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1. 2016

1.1 March

About (2016-03-02 20:53)

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1. <https://wordpress.com/page/107837934/new/>

Personal View of Jewish Endogamy (2016-03-25 17:26)

Jewish endogamy is something that has played a large role in Jewish customs for ages. Jews are generally known for marrying within their religion. Until recently, it was not an accepted concept for a Jewish man or woman to marry someone of another religion. In many countries it still is not accepted, however in America, endogamy is slowly becoming an extinct idea. Endogamy can be defined as marrying within a local group, tribe or religion. Current day Americans seem to believe that endogamy just is not as important as it once was. In Judaism, endogamy is slowly becoming a retired thought.

For this blog post, I thought it would be interesting to interview my own Mother and find out her views on keeping the tradition of marrying within the Jewish community. My mother has always spoken of me finding a nice Jewish boy also commonly referred to as an NJB. I am sure Jewish girls everywhere can relate to their mothers bringing up the marrying of a NJB. However, after speaking with my Mother for about an hour we came to terms that just marrying someone because of their religion is not the most important thing. Although marrying someone of the same religion can make certain aspects of life easier, it is not nearly as necessary as it once was. People in America have become less religious than they used to be. The idea of accepting and loving everyone is a very common theme in the thoughts of millennials, and this means that endogamy does not need to be the most important facet in a marriage anymore. Even though my mom would love for me to marry someone Jewish, she says my happiness is the most important thing, especially because of the increasingly high divorce rates in our country today. She claims that she had a lot of good friends that married men simply because they were of the same religion, not because they were truly in love, and now they are unhappy and divorced.

Overall, after this interview I am able to claim that Jewish endogamy is slowly but surely diminishing. Something that was once viewed as the most important characteristic in a relationship, has become just a small component of a marriage.

1.2 April

Reform Jew's Views (2016-04-02 18:20)

Jewish endogamy is something that has become less and less important as our generations continue. Reform Judaism has become one of the most common sects of Judaism in America, and this is for multiple reasons. First of all, Reform Judaism accepts anyone into their synagogue. Many people who convert to Judaism or who are not even converted will attend Reform synagogues. Since, Jewish endogamy is continuously becoming less common, there are more people becoming Reform Jews because they are always accepted in the Reform community if they have a non-jewish spouse.

In contemporary times, discrimination is not accepted. Reform Jews are known for being the most accepting of all the sects in Judaism. Growing up as reform Jew, I had many friends with parents that intermarried. Now, intermarriage does not even seem like a term worth referring to because it just isn't a big deal. In Reform Judaism today, most Rabbis will officiate a wedding even if both people getting married are not Jewish. This used to be something that was extremely rare. A number of reform Rabbis today still ask for the man or woman who is not Jewish to convert, but the converting process is not extremely difficult.

I found an article on JTA.org, which is the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that asks Rabbi Rick Jacobs if it is better to marry within the Jewish community or if in-marriage is not a big deal anymore. Rabbi Jacobs, who is the head Rabbi of the Union of Reform Judaism and he did not say whether marrying someone within the Jewish community had any more value than marrying out of the community. This should be proof of the major change that is taking place in modern American Judaism, when one of the most well-known rabbis in the country does not have a defined stance on whether endogamy truly makes for a more valued marriage. Rabbi Jacobs does touch on the fact that it is important to keep Jewish traditions alive and to continue to practice Jewish education, nonetheless he touches on the fact that he does not see a direct correlation with endogamy and teaching Judaism. There are some couples that are intermarried who have more religious children than couples who are both Jewish. Sometimes it seems that people who are new to the religion want to be more involved than those who have practiced the religion their entire life. The best latkes I ever had were from my friends Mother who was Catholic, but wanted to perfect her latke recipe because she was so fascinated with the new Jewish side of her life.

Conservative Jew's Views (2016-04-05 19:08)

As far as endogamy in the Jewish religion goes, I have found for the most part it is not as prevalent as it once was. However, in the more traditional sects of Judaism it still holds very high importance. People who practice Conservative Judaism will claim that Jewish endogamy is necessary to keep Jewish traditions alive.

My grandparents grew up as Conservative Jews and they definitely have strong feelings towards their grandchildren marrying within the Jewish religion. Although they always tell me they will love whoever I marry, I know they would be more accepting if I were to marry within the religion.

I found a very interesting article titled "Why I Will Not Simply Accept Inter-marriage". It shows the very defined view of a conservative Jewish Rabbi named Jeremy Kalmanofsky. He claims it is hard to be a Rabbi that will not officiate intermarriage weddings because as a Rabbi it is your job to make your congregants happy. When he turns down a couple because they are not both Jewish it makes him look cruel, however he is not trying to be mean in any way possible. He simply does not want to officiate the wedding because he believes that eventually intermarriages will lead to Judaism becoming less prominent as generations continue. Kalmanofsky shows some statistics that displays that intermarried Jewish couples have about a 20 % rate of raising their children Jewish, while in-married parents show that 96 % of the children will be raised Jewish. This is a very definitive statistic that can show why Rabbi Kalmanofsky has his defined views.

All in all, Conservative Jews most definitely have a different viewpoint when it come to endogamy than Reform Jews. Although some conservative jews accept intermarriage it is not nearly as common for Conservative Rabbis to officiate a mixed marriage wedding.

Pros & Cons of Endogamy (2016-04-11 19:39)

As I have learned more and more about endogamy since the beginning of this project, I feel as though I can definitely explain what some of the benefits of marrying within a community, as well as some of the downfalls.

For the pros:

- Marrying within the Jewish can make it easier on the children, because they will easily be able to identify with Judaism.
- More conservative parents are often happier with their children being in a endogamous relationship.
- Any Rabbi will officiate the wedding.
- When there are hardships in the relationship, having the same religious viewpoint can often deter arguments that would arise.

For the cons:

- In America, there is not an extremely large Jewish population. Therefore, it is sometimes much easier to be in a relationship with someone outside of your religious community.
- It does not promote as much liberal freedom as being in an exogamous relationship

Overall, there seems to be more pros to endogamy than cons. But that is simply because marrying with more in common usually makes life easier, since there are less different views. However, many people would claim that differences can make for a stronger relationship. At times having too many things in common can make couples fight more. Happy couples learn from each other and enjoy the different characteristics that their spouse possesses. Nevertheless, there is no proof that an endogamous relationship will have any more success than an exogamous relationship. In the end, it depends on the people in the marriage and how compatible they are, not just their religious views.



Traditional Jewish Wedding

The Future of Judaism (2016-04-12 19:52)

So why does endogamy matter? Endogamy is not something that people usually address until later in life, maybe their mid-twenties. Yet, when a person is dating someone there is always the possibility that they will fall in love and get married. The future depends on our offspring and the generations that we are going to produce. The future of our governments, our environment, our religion and our society, is all in the hands of the generations that come after us.

When you put things in perspective, carrying on religious traditions is in the hands of your children. And the way you raise your children has a lot to do with the person you marry. If everyone slowly marries outside of their religious group and does not educate their children on the history of their ancestors and the importance of their religion, eventually religion could become something that is simply in history books and is not practiced how it is today.

The thought of this is frightening. Nonetheless, I don't think our society would ever succumb to the point of not practicing any religions. But, the basis of practicing religions and having a strong religious view starts from the parents. If a parent never sends their child to a religious education school, or never teaches them about their religious background they will never know if they want to practice that religion themselves and carry on tradition. The decision to educate your child on their religion stems from the parents. Therefore, if parents come from different religious backgrounds it is definitely more difficult to implement a single, but strong religious identity in the life of your child.

So, this is why endogamy is important. It is important because if we want the generations to come to be well educated and have a fundamental religious background, it is our duty to keep the traditions alive.



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