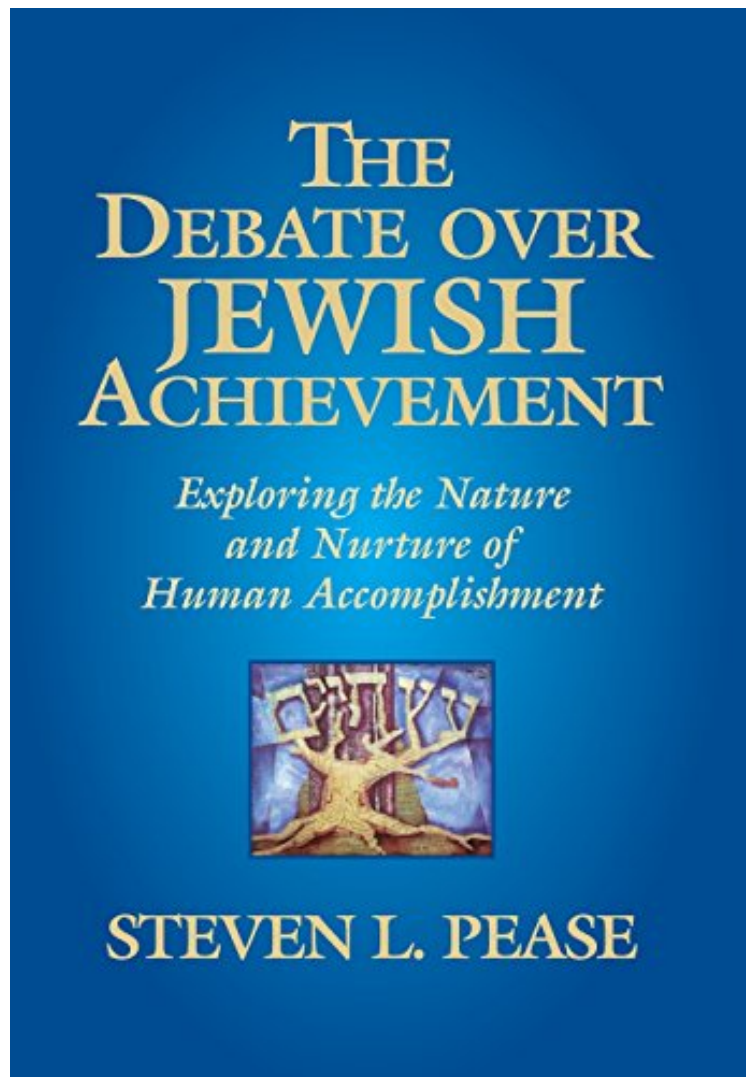


(Mobile ebook) The Debate Over Jewish Achievement: Exploring the Nature and Nurture of Human Accomplishment

The Debate Over Jewish Achievement: Exploring the Nature and Nurture of Human Accomplishment

Steven L. Pease

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Steven L. Pease : The Debate Over Jewish Achievement: Exploring the Nature and Nurture of Human Accomplishment before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Debate Over Jewish Achievement: Exploring the Nature and Nurture of Human Accomplishment:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating and ComprehensiveBy Linda Sawyer KuhnsIf possible,

I am an even bigger fan of Mr. Pease's second book. The case studies are at least as compelling as the mini-biographies, the latest scientific data staggering, and the conclusions both logical and fair. I usually read two books at once - one for educational content and/or literary excellence, the other to make time pass on the stationary bicycle. This book covers it all. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One Star By Dr. Brenda Dressler Thorough analysis of various theories about Jewish Achievements. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Myriam S. Gaby I've only begun to peruse it but very, very interesting.

"Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers ..." Mark Twain Concerning The Jews Harpers, 1899 What Steven L. Pease did in 2009 with his book *The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement* an exhaustive 624-page compendium has been more than matched by *The Debate Over Jewish Achievement*, a thoughtful, balanced and ultimately astounding exploration of the why behind the what of Jewish achievement. Pease traces more than 100 years of major theories put forth to explain the phenomenon, using the technique of a Chronology to expose the strengths and flaws of each theory over time. He puts nature (genetics) and nurture (Jewish culture) under an unrelenting microscope, drawing on recent research into the impacts of culture as well as the breakthroughs in genetics following completion of the Human Genome Project. Some of that research has established, beyond any reasonable doubt, the genetic heritage and linkages between most of the world's Jews dating back thousands of years: the Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Mizrahim and others. Pease also explores how new ways of thinking, such as epigenetics, are moving beyond conventional genetics to present new insights into how nature and nurture may interact to shape what we become. While Pease invites readers to keep an open mind during the time travel of his Chronology, he himself comes down firmly on the side of culture as the most important driving influence behind Jewish achievement. And he is orthodox about what he sees as the critical lessons to be gleaned from Jewish achievement, as they relate to us all.

Six years ago, businessman-turned-author Steven Pease published a remarkable book, *The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement*, a compendium that convincingly chronicled the disproportionate level of Jewish accomplishment in virtually every area of human endeavor. That was the what of the author's objective. The current book, *The Debate Over Jewish Achievement*, seeks to find and isolate the why. Pease, a bright and perceptive writer, has his own theories about this. In a nutshell, he hypothesizes that centuries of hard-earned mental discipline through Torah, Talmudic and rabbinical studies uniquely prepared the Jewish mind for demanding tasks in realms beyond religion. These tasks began to become manifest in the early 19th century, when the Enlightenment opened doors to Jewish thinkers most importantly in the arts and sciences that had heretofore been closed to them. After that, look out. Jewish achievement suddenly found itself on the fast track. Pease's theoretical foundation, of course, is much deeper and more complex than that. He explores such areas as epigenetics, a relatively new science that seeks answers from both nature and nurture in characterizing and gauging human development. He does not, however, limit his research to those areas most likely to support his own theses, nor does he insist that his own take on such questions is the only valid path. Pease examines current research in a variety of fields genetics, neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, child development and sociology and wisely leaves the ultimate conclusions to his readers. Although obviously fascinated by Jews and Jewish culture, Pease comes from a non-Jewish background and assures his readers that he is not aspiring to become Jewish. His sole objective, he writes, is encouraging human achievement. In other words, what Jews have accomplished, despite millennia of persecution and oppression, can provide valuable lessons for the human race in general. Jewish culture is unique, the author writes, but its elements are not. We can learn from them. By Chris Lepek, IJN Assistant Editor --Intermountain Jewish News, July 17, 2015 Pease (*The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement*, 2009) weighs the concepts of nature and nurture in a quest to explain the many accomplishments of Jewish people over the past 200 years. The author, a venture capitalist and self-described lapsed Presbyterian, comes again to the topic of Jewish exceptionalism as a Protestant outsider. Indeed, had he been Jewish, parts of this sequel would read like a prolonged boast instead of an unabashed paean to secular Jewry. Pease explains that he's simply chronicling an undisputable, contemporary phenomenon of achievement. He reprises several facts here to prove it, such as the inordinate number of Jewish Nobel laureates, including such notables as Elie Wiesel and Albert Einstein. But his deeper interest is how and why the globally miniscule Jewish population came to prominence in so many fields, particularly in the United States and among the Ashkenazi. His goal, he says, is the most complete review of all the significant theories and arguments about why it happened, and he largely accomplishes that here. This engagingly written commentary draws heavily on contemporary studies on both sides of the nature/nurture debate, as pre-digested by columnists and science writers for the *New York Times* (particularly columnist David Brooks), the *Wall Street Journal*, and a short list of other publications. However, scientists rapidly evolving understanding of genetics and advances in epigenetics doom the book's compelling nature portion to a short shelf life. Pease himself comes down

most strongly on the side of nurture, and in the case of Jews, he cites the uplifting effects of an ancient framework that has long emphasized study and learning: I believe the strongest case squarely favors Jewish culture as the most important force behind the performance, he writes, adding that nature/nurture is a false dichotomy, and it's their blending that matters most. Despite the author's aim to appeal to a wide audience, this book will inevitably hold the greatest appeal for Jewish readers and in others, it may provoke feelings of inferiority. A cogent, thoughtfully presented synopsis of contemporary research material. --Kirkus

About the Author: A CEO specializing in turnarounds, a venture capitalist, and a community activist, Steve Pease has traveled much of the world in the course of heading up not-for-profit organizations as well as public and private companies. Earlier, he was author of *The Golden Age of Jewish Achievement*. Born and raised Presbyterian in Spokane, Washington, he is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Washington with a master's degree from Harvard Business School. He currently serves as co-chairman of the U.S. Russia Foundation for Economic Advancement and the Rule of Law, and was Chairman of The U.S. Russia Investment Fund. Both are nonprofit entities, organized by the United States government to work with Russians, encourage entrepreneurship, civil society, and the rule of law, while also improving the U.S. Russia relationship. He is also active in the community affairs of the small wine-country town of Sonoma, California, where he lives with his wife, Joyce.