincing. In my book, I refer to the expressions above in italics, and I think I am justified in considering them close to classical antisemitic thought, but, to be sure, without blaming Freud for being an antisemite. It was simply thoughtless of him to write as he did.

Moreover, Ruin writes: 'The Christian roots of antisemitism are a central topic in modern critical Christian theology but are absent in Nurmela's presentation of the problem.' In fact, I do not offer any systematic presentation of the problem in my book. I comment on Freud's remarks on antisemitism and thereby make comments concerning antisemitism. Freud's remarks are completely interwoven with a



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perception of antisemitism as a Christian phenomenon and therefore the Christian roots of antisemitism are inevitably present in my notes. I also repeatedly point out expressions of antisemitism of Christian origin in the Old Testament scholar Ernst Sellin's work *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte* (1922). The accusation of overlooking the Christian roots of antisemitism, as such not only a scholarly reproach

but above all a moral accusation, which makes me appear as a scholar of Jewish studies who ignores the question of the Christian roots of antisemitism, is therefore wrong and represents in my opinion outright slander. ■

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