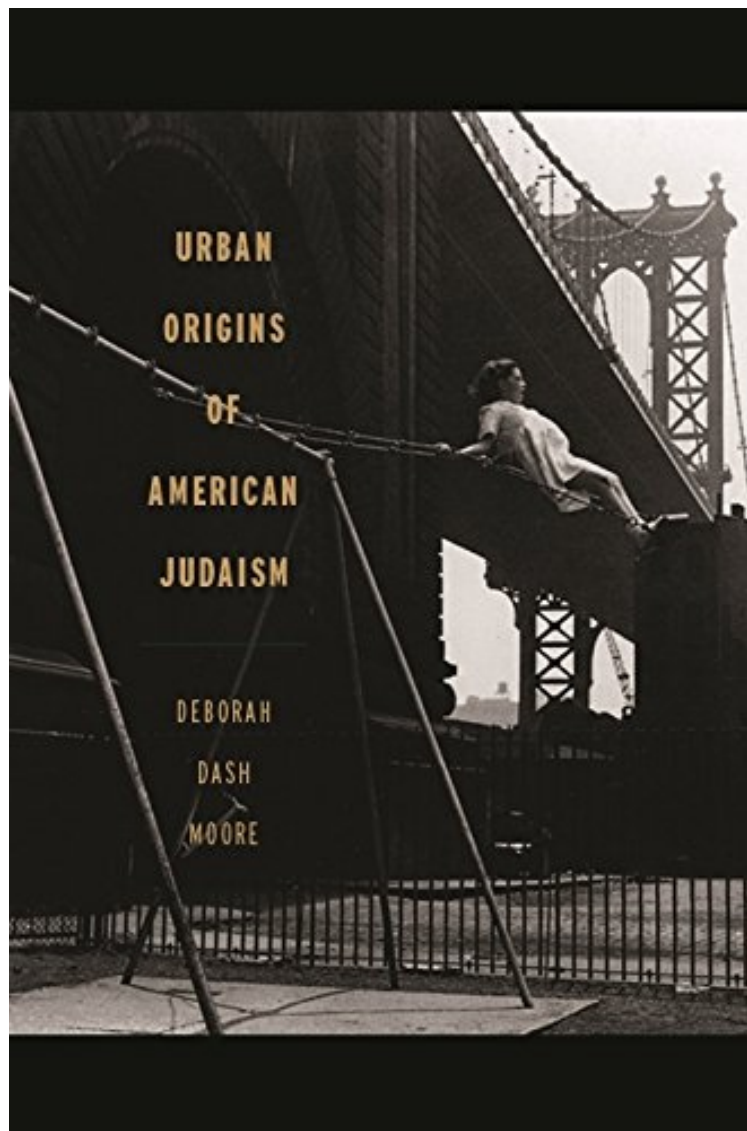


(Mobile pdf) Urban Origins of American Judaism (George H. Shriver Lecture Series in Religion in American History Ser.)

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Deborah Moore

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Deborah Moore : Urban Origins of American Judaism (George H. Shriver Lecture Series in Religion in American History Ser.) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Urban Origins of American Judaism (George H. Shriver Lecture Series in Religion in American History Ser.):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. synagogues and streetsBy Michael LewynIn 1880, Warsaw had

more Jews than any American city. By 1905, New York City had over 700,000 Jews, more than twice as many as Warsaw and ten times as many as it had in 1880. This book tries to answer the question: how has urbanization affected American Judaism? The first major segment of Moore's book focuses on synagogues; she suggests that the size of urban communities allowed a wide range of congregations, and that the newness of these communities allowed for innovations. For example, in the 1920s, the "synagogue center" movement competed with urban commercial recreation by incorporating sports and entertainment into synagogue buildings. The second major segment focuses on streets; in large cities, Jews gathered together for large funerals of major religious and secular leaders, taking over city streets. More recently, Hasidim have turned the streets of Brooklyn's Boro Park, Williamsburg and Crown Heights into modern versions of a East European small town. This interesting book would have benefitted from a bit more of a comparative perspective: that is, a comparison of Jewish city life to small-town life, to help the reader understand what innovations were distinctively urban and which were distinctively American instead.

The urban origins of American Judaism began with daily experiences of Jews, their responses to opportunities for social and physical mobility as well as constraints of discrimination and prejudice. Deborah Dash Moore explores Jewish participation in American cities and considers the implications of urban living for American Jews across three centuries. Looking at synagogues, streets, and snapshots, she contends that key features of American Judaism can be understood as an imaginative product grounded in urban potentials. Jews signaled their collective urban presence through synagogue construction, which represented Judaism on the civic stage. Synagogues housed Judaism in action, its rituals, liturgies, and community, while simultaneously demonstrating how Jews Judaized other aspects of their collective life, including study, education, recreation, sociability, and politics. Synagogues expressed aesthetic aspirations and translated Jewish spiritual desires into brick and mortar. Their changing architecture reflects shifting values among American Jews. Concentrations of Jews in cities also allowed for development of public religious practices that ranged from weekly shopping for the Sabbath to exuberant dancing in the streets with Torah scrolls on the holiday of Simhat Torah. Jewish engagement with city streets also reflected Jewish responses to Catholic religious practices that temporarily transformed streets into sacred spaces. This activity amplified an urban Jewish presence and provided vital contexts for synagogue life, as seen in the captivating photographs Moore analyzes.

This fascinating study of urbanism and American Judaism offers an insightful portrait of the ways that the rhythms of city life shaped the religious practices of American Jews. Examining synagogues, city streets, and photographs, Deborah Dash Moore has changed our understanding of the evolution of American Judaism. Moore demonstrates brilliantly that the distinct features of American Judaism must be interpreted through the lens of urban experience. (Beth S. Wenger author of *History Lessons: The Creation of American Jewish Heritage*) In this elegantly argued and impressively expansive history, Deborah Dash Moore shows us how American Jews engagement with the changing urban environment created a distinctive American Judaism, in all its diversity, and contributed to the making of the American city itself. Moore takes readers inside the great urban synagogues and shuls and then out into city streets and neighborhoods to show how deeply entwined Judaism has been with the American urban landscape, from colonial towns to contemporary global cities. Building on a lifetime of distinguished scholarship, *Urban Origins of American Judaism* makes an essential contribution to U.S. religious history, to urban history, and to the history of American Jews. (Robert A. Orsi author of *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950* and editor of *The Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape*) While it is hardly news that U.S. Judaism has urban origins, Moore rightly focuses on why it made a difference. . . . Recommended. For all readers. (J. D. Sarna Choice) Moore efficiently recasts over three centuries of American Jewish history using the lenses of religious life, public venues and behavior, and iconic photographs to argue for urbanism as a defining facet of, and influence on, American Judaism. (Karen S. Wilson *Journal of American History*) For much of American Jewish history, Jews urbanism brought to mind their miserable poverty and purportedly dishonest business practices. Yet, writing at a time when urban living represents progressive and ecological values, Moore's study expresses contemporary support for urbanism. In *Urban Origins*, cities are presented far less as ghettos than as centers of opportunity. . . . Although Jews living in cities prior to the mid-twentieth century did not experience urban living as a choice they determined by actively weighing pros and cons, Moore's book recalls that cities have often been beneficial for Jews and Judaism. (Rachel Gordan *American Jewish Archives Journal*) From the Inside Flap The urban origins of American Judaism began with daily experiences of Jews, their responses to opportunities for social and physical mobility as well as constraints of discrimination and prejudice. Deborah Dash Moore explores Jewish participation in American cities and considers the implications of urban living on American Jews across three centuries. Looking at synagogues, streets, and snapshots, she contends that key features of American Judaism can be understood as an imaginative product grounded in urban potentials. Jews signaled their collective urban presence through synagogue construction, which represented Judaism on the civic stage. Synagogues housed Judaism in action, its rituals, liturgies, and community, while simultaneously demonstrating how Jews Judaized other aspects of their collective life, including study, education, recreation, sociability, and politics. Synagogues expressed aesthetic aspirations and translated Jewish

spiritual desires into brick and mortar. Their changing architecture reflects shifting values among American Jews. Concentrations of Jews in cities also allowed for development of public religious practices that ranged from weekly shopping for the Sabbath to exuberant dancing in the streets with Torah scrolls on the holiday of Simhat Torah. Jewish engagement with city streets also reflected Jewish responses to Catholic religious practices that temporarily transformed streets into sacred spaces. This activity amplified an urban Jewish presence and provided vital contexts for synagogue life, as seen in the captivating photographs Moore analyzes.

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