

You shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is being shed. (19:16) Then I shall concentrate My attention upon that man and upon his family. (20:5)

There are two *pesukim*, seemingly unrelated to one another, that both impart the theme of collective responsibility for all Jews. In other words, just because one does not see something happen, he is not relieved of responsibility if he has been aware of it. Likewise, when we cover up the malevolent activities of those close to us, we will answer for it. The Torah first teaches that one must not stand idly by as Jewish blood is spilled. *Rashi* adds, "To see his death, and you are able to save him." *Rashi* is teaching us that, if we are able to save someone and we do not, we transgress *Lo saamod al dam reiecha*. **Horav Yeruchem Levovitz, zl**, adds that we may imply from *Rashi* that it is not relevant whether one was there and executed the act of saving a fellow Jew, or if he was farther away. As long as he could have prevented his fellow Jew's blood from being spilled and he did not, he will one day answer to Hashem for his lack of caring. If one is simply aware of his fellow's plight – be it life-threatening or a financial breakdown – he must come to his assistance. He cannot cover his face and say, "I was not there." If one knows about it – it is as if he were there!

The second *pasuk* relates the punishment for one who gives his child to the *molech*, idol. Hashem will punish the individual – and his family. Why is the family being held responsible for the sin of one of its members? They shielded the sinner, covering up his miscreancy, saving him from the court's punishment. *Rashi* adds, if a family has one of its own who is a *moches*, tax collector, they are all considered *mochsim*, because they covered up for him. Thus, they become as contemptible as he.

Rav Yeruchem observes that this type of covering up for relatives, children, even friends, does them no benefit. In fact, it transforms us into like-minded sinners. Offering excuses for a child's behavior is commonplace. "My child would never do that!" is a common form of reneging of parental responsibility. Veritably, some children suffer because their family situation is, at best, tragic. This takes its toll on the child's mindset, causing him to act out his "issues." It is understandable that, in certain extenuating circumstances, we turn a blind eye to a child's guilt. *Chazal* are teaching that when we cover up, give excuses, rationalize a child's egregious behavior – we become no different.

The Torah teaches us to confront issues head-on and assume responsibility. Ignorance might be bliss – but not for long. It is especially serious when parents are sucked into their child's behavior. Not only does the child lose out, because no one is willing to concede that there is a serious problem, but the parent has become labeled an accomplice.