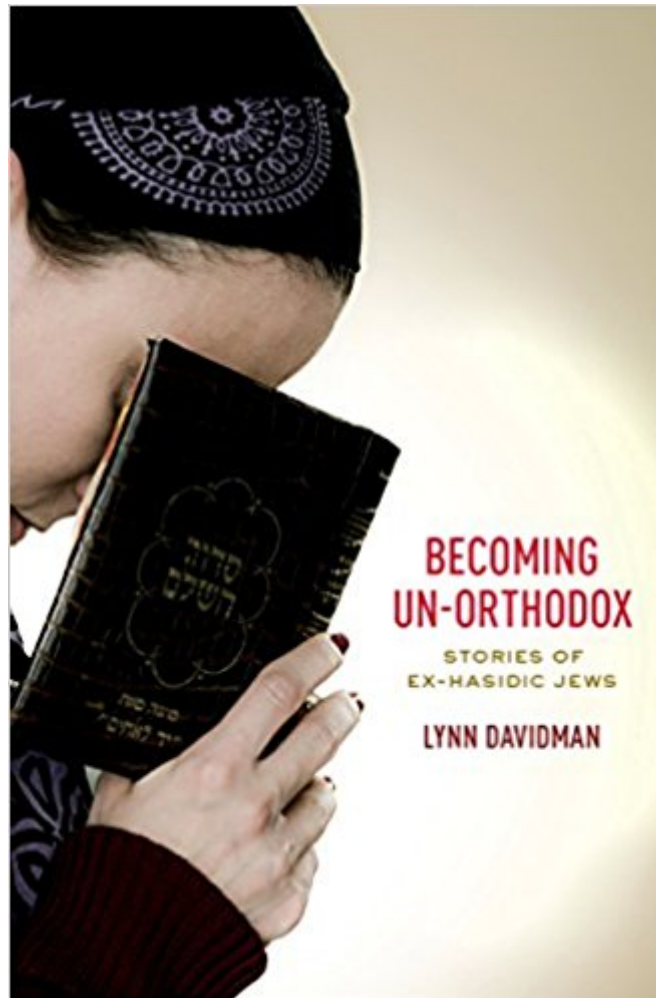




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Becoming Un-Orthodox: Stories Of Ex-Hasidic Jews



Synopsis

Leaving a religion is not merely a matter of losing or rejecting faith. For many, it involves dramatic changes of everyday routines and personal habits. Davidman bases her analysis on in-depth conversations with forty ex-Hasidic individuals. From these conversations emerge accounts of the great fear, angst, and sense of danger that come of leaving a highly bounded enclave community. Many of those interviewed spoke of feeling marginal in their own communities; of strain in their homes due to death, divorce, or their parents' profound religious differences; experienced sexual, physical, or verbal abuse; or expressed an acute awareness of gender inequality, the dissimilar lives of their secular relatives, and forbidden television shows, movies, websites, and books. *Becoming Un-Orthodox* draws much-needed attention to the vital role of the body and bodily behavior in religious practices. It is through physical rituals and routines that the members of a religion, particularly a highly conservative one, constantly create, perform, and reinforce the culture of the religion. Because of the many observances and daily rituals required by their faith, Hasidic defectors are an exemplary case study for exploring the centrality of the body in shaping, maintaining, and shedding religions. This book provides both a moving narrative of the struggles of Hasidic defectors and a compelling call for greater collective understanding of the complex significance of the body in society.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On the one hand, the author clearly has done a huge job to gather all the material and to analyse it all. On the other hand, the book itself only reveals, probably, 10% of the original material (interviews), which, judging by the parts that the author does let us read, could be incredibly interesting. Instead, most of the book's contents is the author's analysis, and there's a problem: the text is exhaustingly repetitive. In her (unnecessarily long) introduction, Dr Davidman writes about how she was trying to make the text "clear and understandable" [this is not a precise quote] for a reader who was previously unfamiliar with the Hassidic world "but instead, it seems that she's just trying to rub in the same conclusions 5-6-7 times, across different chapters. The book does provide some very interesting insights into the matter but the text, as it is now, would have only become better and more appealing if it were transformed into a 20-30-page paper.

Eye opener.

Excellent price. Very satisfied.

This reads more like a textbook which is not what I expected. It's dry. There's no need to sensationalize, but I think it could have read more like a story. The author is an academic so it makes sense, but the description doesn't indicate that.

I read this for a class in college. Overall its not a bad book, I was able to get through it fairly quickly without getting bored. The stories from the people interviewed are very interesting. The issue I had with this book is that after every excerpt the author basically tells you exactly what you already read with a small insight that you could have arrived at yourself. Some the excerpts were repeated a few times which I thought was a bit unnecessary as well. Overall the content of the book is good though, I got an interesting view into the stories of ex-ultra-orthodox Jews. If this subject matter interests you, you will likely enjoy the book, you just have to overlook the "bloat" in the book.

Having read first person accounts as well as my own experiences in departing, all I can say about Ms. Davidman's soulless book is, if you want to read very little personal comments by Hasidim and loads of data studies/social-cultural commentary, this is just the read for you. Couldn't even bother to finish it.

I was interested in this topic, but the book was very slow moving. The author made the same point over and over and over again!

I was fascinated by the content but found the style of the writing was distracting. I felt like there was a lot of feeling kissing from the characters, who were real people.

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