The Art of Pulling Your Head Out of the Sand



**#1**

**Common sayings:**

Look the other way.

Live and let live.

Mind your own business.

**Question: What do you feel about these idioms? Do you relate to them?**

**#2**

**TODAY’S LEARNING MATERIAL**

**Torah Bereishis 4:8**

*Cain spoke with his brother Hevel. And it happened when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Hevel and killed him.*

*G-d said to Cain: Where is Hevel, your brother? And he replied: I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?*

*Then He said: What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.*

*Therefore, you are cursed more than the ground, which opened wide its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.*

*When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield its its strength to you. You shall be a wanderer and an exile in the land*

**Rabbi S.R. Hirsch**

*G-d’s question “Where is Hevel, your brother?” and Cain’s answer reflect the depravity of the murder and serves as a direct warning to all parties to a quarrel: Each one must know where the other one is. G-d’s question would have been justified even if nothing had happened. And then comes the answer: “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” Cain regards this as a legitimate excuse. It is not his task to look after his brother; he is busy enough attending to his own affairs! The cold-blooded egoism expressed in this answer serves as a warning: Whoever does not care about his fellow man, whoever adopts the motto ”every man for himself,” is not far from the hatred that impels a man to murder even those closest to him, when he feels that the latter stands in his way.*

**Question: Do you agree with the statement that “minding your own business” leads to murder?**

**#3**

**Murder of Kitty Genovese, Wikipedia**

In the early hours of March 13, 1964, 28-year-old Kitty Genovese was stabbed outside the apartment building where she lived in Kew Gardens, Queens, a borough of New York City. Two weeks after the murder, The New York Times published an article claiming that 38 witnesses saw or heard the attack, but none of them called the police or came to her aid.

The incident prompted inquiries into what became known as the bystander effect or "Genovese syndrome", and the murder became a staple of American psychology textbooks for the next four decades.

**Chinese toddler left for dead in hit-and-run crash dies, BBC October 11, 2011**

A two-year-old girl in southern China, who was run over by two vans and ignored by 18 passers-by, has died, hospital officials say.

Surveillance camera footage showed people walking past the girl as she lay bleeding and unconscious.

It sparked a wave of condemnation and soul-searching on China's social networking sites.  
Doctors had earlier said Wang Yue, who had been in a coma since the incident on 13 October, was unlikely to survive.

Police have detained the drivers of both vehicles involved in the incident, which happened in the city of Foshan in southern Guangdong Province.

**Questions:**

* **Why would people just walk by and not help out?**
* **What makes people ignore others in need of help?**
* **How would you react in such a situation?**

**Talmud Eruvin 3b**

*A pot belonging to partners is neither hot nor cold.*

**Questions:**

* **When more than one person is responsible for something, it is common for neither to take responsibility. It is for this reason, say the Sages of the Talmud (e.g. Talmud Bava Basra 24b), that shared spaces are most likely to be neglected.**

**What is the real reason for this?**

* **Is there a way to fix it?**

**#4**

**Mishnah Pirkei Avos 2:6**

*In a place where there are no men, try to be a man.*

**Questions:**

* **How do you understand this Mishnah?**
* **How would you feel helping others when no one else is?**
* **Were you ever in such a situation where you stepped up when help was needed and it was not easy to help?**

**#5**

**Talmud Shavuos 39a**

*All of Israel are responsible for each other.*

**Tanna De-Bei Eliyahu Rabbah (Chapter 11)**

*The People of Israel are similar to a ship. If there is a hole in the lower hold, one does not say “Only the lower hold has a hole in it.” Rather they immediately recognize that the ship is liable to sink and that they must repair the hole down below.*

**Mishnah Pirkei Avos 2:17**

*Rabbi Yossi says: The money of your friend should be as beloved to you as your own ...*

“Responsibility”

The Hebrew for responsibility, *“achrayus*”, comes from the word *“acher”*, meaning an *“other.”*

**Questions:**

* **Do you like taking responsibility?**
* **When is it hard to take responsibility?**
* **What are the ways to accustom yourself to taking responsibility?**