



The Jewish Woman in Contemporary Society: Transitions and Traditions

Adrienne Baker

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What does it mean to be a Jewish woman today? To an Orthodox woman, it means living a religious way of life in which serving God totally defines her self-perception and her role as wife and mother. For the secular woman, it means having a sense of belonging, although not necessarily to a specific Jewish community. Most contemporary Jewish women fall somewhere in between, but at the core of all of their identities is a complex interweaving of religious and ethnic elements, a shared history, and a collective memory of periods of prejudice, persecution, wandering, and resettlement.

Focusing on Jewish women in the United States and Britain, Adrienne Baker examines such issues as women's role in religious law, the spectrum of synagogue observance, the mother's role as conveyor of tradition, conversion and inter-faith marriages, and sexuality. In particular, the book examines the impact of feminism on Jewish women and their culture, uncovering the counterinfluences of tradition and new freedoms on women's lives.

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