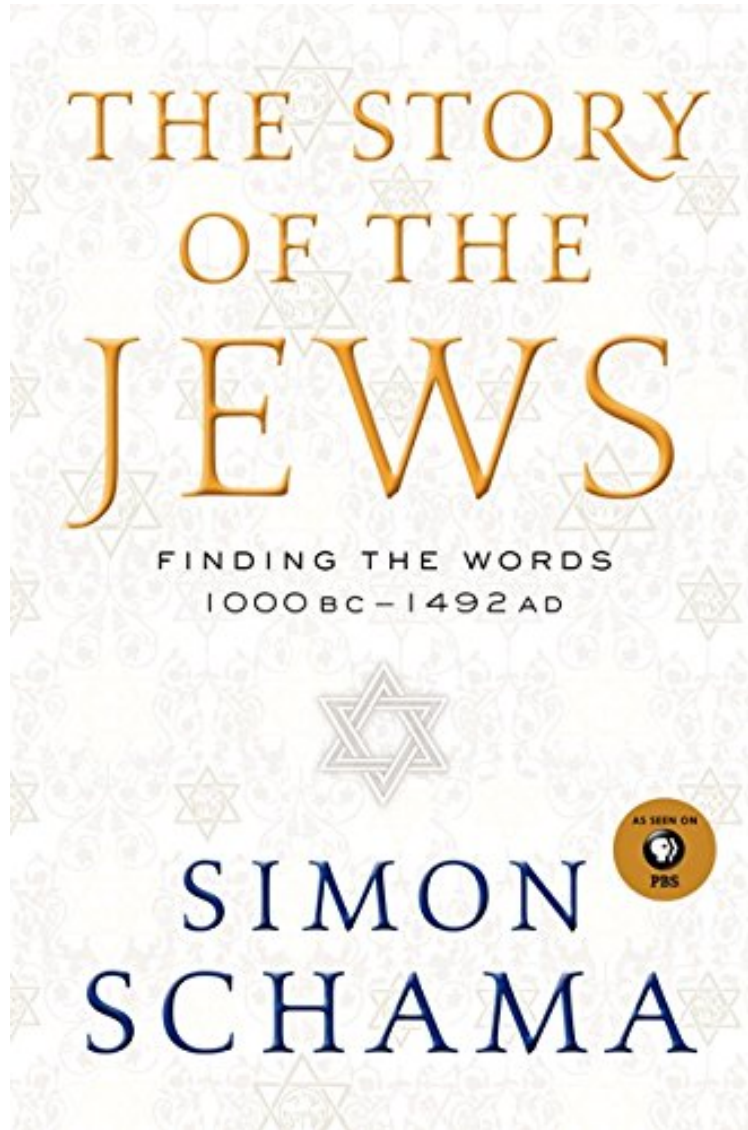


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## The Story of the Jews: Finding the Words 1000 BC - 1492 AD

*Simon Schama*

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In this magnificently illustrated cultural historythe tie-in to the PBS and BBC series The Story of the JewsSimon Schama details the story of the Jewish experience, tracing it across three millennia, from their beginnings as an ancient tribal people to the opening of the New World in 1492 to the modern day.It is a story like no other: an epic of endurance against destruction, of creativity in oppression, joy amidst grief, the affirmation of life against the steepest of odds.It spans the millennia and the continentsfrom India to Andalusia and from the bazaars of Cairo to the streets of Oxford. It takes you to unimagined places: to a Jewish kingdom in the mountains of southern Arabia; a Syrian synagogue glowing with radiant wall paintings; the palm groves of the Jewish dead in the Roman catacombs. And its voices ring loud and clear, from the severities and ecstasies of the Bible writers to the love poems of wine bibbers in a garden in Muslim Spain.In The Story of the Jews, the Talmud burns in the streets of Paris, massed gibbets hang over the streets of medieval London, a Majorcan illuminator redraws the world; candles are lit, chants are sung, mules are packed, ships loaded with spice and gems founder at sea.And a great story unfolds. Not as often imagined of a culture apart, but of a Jewish world immersed in and imprinted by the peoples among whom they have dwelled, from the Egyptians to the Greeks, from the Arabs to the Christians.Which makes the story of the Jews everyone's story, too.

From Booklist\*Starred \* Schama is a professor at Columbia University, an award-winning author of history and art books, and a writer and producer of acclaimed television documentaries. This is the first of a planned two-volume work, and it covers the development of Judaism and the Jewish people from their first stirring of a sense of a national identity up to the expulsion of Jews from Spain. Schama has written an unconventional but masterful and deeply felt history of his people, which seamlessly integrates themes of art, religion, and ethnicity as he illustrates how Jews both influenced and were influenced by the other people they lived among for more than 1,500 years. While Schama follows a roughly chronological approach, this is not a strictly narrative account. Rather, he focuses on particular topics to define the essence of a particular period, and he does so by examining literary and archaeological remnants that provide a human and often deeply moving touch. A letter from a Jewish mercenary in Egypt illustrates the paradox of a Jewish return to the land of their enslavement. The writings of a poet in eleventh-century Granada convey both the benefits and difficulties of Jewish life in a Muslim state. This beautifully written chronicle is a tie-in to an upcoming PBS series. --Jay Freeman Award-winning Columbia University historian Schama . . . brings to bear his gift for synthesizing mountains of information into a well-crafted, accessible narrative in this impressive volume that spans nearly 2,500 years and serves as a companion volume to a PBS series. (Publishers Weekly (starred review))A multifaceted story artfully woven by an expert historian. (Kirkus s (starred review))Schama has written an unconventional but masterful and deeply felt history of his people (Booklist (starred review))Mr. Schamas The Story of the Jews is exemplary popular history. Its engaged, literate, alert to recent scholarship and, at moments, winningly personal. (New York Times)In his brilliant new history of the Jews, the unconventional scholar somehow manages to be simultaneously sentimental and subversive, consensual and contrarian - and we readers are the beneficiaries. (Haaretz (English edition))Mr. Schamas history flashes by with entertaining velocity (Wall Street Journal)An energetic cascade of prose and erudition, rife with pointillist detail and witty colloquialisms (Chicago Tribune, Printers Row)Schama writes history from below, and from the middle and other unexpected angles, resurrecting the unrecorded and long-forgotten, and analyzing the social and cultural forces that shaped his subjects lives [he] has pulled it off with opinionated flair and literary grace. (New York Times Book )Stirring and fascinating (Los Angeles Times)Schama is a historian of prodigious and varied gifts. He can take a specific subject and drill deep; he can take a wide-angled view of many countries over long periods of time. He does both in this excellent first volume Revealing and moving. (San Francisco Chronicle)Reading Schama is like sitting across from the worlds most dazzling dinner party guest (Seattle Times)The story that Schama tells is wide-ranging, well documented, delightful, amusing, personal, and inspiring (New York of Books)From the Back CoverIn this magnificently illustrated cultural historythe tie-in to the pbs and bbc series The Story of the Jewssimon schama details the story of the jewish people, tracing their experience across three millennia, from their beginnings as an ancient tribal people to the opening of the new world in 1492It is a story like no other: an epic of endurance in the face of destruction, of creativity in the face of oppression, joy amidst grief, the affirmation of life despite the steepest of odds.It spans the millennia and the continentsfrom India to Andalusia and from the bazaars of Cairo to the streets of Oxford. It takes you to unimagined places: to a Jewish kingdom in the mountains of southern Arabia; a Syrian synagogue glowing with radiant wall paintings; the palm groves of the Jewish dead in the Roman catacombs. And its voices ring loud and clear, from the severities and ecstasies of the Bible writers to the love poems of wine bibbers in a garden in Muslim Spain.In The Story of the Jews, the Talmud burns in the streets of Paris, massed gibbets hang over the streets of medieval London, a Majorcan illuminator redraws the world; candles are lit, chants are sung, mules are packed, ships loaded with gems and spices

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