

“Sexual Abuse, Shonda and Concealment in Orthodox Jewish Communities is a call to the media, politicians, and governmental agencies charged with protecting children from abuse to refuse to appease powerful rabbis who try to prevent child sexual abuse cases from being reported and investigated. The book serves as a wakeup call to mainstream Jewish leaders and congregants to demand that more conservative and authoritarian branches do more to protect the youngest and most vulnerable members.”—Janet Heimlich, author of *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment* and founder of the Child-Friendly Faith Project

This book—the first of its kind—analyzes how and why cases of child sexual abuse have been systematically concealed in Orthodox Jewish communities. The book examines many such cover-ups in detail, showing how denial, backlash against victims, and the manipulation of the secular justice system have placed Orthodox Jewish community leaders in the position of defending or even enabling child abusers.

The book also examines the generally disappointing treatment of this issue in popular media, while dissecting the institutions that contribute to the cover-ups, including two—rabbinic courts and local Orthodox “patrols”—that are more or less unique to Orthodox Jewish communities.

Finally, the book explores the cultural factors that have contributed to this tragedy, and concludes with hopes and proposals for future reform.

Michael Leshner, a writer and a lawyer, has published a number of articles about child abuse and is co-author of a book on the American family court system’s poor record of protecting children. He has performed legal work on behalf of child sexual abuse victims and their protective parents. An Orthodox Jew, he has also published short fiction and poetry and lives in Passaic, New Jersey.