



# Here and There: Leaving Hasidism, Keeping My Family

*Chaya Deitch*

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## **Here and There: Leaving Hasidism, Keeping My Family** Chaya Deitsch

A heartfelt and inspiring personal account of a woman raised as a Lubavitcher Hasid who leaves that world without leaving the family that remains within it.

Even as a child, Chaya Deitsch felt that she didn't belong in the Hasidic world into which she'd been born. She spent her teenage years outwardly conforming to but secretly rebelling against the rules that tell you what and when to eat, how to dress, whom you can befriend, and what you must believe. Loving her parents, grandparents, and extended family, Chaya struggled to fit in but instead felt angry, stifled, and frustrated. Upon receiving permission from her bewildered but supportive parents to attend Barnard College, she discovered a wider world in which she could establish an independent identity and fulfill her dream of an unconfined life that would be filled with the secular knowledge and culture that were largely foreign to her friends and relatives in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. As she gradually shed the physical and spiritual trappings of Hasidic life, Chaya found herself torn between her desire to be honest with her parents about who she now was and her need to maintain a loving relationship with the family that she still very much wanted to be part of.

Eventually, Chaya and her parents came to an understanding that was based on unqualified love and a hard-won but fragile form of acceptance. With honesty, sensitivity, and intelligence, Chaya Deitsch movingly shows us that lives lived differently do not have to be lives lived apart.

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