



Becoming Frum: How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism (Jewish Cultures of the World)

Sarah Bunin Benor

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When non-Orthodox Jews become *frum* (religious), they encounter much more than dietary laws and Sabbath prohibitions. They find themselves in the midst of a whole new culture, involving matchmakers, homemade gefilte fish, and Yiddish-influenced grammar. *Becoming Frum* explains how these newcomers learn Orthodox language and culture through their interactions with community veterans and other newcomers. Some take on as much as they can as quickly as they can, going beyond the norms of those raised in the community. Others maintain aspects of their pre-Orthodox selves, yielding unique combinations, like Matisyahu's reggae music or Hebrew words and sing-song intonation used with American slang, as in “*mamish* (really) keepin' it real.”

Sarah Bunin Benor brings insight into the phenomenon of adopting a new identity based on ethnographic and sociolinguistic research among men and women in an American Orthodox community. Her analysis is applicable to other situations of adult language socialization, such as students learning medical jargon or Canadians moving to Australia. *Becoming Frum* offers a scholarly and accessible look at the linguistic and cultural process of “becoming.”

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