



Race and Religion Among the Chosen People of Crown Heights

Henry Goldschmidt

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In the first major scholarly work to look beyond the sensationalized violence of August 1991, Henry Goldschmidt explores the everyday realities of Black-Jewish difference in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights. Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork, he argues that collective identities like Blackness and Jewishness are particularly complex in today's Crown Heights because the neighborhood's Afro-Caribbean, African American, and Lubavitch Hasidic communities understand their differences in dramatically different ways—as a racial divide between Blacks and Whites or a religious divide between Gentiles and Jews. Goldschmidt takes this collision of conceptual categories as an invitation to reimagine both "race" and "religion." By exploring the limits of categorical thought, he works to create space in American society for radical forms of cultural difference.

Henry Goldschmidt is the Education Program Associate at the Interfaith Center of New York, and formerly an Assistant Professor of Religion and Society at Wesleyan University.

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