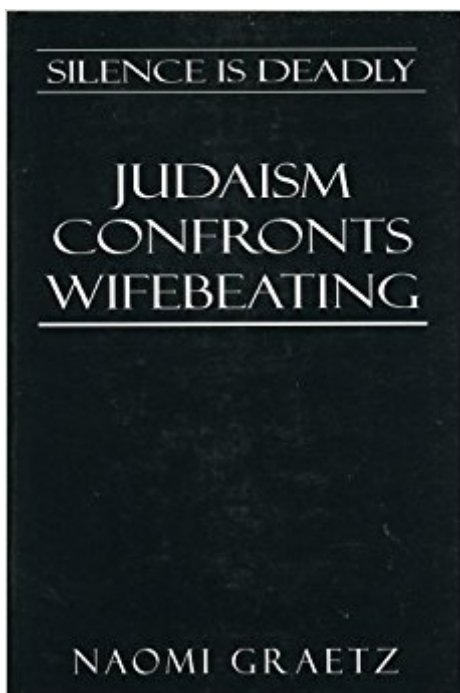


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Silence Is Deadly: Judaism Confronts Wifebeating



Synopsis

The topic of battered women in the Jewish tradition has just begun to be properly explored. The purpose of this book is to present the attitudes on wifebeating that can be found in Jewish texts. As Naomi Graetz shows, rabbinic responses to wifebeating in the Jewish community are not monolithic.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Naomi Graetz's book is another example of an excellent one at that of the current trend in feminist-critique of classical Jewish text, this time on a topic of importance to all who care about justice and equity in the family and in society. (Alice Shalvi, The Israeli Women's Network) Naomi Graetz has written an important and fascinating work meant to be read on several levels. Her well-researched book is a historical and cross-cultural examination of how rabbinic leadership and Jewish law failed in most instances to find adequate relief for the pain and suffering of abused wives. (Rabbi Joel H. Meyers, executive vice-president, The Rabbinical Assembly) Naomi Graetz's *Silence is Deadly: Judaism Confronts Wifebeating*, is an eye-opening exploration of Jewish domestic violence, a subject that many Jews still dismiss, apologetically defend, or consider to be 'taboo.' Yet as Graetz's well-researched and amply documented work reveals, biblical concepts and theological metaphors influenced the creation of rabbinic principles and laws that, despite the ongoing opposition of some rabbis, continue to support wifebeating as a permissible form of punishment and education. Unflinchingly honest, troubling, challenging, and deeply insightful, Graetz's work deserves a wide audience. Both scholarly and accessible, this work makes an invaluable contribution to our better understanding the complexities, and not-always-pleasant

realities, of Jewish family life. (Ellen M. Umansky, Fairfield University)

Naomi Graetz, born in 1943 in New York City, is a Jewish feminist who is grounded both in Jewish tradition and feminist thought. She teaches critical reading skills to students at Ben Gurion University of the Negev and lectures widely on Women and Judaism. She is the author of *S/He Created Them: Feminist Retellings of Biblical Stories*, and her scholarly articles on women in the Bible and Midrash have appeared in numerous journals and edited books. Graetz is a volunteer lecturer for The Women's Support Center of the Negev, which operates a shelter for battered women in Beersheba, and runs a Rosh Hodesh Group for the women of Congregation Magen Avraham, of which she is a member

This book was very very well researched with extensive footnotes and references. It was refreshingly free of apologetic nonsense and tackled the fact that under Jewish law married Jewish women have extremely limited rights. Under Jewish Law a wife cannot get a divorce no matter what the husband is doing because only the husband can release the wife. No Court may grant a divorce decree either. He on the other hand may divorce her easily and for certain infractions (if she curses his parents for example) she even loses her ketubah. The husband, on the other hand, has the right to her earnings, right to enjoy income and fruits from her property, right to anything she finds, right to inherit all her property in the event of her death and right to expect her to perform all household duties (including washing his face, hands and feet). If she refuses to perform these duties he may "scourge her with a rod" (Maimonides, Book of Women). He also has the right to have any kind of sex with her, including anal sex. If she gets injured as a result it seems the majority opinion thinks he does not have to compensate her! This book should be a must read for all high school students -- to show how far civilization has progressed.

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