

REJECTION: THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR WIFEBEATING

In this chapter, I will focus on the pattern I call rejection, which is the attitude of the group of rabbis who rejects wifebeating. There are two types of rejection: unqualified and qualified. Rabbis who hold the former attitude state that battering is considered sufficient grounds for divorce. Rabbis holding the qualified attitude, however, view battering as a terrible thing that should not be done, yet take an evasive attitude, which will be discussed fully in Chapter Ten.

Unqualified rejection is an attitude that does not allow compromise. It looks injustice squarely in the eye and will not tolerate what is wrong. In order to repair the state of injustice, it will not perpetuate the root of the injustice, it will not permit the perpetuation of the *status quo*, which is the root of the injustice—in our case, having the wife remain married to a violent husband.

"Rejection" first of all confronts the problem of wifebeating; it does not deny it, accept it, or excuse it. Rejection clearly states that wifebeating is wrong and demands some kind of redress or release of the victim from her suffering.

Unconditional rejection is the approach of those rabbis who face up to the fact that there is a problem and condemn it. Some of them relate creatively to halakha by use of *takkanot* [pl. of *takkanah*] or creative legislation to change what they perceive to be an unjust law.