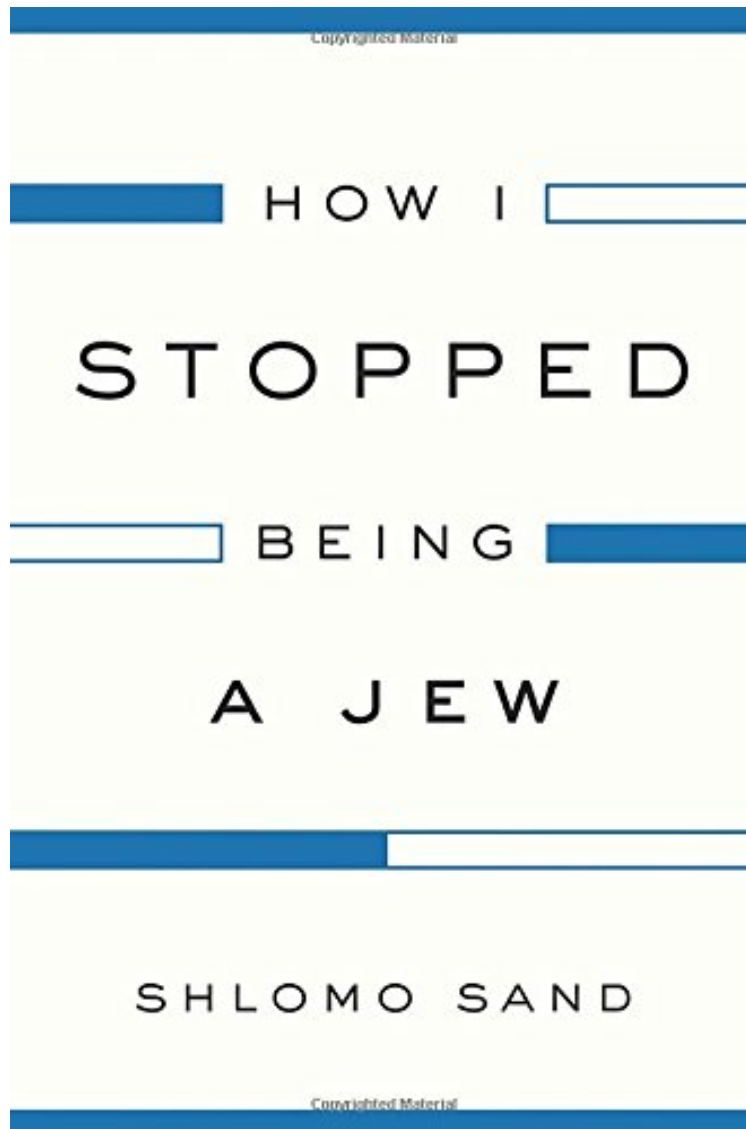


(Free) How I Stopped Being a Jew


## How I Stopped Being a Jew

*Shlomo Sand*

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**Shlomo Sand : How I Stopped Being a Jew** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How I Stopped Being a Jew:

29 of 32 people found the following review helpful. Sand against the sacred cowsBy Sergio LipkinThe title of this book should be "The invention of Secular Judaism", and in this way it would naturally close the trilogy that started with "The Invention of Jewish People" and was followed by "The Invention of the Land of Israel". Among Sand's discussion on those three inventions, the one referred to secular judaism (the object of the new book) is perhaps the most directed to the jewish public, or likely to have jews as the most interested readers. The central subject relates to

the Jewish identity, a question that simply has been torturing Jews around the world at least since the end of the nineteenth century. Sand is not absolutely interested in doing any type of proselitism: he does not want to convince any Jew to stop being Jewish as he did. Sand simply wants to dramatically invoke all Jews to deeply re-think and face fearlessly the identity question again as he thinks this is the crux of the matter of all historical contradictions between Judaism and Zionism (and he is surely echoing Boas Evron's call in this same direction, as stated on his magnificent 1995 book - *Jewish State or Israeli Nation?*). Like his arguments or not, the book is certainly extremely rich as a source for relevant subjects in the discussion agenda of the Jewish identity question. Like his conclusions or not, the point is that it is almost impossible not to see and feel an overall beauty in the last chapter's remarks, where Sand let the reader get in contact with his profound and declared love for Israel, something really amazing when contrasted with the usual image of "Israel traitor" drawn by many of Sand's detractors. After reading the chapter's last lines, I had the impression that Sand would like to tell us, among other things, that to keep faithfully loving Israel, a non-religious and pro-enlightenment Israeli Jew must "leave Judaism" in a very precise way: by getting rid of any kind of secular messianic concept of Jewish redemption, by recognizing that Jewishness is not a sufficient condition for nation building and that its prominent consideration involves a very high token to pay in terms of exclusion and discrimination. For "diasporic" Jews, Sand's conclusion seems to raise a similar dramatic and "revolutionary" question: in order to "save" both Liberal Judaism and Liberal Zionism, they must be divorced: Jews must establish a radical separation between their community affiliation and the national project of the Israeli people. Hard questions, difficult thoughts. But we cannot avoid them anymore. Thank you Sand, for this conceptual earthquake.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must for every Jew today

By Florencia Davidzon I really like this book, he covers many of my own questions and concerns but seeing from an Israeli perspective, not the Gola like my case. I really appreciate with critical thinking, his honest dilemmas and the data he shares of the inequities inside Israel for non-Jews. A very challenging and interesting book, very fast to read.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Another Sand Storm

By Thomas J. Hatch Perhaps a more felicitous title for this book might have been *The Myth of the Secular Jew*, or better yet, *The Impossibility of Secular Zionism*. While in a universe unaffected by the self-anointed hasbara literary death squad this worthwhile and thoughtful little book would warrant a four star rating. I gave it five stars to counterbalance those who would rate it without a reading (literally) and think Leon Uris a first rate historian and the sectarian militia commonly known as the IDF is the world's most moral army.

Shlomo Sand was born in 1946, in a displaced persons camp in Austria, to Jewish parents; the family later migrated to Palestine. As a young man, Sand came to question his Jewish identity, even that of a secular Jew. With this meditative and thoughtful mixture of essay and personal recollection, he articulates the problems at the center of modern Jewish identity. *How I Stopped Being a Jew* discusses the negative effects of the Israeli exploitation of the chosen people myth and its Holocaust industry. Sand criticizes the fact that, in the current context, what Jewish means is, above all, not being Arab and reflects on the possibility of a secular, non-exclusive Israeli identity, beyond the legends of Zionism.

Praise for *The Invention of the Jewish People*: Perhaps books combining passion and erudition don't change political situations, but if they did, this one would count as a landmark. Eric Hobsbawm, *Observer* Sand's quiet earthquake of a book is shaking historical faith in the link between Judaism and Israel. Rafael Behr, *Observer* No discussion of the region any longer seems complete without acknowledgement of this book. *Independent on Sunday*, Best History Books of 2009 A radical dismantling of a national myth. *Guardian* About the Author Shlomo Sand studied history at the University of Tel Aviv and at the *cole des hautes études en sciences sociales*, in Paris. He currently teaches contemporary history at the University of Tel Aviv. His books include *The Invention of the Land of Israel*; *The Invention of the Jewish People*; and *On the Nation and the Jewish People*.