



Moses: A Life

By Jonathan Kirsch

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Moses: A Life By Jonathan Kirsch

Lawgiver and liberator. Seer and prophet. The only human permitted to converse with God "face-to-face." Moses is the most commanding presence in the Old Testament. Yet as Jonathan Kirsch shows in this brilliant, stunningly original volume, Moses was also an enigmatic and mysterious figure--at once a good shepherd and a ruthless warrior, a spiritual leader and a magician, a lawgiver who broke his own laws, God's chosen friend and hounded victim. Now, in *Moses: A Life*, Kirsch accomplishes the wondrous feat of revealing the real Moses, a strikingly modern figure who steps out from behind the facade of Sunday school lessons and movie matinees.

Drawing on the biblical text and a treasury of both scholarship and storytelling, Kirsch examines all that is known and all that has been imagined of Moses. In these vivid pages, we see the marvels and mysteries of Moses's life in a new light--his rescue in infancy and adoption by an Egyptian princess; his reluctant assumption of the role of liberator; his struggles to wrest his people from the pharaoh's dominion; his desperate vigil on Mount Sinai. Here too is the darker, more ominous Moses--the sorcerer, the husband of a pagan woman, the military commander who cold-bloodedly ordered the slaying of innocent people; the beloved of God whom God sought twice to murder.

Jonathan Kirsch brings both prodigious knowledge and a keen imagination to one of the most compelling stories of the Bible, and the results are fascinating. A figure of mystery, passion, and contradiction, Moses emerges from this book very much a hero for our time.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Moses: A Life is Jonathan Kirsch's attempt to depict the historical Moses. There is not one whit of archeological evidence that the great lawgiver ever lived, but Kirsch, a California lawyer, combs through the Scripture and its cultural remains with forensic zeal in his efforts to uncover the man he calls "the most haunted and haunting figure in the Bible." Although his thirst for empirical evidence remains, at the end, unsated, Kirsch's imagination is given new life by his quest. Moses emerges, in this fascinating, wide-ranging, and somewhat frustratingly logical book, as a person both necessary and nebulous. Kirsch concludes that Moses' existence cannot be proven, even though his influence is as great as that of any man who ever lived. --*Michael Joseph Gross*

From Publishers Weekly

Kirsch's treatment is less a biography of Moses than a meticulous distillation of the considerable secondary literature that has grown up around the sparse biblical material. Kirsch (*The Harlot By the Side of the Road*) draws extensively on the various theories elaborated by biblical scholars over the past centuries to explain multiple accounts of Moses' life. He also draws extensively on myths, legends and midrashim that have been woven around the figure of Moses, who figures, in various interpretations, as warrior, magician, shepherd, God's favorite, sorcerer's apprentice and reluctant prophet. Kirsch offers interesting speculation on Moses's identity, including the depth of his connection to Egypt, and on the power struggles that he believes underlie the patchwork narrative of Hebrew scripture. He also notes the succession of strong women who intervene on Moses's behalf, and he pays careful attention to the struggle between Miriam (who was a priestess in her own right) and Moses. Ultimately, Kirsch's Moses emerges less as a presence than an absence. But an absence that determines the structure of the whole narrative around him.

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From [Booklist](#)

Kirsch meticulously distills the vast secondary literature that has grown up around the sparse biblical material on Moses. He draws on the myths, legends, and midrashim of Moses to soften ragged edges left by competing images of him as warrior, magician, shepherd, God's favorite, sorcerer's apprentice, and reluctant prophet. He wavers between a dispassionate historicism, intent on cutting through "secondary accretions" to get at "the kernel of genuine tradition," and a symbolic approach in which it is not so much Moses as the "values" he represents that matter. Finally, he leans toward the latter approach, which he says embraces the truth found in myth, legend, and poetry, rather than trying to ascertain what "really" happened. Yet, like Freud (whose pseudoscientific treatment of Moses is an obvious source of fascination), Kirsch has chosen to write a biography rather than a historical novel. A novel might better sustain the competing images of Moses and the unpredictable deity who befriended him, but the historical approach will better please serious though nonspecialist readers of all sorts. *Steven Schroeder*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ron Lauer:

Hey guys, do you want to find a new book to study? Maybe the book with the name *Moses: A Life* suitable to you? Often the book was written by renowned writer in this era. The book entitled *Moses: A*

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Noel Stevens:

The reason why? Because this Moses: A Life is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret it inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who else write the book in such remarkable way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking means. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I had been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

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Bettye Heinrich:

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