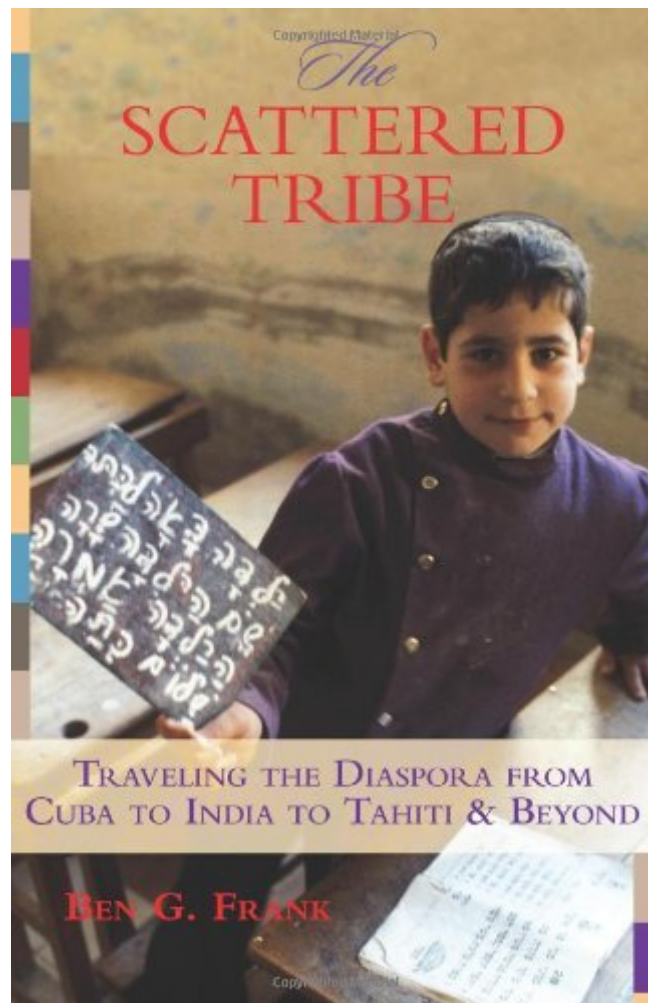




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The Scattered Tribe: Traveling The Diaspora From Cuba To India To Tahiti & Beyond



Synopsis

This book is an odyssey to discover exotic Jewish communities around the world. It is a road map of travel and adventure set in such locales as Russia (including Siberia), Tahiti, Vietnam, Myanmar, India, Cuba, Morocco, Algeria, and Israel.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Very informative.

The book is filled with tons of information that I did not know, but is not very easy to read and has numerous repetitions. It was not an "easy" read although very informative.

I have struggled through the first half of this book and do not know if I will continue. I suspect the author was surprised when he sat down to write his book at how little material he had collected about Jewish life among the scattered tribes. For the author has taken on to write about a subject---remote Jewish communities that often have neither Jews nor Jewish life. Rather, the book reads like a diary of a synagogue vice president whose hobby is visiting remote Jewish communities

and later delivering a presentation with slides to his men's club on Sunday morning. And as long as they serve brunch, there will be a good turnout for his talk. We learn that he spends some time in Russia and meets with officials in some communities. The story quickly evolves into one in which the organized Jewish community is seeking to revive a dead community with minimal luck, though they deliver meals to the poor and elderly and a few children go to a Jewish school. In Russia we know that very little thrives, especially near-dead Jewish communities. So the writer has very little to write about in Russia. This becomes the pattern in his book as he travels to other communities in Asia, because there are virtually no Jews. And when he writes about the wonderful work of Chabad, it is simply a rewriting of the same story-line from one city to the next. Faced with the fact that he cannot deliver what is promised in the book's title, he instead fleshes out the book with too much about his travels through Russia and Asia. (Perhaps ten or fifteen percent of the book is about Jewish communities.) And this reads like a travelogue in a community newspaper. We do learn from the author about where to shop in some cities, that he has an eye for young women, and instead of footnoting, he repeatedly informs us that he is well-read. From what I have so far read, the book does not live up to its title and is certainly not worth whatever is paid for it.

To me the true test of a travel book is whether it deepens my travel experience beyond visits to the obvious sites well-covered in any travel book or travel write-up. Ben Frank's new book does precisely that, providing insights into the culture of these exotic and remote Jewish communities. His historical perspectives and musings and his personal impressions bring me into this world with him, as I sit in my armchair and he guides me through these communities. I had visited a couple of these countries in years gone by - and wish I had read the book first; I missed out on some fascinating spots and communities. This travel memoir has awakened my desire to go back and retrace his steps. Highly recommended.

In his latest book, my friend and colleague takes his readers on an eye-opening journey and introduces them not only to fascinating places but to remarkable people who, each in their own way, honor their Jewish heritage. Along the way, Ben connects the reader with earlier authors and shares their impressions of places from "from Cuba to India to Tahiti and Beyond

Ben Frank is one of the nicest guys I know and a wonderful historian of Jewish culture and lore. The Scattered Tribe is the result of endless research and observation on Ben's part and a real contribution to travel literature. If you are Jewish it is a must read for you. If you are not it is a must

read for you.

As a travel agent and intrepid traveller, I've visited most of the places covered in this amazing guide book. How I wish I'd read this book first!

Ben is drawn by his love for his people and history to travel back to the where the old communities once stood and inquire of their fate and their stories. It is truly a inspiring journey.

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