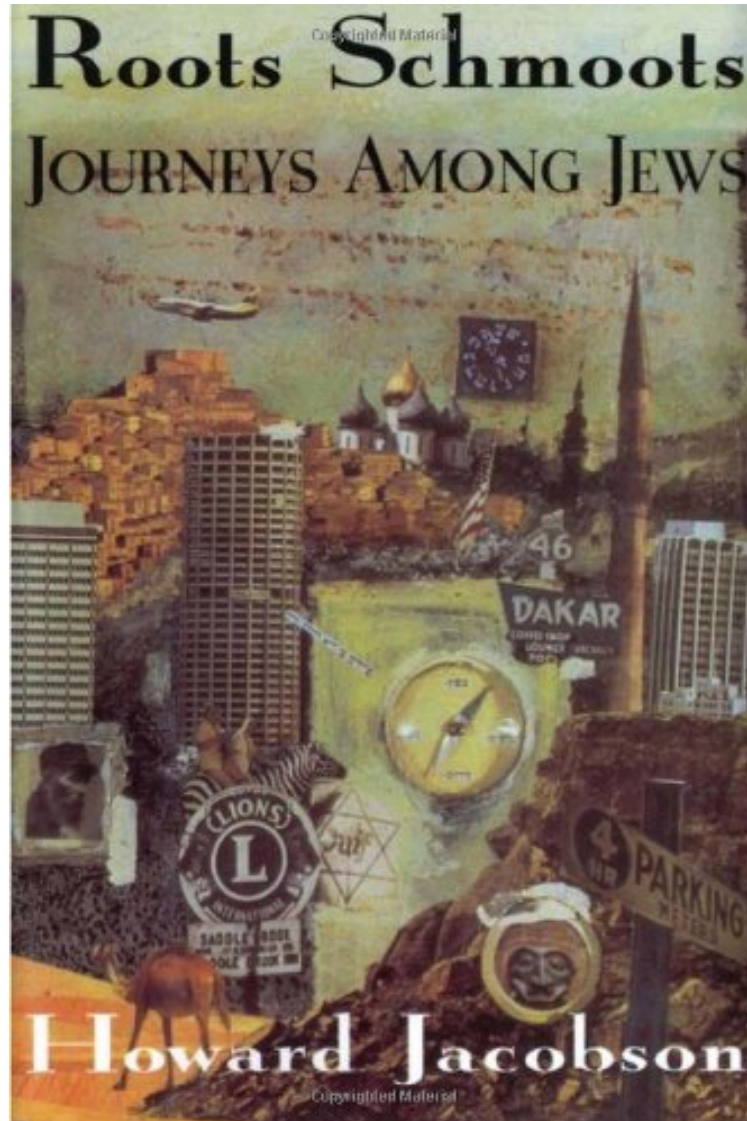


[DOWNLOAD] Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews

## Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews

Howard Jacobson

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**Howard Jacobson : Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly enjoyable Jewish travel storiesBy Harmon SpolanHoward Jacobson has written a very funny, sometimes poignant, and always insightful book about his travels to

various Jewish Communities in the US, Europe, and Israel. His wit is rapier sharp, and his commentaries are always right on the spot. I found myself laughing out loud, and annoying my wife by reading long passages to her, thereby spoiling her fun. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wanderings and wondering By Rosemary The book took the reader to interesting places and introduced interesting people. But there was a curious lack of "glue" to the narrative. The "why" of the endeavor always came to mind. 12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Enlightening By David Smith No hatred in this book, although plenty in the remarks of two of the on-line reviewers who are like bit part players in the book itself. Jacobson is erudite, fair, modest, compassionate and compelling. He doesn't pretend to be writing an academic investigation, more a personal journey, and he has the decency to admit that it's an inconclusive one. There is, of course, no point in spending time and money on a book like this if you lack learning and humour, of if you believe that on matters of religion and identity you already have all the answers.

Wherever there is a Jew there is a journey; for a Jew to go travelling in search of his Jewishness is therefore doubly Jewish. When fast-breaking political events forced British novelist Jacobson (Peeping Tom) to put off a trip to Lithuania planned as a search for his Jewish roots, he accepted an offer from the BBC to visit Jewish communities around the globe instead. This informed and witty account of his experiences deals with the wide variety of contemporary Jewish life, as well as with how Jacobson's observations affected his own concept of what it means to be a Jew. Riding an emotional roller coaster, he witnessed the hostility between Jews and African Americans in New York City, attended services in a gay synagogue in California and found his basic cynicism about religion reinforced after he spent time with Orthodox Jews in Israel, although his spirits were lifted by a visit to an idealistic, tolerant Israeli kibbutz. His journey concluded with the postponed trip to Lithuania, where the author found virulent anti-Semitism. The book has been adapted for a forthcoming BBC/PBS documentary.

From Publishers Weekly When fast-breaking political events forced British novelist Jacobson ( Peeping Tom ) to put off a trip to Lithuania planned as a search for his Jewish roots, he accepted an offer from the BBC to visit Jewish communities around the globe instead. This informed and witty account of his experiences deals with the wide variety of contemporary Jewish life, as well as with how Jacobson's observations affected his own concept of what it means to be a Jew. Riding an emotional roller coaster, he witnessed the hostility between Jews and African Americans in New York City, attended services in a gay synagogue in California and found his basic cynicism about religion reinforced after he spent time with Orthodox Jews in Israel, although his spirits were lifted by a visit to an idealistic, tolerant Israeli kibbutz. His journey concluded with the postponed trip to Lithuania, where the author found virulent anti-Semitism. The book has been adapted for a forthcoming BBC/PBS documentary. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s In his fiction (Redback, 1987; Peeping Tom, 1985, etc.) and now with this travelogue/sociologue/personalogue about his semi-Jewishness, Jacobson seems fated never quite to cast off the perception of him as a Philip Roth wannabe perpetually one step behind (both in talent and intellectual plasticity) his American master. Given a deal by the BBC and PBS to wander Jewish venues such as the Concord resort, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Israel, and his grandparents' Lithuania, Jacobson is ever defensively atwitter, waving the antenna of his jokey skepticism. He detests the religious like the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the Hasidim of Jerusalem not only because they no doubt would be scandalized by Jacobson's gentile wife and his own secularism but also on the grounds of aesthetics: "How is it that austerity on matters of religious faith and ritual almost invariably accompanies laxity in matters of art, music, proportion, tact, ethics, manners, civic probity, passing decency and whatever else you can think of that isn't religious faith and ritual." Had he spent less time flexing his condescension, Jacobson might have been able to arrive at some provisional conclusions as to why (there are an established few, after all, not all of them anti-Semitic, too)--but, instead, his screed is wrapped inside a Carnegie Deli corned-beef sandwich of wise-guy superiority and overeducated disaffiliation. Despite some nice miniatures: a snide, rather pointless, lazy book. -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From the Back Cover Whether one understands it as flight or restlessness, as ancient punishment or promise, the compulsion to travel is at the heart of historical Jewishness. Wherever there is a Jew, there is a journey, and for a Jew to go in search of his roots is doubly Jewish. As Howard Jacobson sets off in search of his Eastern European roots, he does so not with the sentimental hope of repossessing the sensation of belonging, but fully expecting to repossess nothing. As the journey takes him via the Catskills, Manhattan, Tucson, L.A., Eilat, Jerusalem, Tiberias and Haifa, to say nothing of Stamford Hill and Llandudno - although there are shorter routes to Lithuania - he finds there is more to being Jewish than schmaltz and self-ridicule. Roots Schmoots is as fast, funny and furious as Howard Jacobson's fans would expect, but beneath its surface there is a profound and moving exploration of what it is to be a Jew in the late twentieth century.