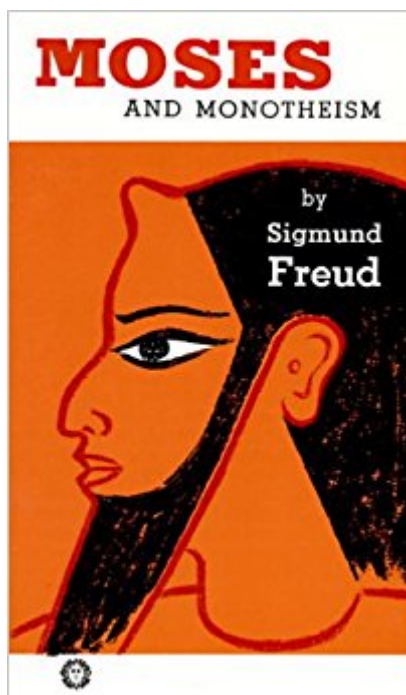


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Moses And Monotheism



Synopsis

This volume contains Freud's speculations on various aspects of religion, on the basis of which he explains certain characteristics of Jewish people in their relations with Christians.

From an intensive study of the Moses legend, Freud comes to the startling conclusion that Moses himself was an Egyptian who brought from his native country the religion he gave to the Jews. He accepts the hypothesis that Moses was murdered in the wilderness, but that his memory was cherished by the people and that his religious doctrine ultimately triumphed. Freud develops his general theory of monotheism, which enabled him to throw light on the development of Judaism and Christianity.

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Customer Reviews

"To deny a people the man whom it praises as the greatest of its sons is not a deed to be undertaken lightheartedly--especially by one belonging to that people," writes Sigmund Freud, as he prepares to pull the carpet out from under The Great Lawgiver in Moses and Monotheism. In this, his last book, Freud argues that Moses was an Egyptian nobleman and that the Jewish religion was in fact an Egyptian import to Palestine. Freud also writes that Moses was murdered in the wilderness, in a reenactment of the primal crime against the father. Lingering guilt for this crime, Freud says, is the reason Christians understand Jesus' death as sacrificial. "The 'redeemer' could be none other than the one chief culprit, the leader of the brother-band who had overpowered the father." Hence the basic difference between Judaism and Christianity: "Judaism had been a religion

of the father, Christianity became a religion of the son." Freud's arguments are extremely imaginative, and his distinction between reality and fantasy, as always, is very loose. If only as a study of wrong-headedness, however, it's fascinating reading for those who want to explore the psychological impulses governing the historical relationship between Christians and Jews. --Michael Joseph Gross

Freud's speculations on various aspects of religion where he explains various characteristics of the Jews in their relations with the Christians.

This book probably reveals more about Freud than Moses or monotheism. It is not extensively or objectively researched. No new revelations for me. I already knew about the comparisons regarding tribalism, cannibalism and the Eucharist. I also found his reasoning for believing circumcision wasn't required as a sign of the covenant with Abraham poorly supported and unconvincing. Freud obviously wrestled with issues of importance to him. It's pretty easy to understand why a professing atheist, undeniably facing his own mortality, developed an intense interest in religion. Since it was written before and after fleeing Vienna, it's easy to see why the problem of widespread hatred toward Jews weighed heavily on his mind. It's no wonder he puzzled about the possible connection between the collective unconscious and anti-Semitism. He seemed to be literally talking in circles and repeating himself, which he himself noticed and did a poor job of defending. I wondered if his communication and reasoning might be hindered by pain medication since he was, after all, dying of cancer while writing this. Especially since he ultimately received so much morphine to relieve his physical pain that he slipped into a coma and never regained consciousness. The value in this book for me is that Freud seemed to, inadvertently, do an excellent job of demonstrating the "talk therapy" he and his early mentor Josef Breuer used to cure patients. Because the flow of thought doesn't have to be well researched, persuasive, accurate, organized, grammatically correct, logical or impressive in any way. In fact, talk therapy doesn't even have to make sense. The words seemed like those of a dying man who was likely drugged, further hampered by an extremely analytical mind, valiantly struggling with God issues as best he could. I agree with some of the other reviewers, this is not an impressive theological treatise, but he was a fascinating man who made some great contributions to the field of psychology. And that is what he will always be remembered for.

This book is an important read for anyone interested in the Egyptian/Israelite interface polemic. Not because Freud's hypothesis is correct necessarily, but because he was, to the best of my knowledge, the first person to bring up the Akhenaten Aten worship (which was the first known monotheism) and try to connect it to the monotheistic worship of YHWH by the Israelites. I think his ideas in this book are not supported well. They are interesting hypotheses, but that is all. Several other books on the subject include Moses and Akhenaten by Osman and The Mystery of the Copper Scroll of Qumran by Feather. I believe some of the observations made in the latter are more valid than either Freud's book or Osman's. I am an amateur biblical/religious scholar and believe there is a connection between the two religions but it is very complex and not fully understood yet. I believe the first fallacy in Freud and Osman's books is to think that the early Israelite religion was monotheistic. It was not. It was henotheistic. That is to say acknowledged other gods but held one god above the others. Reading The Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud and other ancient Near Eastern works carefully will show this to be true. I believe that the Israelite religion only became monotheistic after the Babylonian Exile (6th C. BCE) and that perhaps the monotheism of the Zoroastrian Persian King Cyrus may have been a more immediate influence. I will not ramble on..... sorry! The book is an interesting read and an interesting hypothesis, but I would not hang my history on it. There have been many new discoveries since this book was written that make this subject of research more rich, complex and interesting.

Not Freud's greatest work undoubtedly. Great speculative analysis of the cultural and mythological development of Hebrews however. Freud's attention to the archeological relationships between Moses and Egyptian culture is superb. All in all just an idea, but raises many interesting points

Another theory that is still being battled by those who do not wish to amend the history books as they have the dates in history right where they want them.

Best thing by Freud I have read. He makes a better historian than psychologist.

Translation is lacking. Punctuation is deficient. Conversion to Kindle, poor. Buy it in paper.

The book presented a viable option for the creation and changes in religions.

An outstanding and audacious book. Not to many people have knowledge of this subject on Freud's

writings. It is amazing to notice the author's courage exposing thesis where he attempt to prove or at least to demonstrate that Moses was an Egyptian and not a Jew. The argument of the existence of two Moses the one from Egypt and the other from Midia, a Medianite, is also surprising although in any way fanciful. In some bookstores this book is incorrectly classified in the psych area. This is truly a Bible history research, of course using an approach that places, in his words, religion phenomena as a model of neurotic symptoms of the individual. As I mentioned in other book comment, this kind of study always carries some dose of speculation. Freud was not an exception but without lost of plausibility.

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