

SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST JEWISH WOMEN

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Annotated Bibliography

Cares, Alison and Gretchen Cusick. "Risks and Opportunities of Faith and Culture: The Case of Abused Jewish Women." *Journal of Family Violence* 27 (2012) 427–435.

Cares and Cusick analyzed a sample of 76 clinical case files from a Jewish domestic violence services agency, and found that 53 of the cases (70%) explicitly identified ways in which husbands used Jewish holidays, laws, or customs to reinforce abusive behavior. For example, in Jewish law husbands must grant wives a *get*, or a Jewish divorce document, in order to dissolve the marriage. Some husbands withheld the *get*, which prevented women from leaving abusive marriages. In addition, some husbands exploited the Israeli Law of Return and fled to Israel to avoid resolving court cases, custody issues, paying child support, or granting *gets*. The authors refer to these cases as examples of "using Judaism as a tool for abuse" (431). In addition, 21 out of 76 cases discussed the role of rabbis during times of conflict. Eleven of those 21 cases described rabbis as a positive influence, as they assisted in obtaining *gets*, referred women to agencies, or provided counseling. Conversely, five cases described Rabbis as detrimental in their efforts to respond to abuse. In each of those instances the Rabbis were Orthodox. The authors conclude that more research needs to be done comparing instances of abuse across Jewish denominations and cultures.

Danis, Fran S. "Flora's Vest: The Personal Is Political Is Personal Again." *Affilia* 20 (2005) 362–367.

In the year 1900, Flora Fialkov (1882–1937), Danis's great grandmother, emigrated from Russia alone at the age of 18. Danis asks what circumstances would have allowed for Flora's parents to send their teenage daughter to America alone. Because Flora was born during a major wave of pogroms from 1881–1884 (pogroms refer to unsolicited attacks against Jewish Russian populations) Danis postulates that her parents sent her to America to escape persecution and sexual violence. In addition to murder, rape was a common feature of pogroms, and families with financial means would often send their loved ones to safety outside of Russia. Danis is not sure whether or not Flora was a survivor of sexual abuse, but recognizes rape as a looming danger for all early 20th century Jewish women in the Pale of Settlement. Danis concludes by connecting her family's history with her current occupation as a social worker.

Dehan, Nicole and Zipi Levi. "Spiritual Abuse: An Additional Dimension of Abuse Experienced by Abused Haredi (Ultraorthodox) Jewish Wives." *Violence Against Women* 15 (2009) 1294–1310.

Dehan and Levi demonstrate how spiritual abuse can occur alongside physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse by drawing on the accounts of eight Israeli Haredi women who participated in therapeutic group meetings for Orthodox wives in abusive marriages. The participation of Haredi women in this group was crucial since Haredi communities typically discourage members from discussing domestic problems, or slandering the reputation of another Jew. The authors recognize spiritual abuse as a

distinct form of abuse because damage is done at the transcendental, rather than interpersonal level. For example, although Jewish law strictly prohibits intercourse during a woman's cycle (and even seven days after), one husband forced his wife to have intercourse while she was menstruating, which is an example of "causing the woman to transgress spiritual obligations or prohibitions" (1300). In addition, one husband demeaned his wife's spiritual worth and practice by criticizing her prayers as worthless, and insisting she attend to more important tasks. The authors conclude that spiritual abuse can occur within other religious denominations as well and that there is more research to be done on the topic.

Dorff, Elliot. "The Role of Rabbis, Cantors, and Educators in Preventing Abuse and Repairing Its Consequences." *Shine the Light: Sexual Abuse and Healing in the Jewish Community*. Ed. Rachel Lev. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2003, 177–189.

In this essay Rabbi Dorff addresses leaders in the Jewish community such as rabbis, cantors, and educators. In order to stop sexual abuse and incest in the community Jewish leaders must follow these guidelines. First, they must learn to recognize abuse, which includes teaching other community members how to identify potentially abusive situations and know which professionals to call upon. Secondly, religious leaders should not act as therapists unless they are trained to understand and respond to sexual abuse. Rather, they should put survivors in contact with professionals who are equipped to help. Thirdly, religious leaders *must* follow their government's requirements to report abuse to legal authorities. Fourthly, in order to protect schools and congregations from potential abusers, comprehensive background checks must be conducted when filling positions in the Jewish community. Fifthly, community leaders must maintain and provide child and spousal services. Sixthly, religious leaders can use the power of religion and community to deter abuse. For example, community leaders can demonstrate disgust of abuse by "refusing to give honors or positions of leadership to those known to be physically or verbally abusive to others" (186). In addition, religious leaders must offer counseling for adult survivors of child abuse through support groups. Lastly, religious leaders must address the spiritual aspects of healing. For example, Dorff suggests that religious leaders remind survivors that they were created in the image of God, and therefore have inherent worth.

Dorfman, Elana. "Ayelet Program: Mentoring Women Leaving the Cycle of Violence." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 101–108.

Elana Dorfman introduces the Ayelet Project, which was founded in 1998 by the Haifa Battered Women's Hotline. The hotline provides support to Israel's diverse population by providing services in Hebrew, English, Arabic, Russian, and Amharic (Ethiopian language). The Ayelet Project provides long term mentoring to women beginning new lives outside of cycles of abuse. Dorfman draws from shelter studies that find that 30–60% of women who leave abusive relationships return to their partners within the first six months of leaving. The primary goal of the Ayelet Project is to help survivors successfully restore their lives and not return to abusive partners. Ayelet works

to provide the communal support women may need to rehabilitate their lives. In addition, the project also aims to end generational cycles of violence. According to a paper published by the Minerva Institute for Youth Studies, sons who are exposed to fathers abusing their mothers are far more likely to become wife abusers than sons who were not witnesses to abuse. According to Dorfman, the project has a 100% success rate of survivors who successfully rehabilitated their lives.

Dratch, Mark. "Forgiving the Unforgivable? Jewish Insights into Repentance and Forgiveness." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 7–24.

Rabbi Dratch explores the significance of repentance and forgiveness within Judaism, especially surrounding the holiday *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) and asks how survivors of domestic and/or sexual abuse forgive the abusers who committed the unforgiveable. Upon *Yom Kippur*, God forgives those who truly repent, however, God will not absolve one's sins committed against another person until one receives forgiveness from the person who has been wronged. In addition, according to the Babylonian Talmud, *Rosh Hashanah* 17a, one who forgives the sins of others is forgiven for one's own sins. Dratch claims that "most Jewish authorities are of the opinion that there is no absolute obligation to forgive in all circumstances" (14), and that forgiveness is only granted when the sinner has truly repented, and the wronged one is appeased. He concludes that the abusive are not worthy of forgiveness until they end their cycle of violence and change their character.

Ellison, Amy Robbins. "Voice of a Survivor: Opening Plenary Keynote Address." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 11–17.

Dr. Amy Ellison shared her history of abuse at the First International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community (Baltimore, MD, 2003). She opened her speech by sharing her credentials, which are rather impressive. Her long list of accomplishments ends with the reason she was speaking at this conference, namely that she is a survivor. Ellison recounted the 10 years she suffered in an abusive marriage. She provided details of her abusive and erratic husband who put his wife and daughter in danger. Sadly, her daughter was often a witness to her father's abuse. Ellison recalled her daughter kicking her father's back while he beat his wife. She spoke of feeling uneasy, fearful, and isolated. Although her husband's family was aware of the abuse her mother in law did not reach out until her own husband passed away. Ellison concluded with a moving poem composed by her fifteen-year-old daughter.

Farber, Roberta. "Jewish Religious Communities and Wife Abuse." *Jewish Studies in Violence*. Ed. Roberta Farber and Simcha Fishbane. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007, 11–38.

Roberta Farber acknowledges the challenges of helping battered women in the ultra-orthodox, or *haredi* community. She defines the *haredi* outlook as one that

romanticizes religious traditions of the past, and highly discourages assimilation. Therefore the services offered to *haredi* survivors must fit within the parameters of their ultra-Orthodox lifestyle. The Shalom Task Force was founded in 1992 in New York City “to provide immediate assistance and guidance for battered women and secondly, to prevent further abuse” (25). The Shalom Task Force runs a 24-hour hotline and survivors can choose to speak in English, Hebrew, or Yiddish. In addition, the hotline’s operators are trained to be familiar with *haredi* culture. The Shalom Task Force trains and educates rabbis on dealing with abuse, and also increases community awareness of abuse through its Speakers Bureau. The Speakers Bureau educates the general community on how to respond to wife abuse, and works to reduce the stigma of abuse, and shift the condemnation from survivors to perpetrators.

Field, Dorothy. “Going Out From Mitzrayim.” *Violence Against Women* 2 (1996) 103–106.

Dorothy Field, a survivor of child sexual abuse, acknowledges the issue of Jewish survivors hiding histories of abuse. She finds that Jews may internalize their oppression, as they have been scapegoats and victims throughout history. In order to prevent anti-Semitism and further shaming of the Jewish population, survivors may refrain from revealing attackers from their communities. Field writes that, “[s]peaking truth feels like ammunition for the world at large to use against us” (104). Field writes that when she addressed the issue of sexual abuse within the Jewish community at a conference on *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), roughly one out of four women attending the conference acknowledged past instances of sexual abuse. Field connects her healing to the Passover *Haggadah*, the text read at Passover, which celebrates freedom from bondage. She concludes that in order to fulfill the duty of *Tikkun Olam*, Jews must identify with the powerless and effectively respond to survivors of abuse.

Gelber, Lisa. “The Power of the Rabbinate: Opportunities for Education and Awareness in Combating Domestic Violence in the Jewish Community.” *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral 2004, 149–153.

Rabbi Lisa Gelber debunks the myth that violence does not occur in Jewish communities, and looks to Rabbis to provide education and awareness regarding the issue. In addition to adult education, she urges teenagers to be educated on corporeal respect as well. She charges the Jewish people with the task of telling their stories and confronting abuse in their communities. She briefly mentions the *Haggadah* (text read at Passover) that was created for a workshop entitled *A Journey Towards Freedom: Healing Through a Community Seder*. This *Haggadah* was designed to demonstrate the connection between the legend of the Jews’ exodus from Egypt and survivors’ stories of domestic violence.

This *Haggadah* conveys the message that although Jews are a people with a history with abuse and enslavement, “we move forward towards liberation and freedom, towards healing and wholeness” (152). Gelber concludes that Rabbis are responsible for

providing guidance to constituents, and must increase awareness of and compassion toward the problem of violence in the Jewish community.

Gottlieb, Lynn. "Women's Right to a World Free of Violence." In *The New Jewish Feminism: Probing the Past, Forging the Future*. Ed. Elise Goldstein. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2009, 369–381.

Rabbi Gottlieb argues that the feminist goal of gender equality has not been fully achieved because women are still subject to male violence. She finds that the denial of violence within the Jewish community makes prevention more difficult. She urges rabbis and communities to accept that Jewish violence does occur and asserts, "the only way to overcome violence is to institutionalize prevention and intervention within all our communal structures" (373). Later in the essay, she looks to Israel to see how abuse occurs in a state with a Jewish majority, and that has a mandatory military draft for men and women. According to research from the Haifa feminist center *Isha L'isha* (Woman to Woman) 81% of women in the Israeli army experience sexual harassment. In addition between the years 2000–2005 47% of Israeli female homicide victims were murdered by partners or relatives who worked as security guards, soldiers, or police officers. Gottlieb finds that abuse often occurs under the pretense of the right to defend oneself. She concludes that the feminist mission is far from complete as long as one out of three women experience violence.

Graetz, Naomi. "An Overall View of Wife Beating from the Perspective of Judaic Texts," *Violence and Abuse in Society: Understanding a Global Crisis 2* (2012) 347–359.

Naomi Graetz looks to Judaic texts such as the Bible and the Talmud to analyze Jewish attitudes toward wife beating. She finds that instances of sexual abuse and violence against women appear in the context of damages to a man's property. For example, the term for husband in the Bible, *ba'al*, translates to owner or lord. Graetz finds responsa literature a useful source to examine wife beating. Responsa literature, or correspondence between rabbis and constituents, includes attitudes that condemn wife-beating as unlawful and sources that justify it under certain circumstances. For example a husband may be permitted to beat the "bad wife" who behaves immodestly, does not fulfill her commandments, or curses her husband, parents, or in-laws. Samuel ha-Nagid (936–1056) was a prominent Jewish sage in Muslim Spain who condoned wife beating. He wrote that a husband should beat his wife if she is too domineering and not submissive. Later, Rabbi Meir b. Baruch of Rothenburg (1215–1293), wrote that battering constituted grounds for forcing a man to grant a *get*, or Jewish divorce document. Graetz concludes that in modern times many rabbinic authorities "still do not allow a forced divorce to free the victim of wife beating" (358).

Graetz, Naomi. "The Battered Jewish Woman in the Jewish Tradition: See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 31–48.

In this speech Graetz demonstrates how the issue of domestic violence is magnified in Israel because women must obtain a *get* (Jewish divorce bill) in order to

dissolve the marriage. The Israeli Rabbinic courts, which are run by Orthodox authorities, do not typically order a husband to grant a *get* unless the battered woman is in a life or death situation. An enforced divorce is viewed as invalid by many Orthodox authorities. Historically Jewish women have been socialized into staying in bad marriages due to the notion that any husband is better than no husband at all. Graetz divides rabbinic attitudes toward wife beating into five categories: acceptance (of wife beating as natural), denial, apologetics, rejection, and evasion of responsibility. She suggests that women find rabbis who are willing to use *halakhic* (Jewish legal) tools for annulments and prenuptial arrangements. She concludes that the Israeli Rabbinic court system is biased toward men and should be abolished since it is outdated and discriminates against women.

Kaufman, Gus. "Renewal and Reconciliation After Family Violence?" *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 93–100.

In this speech Kaufman, who has worked with male batterers for over twenty years, outlines the steps batterers must take in order to make amends. The first step is to stop battering, which includes learning what battering is. Secondly, men must take accountability for their actions. Thirdly, batterers must learn to listen respectfully, which includes appreciating women's realities and autonomy. Fourthly, they need to make restitution such as paying child support, alimony, therapy costs, or taking care of the children. Finally, they need to heal. This means batterers must learn to be self-reflexive and learn to relate to people in non-controlling ways. Kaufman also asserts that in order for men to stop battering, individual and collective efforts must be made. Although rabbis can be very helpful in responding to violence, Kaufman asks, "how effective a rabbi alone can be in getting a man to stop his abuse"? He finds that male batterers are often influenced by other groups of men, and that they can improve their own behavior by seeing men treat women with respect. Kaufman concludes that in order to end violence against women, we must rebuild a society where violence does not work.

Lev, Rachel. "If It's There Why Don't We See It?" *Shine the Light: Sexual abuse and Healing in the Jewish Community*. Ed. Rachel Lev. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2003, 22–45.

Rachel Lev reveals why denial of incest and child sexual abuse is so salient in the Jewish community. Lev was molested by her father, and identifies the ways in which child victims may use denial to cope or protect their family's image. Often, children are too young to have the vocabulary to describe what is happening to them. In addition, the boundaries of in/appropriate touching are usually not defined within families. Lev also recognizes family and communal denial as preconditions for abuse. She writes that there is a tendency to "minimize, discount, or stay silent about the things that we see" (29). Perpetrators will often deceive or distract family and community members from looking too closely. Even in instances when abuse is recognized, witness may remain silent because denial is easier than confronting and responding to the realities of child sexual abuse. Witnesses may also remain silent in order to protect the reputation of the Jewish community. Lev asserts that denial and silence do not thwart anti-Semitism, because allowing for the abuse of Jewish children is a form of anti-Semitism. Lev concludes that

the only way to prevent incest and child sexual abuse in Jewish homes is to educate children and community members on how to confront and respond to the issue properly.

Mandel, David. "A Community Safety Plan to Respond to Sexual Abuse." *Breaking the Silence: Sexual Abuse in the Jewish Community*. Ed. David Mandel and David Pelcovitz. Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2011, 97–117.

David Mandel, a representative of the Jewish social service agency Ohel Children's Home and Family Services, addresses the reality of sexual abuse in the Jewish community, and provides the steps for creating a culture of prevention. Mandel does not find the relocation of pedophiles to be a solution because it is likely they will harm children in a new community. Rather, perpetrators can remain in the community under the strict monitoring of a *shomer*, or a "watchful eye." Mandel introduces a community protection plan with six core elements: "Prevention, Community Education, Emotional Support, Specialized Services, Accountability, and Monitoring" (102). In order to create a culture of prevention, schools and parents must educate children on how to identify and respond to sexual abuse. Since many perpetrators are often relatives or family friends of child victims, children must be taught to be more wary of 'friendly danger' than 'stranger danger.' Rabbis must encourage parents to educate their children, and must publicly condemn sexual abuse in the community. They must stress that sexual abuse must be reported like any other crime, and that one should not feel guilty for exposing a predator. These efforts may lessen the stigma on sexual abuse, therefore increasing victim disclosures.

Palant, Esti. "A Shelter for Orthodox Jewish Women in Israel: The Experience of Helping Religious Women Escape Domestic Abuse." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 19–29.

Esti Palant gave this speech at the First International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community (Baltimore, MD, 2003). She spoke on behalf of the shelter *Bat-Melech* (daughter of the king), which is the only shelter that serves Orthodox Jewish women in Israel. *Bat-Melech* provides a safe atmosphere and refuge for mothers and children, and offers professional counseling and legal support. She opens with the observation that there are distinct features to domestic abuse among religious Jewish women. She mentions the myth that domestic violence does not occur in religious homes, and finds it isolating for religious women in abusive marriages. She lists two features that make the experience of abuse among religious women unique. Firstly, religious women are more likely to be subject to abuse that relates to religious observance. (Other researchers may identify this as spiritual abuse [Dehan and Levi 2009]). Palant provides an example of a husband who would obsess over a small detail of religious law, and force his wife to search for insects on vegetables repeatedly in order to properly adhere to Kosher laws. The second distinct feature Palant identifies is that religious women wait longer to relocate to shelters and undergo more abuse than non-religious survivors. In addition, some Orthodox women stay in their abusive marriages because they believe marriage is especially sacred and essential even if it is abusive. She concludes that it is

crucial to increase awareness of domestic violence in these communities, and to offer younger couples the tools to deal with relationship conflicts.

Pliel-Trossman, Ada. "Services for Women and Girls in Israel." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 141–148.

In this speech, Pliel-Trossman speaks on behalf of the Department of Services for Women and Girls in Israel. She shares some of the organization's long-term goals such as improving women's self-esteem, helping women become economically independent, and putting women in touch with their physical and emotional needs. Some services provided include therapy, and help to find housing, employment, or occupational training. At the time of the speech, there were 14 shelters in Israel serving approximately 700 women and 1,000 children per year. The shelters provide women with a social worker, childcare, and legal assistance. In addition, there are also halfway houses (22 at the time of publication) for women, and hotlines (eight at the time of publication) for battered women. Support centers for victims of sexual assault provide volunteers who "accompany the victim during the police investigation, in the hospital, provide moral support, and refer her to follow-up treatment according to her needs and desires" (145). Pliel-Trossman concludes by addressing the issue of human trafficking in Israel, and announcing that the Department of Services for women and girls is in the process of establishing a shelter for victims of trafficking.

Ringelheim, Joan. "Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research." *Signs* 10 (1985) 741–761.

Ringelheim begins this essay by criticizing how women's experiences in the Holocaust have not been represented as distinct from men's. In order to provide an accurate representation of women's history in the Holocaust Ringelheim conducted interviews with women who survived Auschwitz. Much of the women's testimony revealed the sexual vulnerability of women in the camp. The women interviewed gave accounts of women being raped, using sex as a commodity, and pregnancies and abortions. One woman revealed how she offered sex in exchange for food and other goods. This same woman also reported that another prisoner raped her. Another respondent recalled a young SS officer from the Warsaw Ghetto who would find beautiful Jewish women, rape them, and kill them afterward. Two of the respondents reported being raped, and twelve out of twenty mentioned fear of rape, feelings of sexual humiliation, or using sex as a commodity.

Scarf, Mimi. "Portrait Of the Battered Jewish Wife." *Battered Jewish Wives* (1988) 57–68.

Mimi Scarf opens this chapter with the reality that the battered Jewish wife exists across ages, socio-economic groups, and Jewish denominations. Scarf outlines the typical timeline of abuse among Jewish married couples, and finds that abuse usually starts in the early years of marriage. The reports of battered women reveal some of the events that triggered abusive attacks. One woman was abused because she hogged the covers in bed, another woman beaten because her cooking was not satisfactory, and one woman was violated because she did not express interest when her husband initiated sex. Scarf also

describes abusive husbands as judging their wives character, intelligence, or common sense in addition to inflicting physical abuse. This chapter concludes that since domestic violence is not seen as a Jewish issue, battered Jewish wives may feel isolated and hesitant to expose and leave their abusive husbands.

Silverman, Sue. "My Jewish Journey Home." *Shine the Light: Sexual Abuse and Healing in the Jewish Community*. Ed. Rachel Lev. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2003, 128–134.

Despite being sexually abused by her Jewish father, Silverman believed the myth that sexual violence does not occur in the Jewish community. Silverman recalls that as a child her mother would often tell tales of Jewish children who were kidnapped and perished in the Holocaust. She writes: "I didn't feel safe. For the war felt neither far away nor as if it were really over. Rather, *after* my mother turned off the light and said good-night, her insistent stories seemed to come to life" (128). As a child Silverman distanced herself from her Judaism, and grew attracted to Christianity. She felt Christianity would provide the safety and normalcy she desperately needed. As an adult, Silverman realized she was drawn to Christian symbols and icons because she "was so starved for spirituality" (133). Growing up in an incestuous household did not provide Silverman with faith or belief. Silverman did not reconnect with her Judaism until the release her memoir, *Because I Remember Terror, Father, I Remember You*. While promoting the memoir, a woman approached Silverman and said she was pleased that a Jewish woman published a testimony of incest. After this encounter Silverman finally realized that she was not alone, and that sexual abuse is a Jewish problem.

Sinnreich, Helene. "The Rape of Jewish Women during the Holocaust." *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*. Ed. Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010, 108–123.

Despite Nazi policy regarding *Rassenschande* (race defilement), which prohibited Aryans from engaging in sexual relations with Jews, Jewish women were sexually violated during the Holocaust. Many German Jewish women were subject to sexual abuse while soldiers looted their homes and neighborhoods. Sexual abuse occurred within Jewish ghettos as well. Victim testimony from the Lodz (Litzmannstadt) ghetto reveals that Hans Biebow, in charge of the German Ghetto Administration of the Lodz Ghetto, beat and raped Jewish women on at least three separate occasions. Several testimonies from survivors of Auschwitz describe women who were dragged from barracks by guards and raped. Survivor Sara M. recalls being sexually abused at the Ravensbrück concentration camp at a very young age. She testified that she was brought into a room with at least two men, and violated on a table. Sexual abuse was particularly prevalent in Skarzysko-Kamienna, a labor camp in Poland where many Lodz and Krakow ghetto occupants were sent. Gang rape against Jewish women was a common feature of a sexual abuse in this camp, and sexual violence often occurred in the open or as was deliberately committed in front of other prisoners. In addition, Jewish women were often coerced into serving as prostitutes in military brothels.

Sommer, Robert. "Sexual Exploitation of Women in Nazi Concentration Camp Brothels." *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust*. Ed. Sonja Hedgepeth and Rochelle Saidel. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010, 45–60.

By the end of the Third Reich, brothels appeared in ten of the major concentration camps including Mauthausen (July 1942), Auschwitz-Monowitz (November 1943), and Dachau (April 1944). The first camp brothel opened in Mauthausen in July 1942 under the orders of Heinrich Himmler. Himmler established the *Sonderbauten* (special buildings) in order to increase production efficiency by offering certain prisoners access to a brothel. In 1943 the *Wirtschafts-und Verwaltungshauptamt* (WVHA), the economic and administrative office of the SS, initiated a piecework wage system called the *Prämien-Vorschrift* (bonus order). Hardworking prisoners received bonus coupons if they fulfilled their work quota. In order to enter the brothel, prisoners had to pay two *Reichsmark* in bonus coupons, out of which the forced sex worker would receive 0.45 *Reichsmark*. Women were recruited to the brothels under the pretense that they would be released after six months of sex work. In addition, some women from camp brothels forged "rational relationships" with male prisoners, and would exchange sexual services for extra food rations or protection. Sommer concludes that although women in the brothels were subject to sexual exploitation and stigma, sex work proved to be a survival strategy since there is no record of a woman who died in a brothel *Kommando* (work squad).

Spiegel, Marica Cohn. "Community Culture: Community Response." *Domestic Abuse and the Jewish Community: Perspectives from the First International Conference*. Ed. Cindy Enger and Diane Gardsbane. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2004, 83–92.

In this speech, Spiegel discusses how the *neohasidic* movement has dealt with sexual abuse by charismatic leaders, or *rebbe*s. One defining feature of the *neohasidic* movement is that unlike traditional *Hasidism*, it is not sex-segregated. Spiegel reveals how the intense spiritual experience of the movement can sometimes border on the erotic. For example, *Hasidic rebbes* used to tell their male disciples to take cold baths to deter them from temptation. Students often have very close relationships with their *rebbe*s, and put great faith and trust in them. The deep respect and admiration for *rebbe*s may dissuade survivors from exposing their sexually abusive religious leader. Spiegel provides testimony from one woman who had been abused by her teacher years ago. She attested: "[a]s an orthodox woman, there is a tremendous amount of shame for women related to any premarital sexual involvement, and a girl is likely to be humiliated into silence, as I was" (87). Unfortunately many Orthodox women who expose perpetrators are met with disbelief, and the community may try to protect a revered leader. Spiegel writes that we must demand the perpetrators' accountability and provide a community of safety and support for survivors. Spiegel concludes that the policy on abuse must include procedures for reporting allegations and ongoing education of both professionals and members.

Spiegel, Marcia Cohn. "Forgiveness and the Jewish High Holy Days." *Forgiveness and Abuse: Jewish and Christian Reflections*. Ed. Marie Fortune and Joretta Marshall. New York, NY: Haworth Pastoral, 2002, 25–27.

Spiegel briefly addresses the challenge survivors of abuse may face surrounding the holiday of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement). During this holiday Jews are expected to forgive those who wronged them, and are forgiven for sins for which they repent. Spiegel asks how survivors can forgive those who caused severe damage to them. She says that Jews are not obligated to forgive in all instances, but are highly encouraged to do so. Rather than strive for forgiveness, Spiegel suggests that survivors turn to the notion of *shlemut* (wholeness). She concludes with a prayer of healing and renewal created by a group of Jewish members in her community who have been affected by abuse.

Spiegel, Marcia Cohn. "Spirituality for Survival: Jewish Women Healing Themselves." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 12 (1996) 121–137.

Marcia Cohn Spiegel and other survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence found that rabbis in their communities typically responded to their reports of such violence by delegitimizing the reality of abuse in Jewish households and/or by resorting to victim blaming. In order to find spaces of healing within Judaism, Spiegel and other survivors began changing such religious practices as prayer and ritual, and they began creating their own Midrash. For example, instead of addressing God in prayer in masculine terms such as "father" and "king" some survivors chose to address the feminine aspect of God known as the *Shekhinah* (this name derives from the term "to dwell"). Spiegel also describes how survivors have adopted such new rituals such as adding a *Kos Miriam* (cup of Miriam) to the four glasses of wine present during Passover Seder. Spiegel effectively illustrates that by sharing experiences and creating new rituals in small intimate groups Jewish survivors have discovered new modes of healing and recovery.

Steinmetz, Simona and Muhammad M. Haj-Yahia. "Definitions of and Beliefs About Wife Abuse Among Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Men From Israel." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 21 (2006) 525–554.

Steinmetz and Haj-Yahia conducted a study among 148 ultra-Orthodox men throughout Israel. The men completed a "self-administered questionnaire [that] was utilized to examine their definitions of and beliefs about wife abuse" (525). The questionnaire was designed to measure marital role expectations, familial patriarchal beliefs, and attitudes toward women. Between 8–13.6% of the men agreed that a husband is permitted to beat his wife under certain circumstances, whereas 65.5–93% disagreed. The authors found that the higher the men's level of education, the more likely they were to oppose justifying wife abuse. Approximately 69% of participants agreed that only mentally unhealthy women stay with husbands who beat them. The authors also found that men who held traditional attitudes towards women and patriarchal beliefs about family were less likely to hold the husband accountable for his violence.

Twerski, Abraham. "Why Did She Stay With Him?" *The Shame Borne in Silence: Spouse Abuse in the Jewish Community*. Pittsburgh, PA: Mirkov, 1996, 38–42.

Rabbi Twerski acknowledges a typical response to instances of abuse; why did she stay? Twerski identifies this question as a form of victim blaming because it implies that a woman contributes to her own violence by staying in an abusive relationship. In addition, this question implies that the woman has the option of leaving, and that doing so

is a simple solution to the problem. However, Rabbi Twerski recognizes that our society has not provided a battered woman with resources that would facilitate her leaving. For example, in many cases a battered wife and her children may be financially dependent on her husband. In addition, it is not easy for a woman and her children to relocate. Shelters, when available, only offer temporary residence. The option of leaving is even less available within Orthodox community. Many Orthodox marriages are arranged through a *shidduch* (matchmaking), and it is more difficult to marry off a child who comes from a home where there was known to be abuse. Some Orthodox mothers will suffer violence for years in order to protect their children from stigma. These and many other factors may reinforce an abuser who realizes how unrealistic it is for his wife to leave. Rabbi Twerski concludes that the battered woman's family and community should provide support for her and her children.

Umanit, Irit. "Violence Against Women." *Jewish Feminism in Israel: Some Contemporary Perspectives* (2003) 132–140.

According to Umanit's data every seventh woman in Israel is a battered woman, and every third woman has experienced some kind of violence related to her gender. In addition, Umanit reports that approximately 25 women are killed by their male partners each year in Israel. The issue of violence against women was first raised in the early 1970s, and authorities responded by claiming that no such problem occurred in Israel. The first Israeli shelter for battered women opened in 1976, but the state did not initially provide financial support for it. Violence against women was not seen as a public issue until the Labor Party, in power during the early 1990s, implemented state support for services related to violence against women. At the time of publication (2003) there were 13 shelters for battered women in Israel, yet only six claimed to hold a feminist ideology. The first Israeli rape crisis center opened in 1978 in Tel Aviv, and at the time of publication there were ten rape crisis centers throughout Israel. The main service provided by rape crisis centers is the operation of anonymous hotlines for survivors of any sexual abuse.

Weinbaum, Batya. "How Sexual Trauma Can Create Obstacles to Transnational Feminism: The Case of Shifra." *NWSA Journal* 18 (2006) 71–87.

In this essay Weinbaum relays her interview with Shifra, a Moroccan-born Israeli woman and the founder of the right-wing Zionist Women in White movement in Jerusalem. When asked if she immigrated to Israel by choice or by force, Shifra reveals a history of abuse. While still in Morocco at the age of seventeen, Shifra was raped and kidnapped by Muslim men who entered her community disguised as Jews. Shifra is the daughter of a rabbi, and she interpreted her rape as an act of anti-Semitism. Fortunately she managed to escape, and reported that after the incident she became "a Zionist from head to toe," and sought "a small place on this earth to be a Jew" (75). Shifra joined a Zionist youth group, and later immigrated with her brother. She felt she chose to go to Israel, but as a result of force.

Yehuda, Rachel, and Friedman, Michelle, et al. "History of Past Sexual Abuse in Married Observant Jewish Women." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 164 (2007) 1700–1706.

In this study, Orthodox Jewish married women aged 19–58 answered advertisements asking respondents to fill out an anonymous questionnaire regarding past sexual experiences and sexual abuse. 380 women responded; 208 of which are modern–Orthodox, and 172 of which are ultra–Orthodox. Overall, more ultra–Orthodox women reported instances of abuse than modern–Orthodox women. For example, more ultra–Orthodox women than modern–Orthodox women stated instances of sexual abuse before the age of 13. In addition, women who became observant later in life reported more instances of abuse than women who were raised observant. The authors suggest that the women who were sexually abused may have been more inclined to adopt a more sexually restrictive lifestyle. The authors conclude that they have received great commentary from participants in the study expressing gratitude for the experience.

Zeira, Ana, and Ron Astor, et al. “Sexual Harassment in Jewish and Arab Public Schools in Israel.” *Child Abuse and Neglect* 26 (2002) 150–166.

This study compares rates of sexual harassment among 10,400 Jewish and Arab students in grades 7–11 in Israeli public schools. The authors broadly present the Jewish population as more Western and liberal with regard to sexual issues and gender roles, and the Arab population as more conservative and traditional. Students were presented with seven forms of sexual harassment and asked if they were subjected to any of these acts in the past month. Overall, 29.1% of students reported to at least one form of harassment. The most prevalent forms of harassment engaged in by boys were to expose explicit pictures or to attempt kissing a student. The most common forms of harassment girls experienced were unwanted sexual comments or peers who tried to touch them in a sexual manner. Arab boys and eighth grade students appeared as the most vulnerable groups. Arab girls and older students (grades 10 and 11) were least likely to be sexually harassed. Despite the alarming rates of sexual harassment, the authors reveal that there is no clear policy regarding sexual harassment in Israeli schools, and that sexual harassment in schools is not considered a serious issue.