

In this week's parasha, Vayishlach, Dina, the daughter of Leah and Jacob, is abducted and raped. In this sad tale the Bible again shows its timelessness. Domestic violence (DV) is all too prevalent today, a harsh plague affecting millions of women, children, and men.

The statistics are beyond alarming. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in every four women will experience DV in her lifetime. This is simply intolerable and we must put a stop to it. I am supporting the following organizations that are engaged in this mitzvah work.

Next Thursday is Thanksgiving, but November 25 is also the International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is partnering with other organizations to fight DV. In its October policy paper, it reports on initiatives like the Shaheen Resource Center and Girls Rise India that support and empower girls and women in India. To learn more, go to www.ajws.org.

Locally, Project S.A.R.A.H (Stop Abusive Relationships At Home) is a domestic abuse project funded by the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, the Jewish Federation, and private donations and foundations. Project S.A.R.A.H. targets Jewish women throughout the state. The Project seeks to overcome the cultural, religious, and linguistic barriers that prevent victims from acknowledging the problems of domestic abuse and sexual assault. It aids the Jewish community in finding appropriate ways to access victims' services. While the focus is on Orthodox Jewish women, no one in need of help is ever turned away. To learn more go to www.projectsarah.org.

Please join me in the struggle to end DV by giving to the AJWS, to Project S.A.R.A.H. and to other worthy organizations. On Thursday evening I attended our Federation's 2011 Campaign Kickoff, a very successful event. Please give generously to Federation, which allocates funds for similar programs.

The Messianic Era, a time of peace, will come only with our unflagging pursuit of justice. Isaiah the prophet imagined that, "the wolf will lie down with the lamb, and . the calf and the lion and the fatling together . There will be no violence in God's holy mountain, for the earth will be covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea

(11:6,9) May it be so in our lifetime.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Pont