



When Disaster Strikes: Our Responsibility

Babylonian Talmud Ta'anit 11a

If the community is in trouble, a person must not say,
"I will go home, and eat and drink, and all will be well with me..."

But rather, a person must share in the concerns of the community, for so we find that Moses, our teacher, shared in the distress of the community... Those who share in the community's troubles are worthy to see its consolation.

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

...Therefore, a single person was created to teach you that anyone who destroys one soul, scripture considers him as though he destroyed a whole world and anyone who preserves one soul, scripture considers him as though he preserved a whole world...

Genesis 4:9

God said to Kayin, "Where is Hevel your brother?"

[Two understandings of how to read the Biblical text]

1. He said, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Rashi)
2. He said, "I didn't know I was my brother's keeper [said as a statement of not understanding]." (Kli Yakar)

תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית יא.

בזמן שהצבור שרוי בצער אל יאמר אדם
אלך לביתי ואוכל ואשתה שלום עליך
נפשי...

אלא יצער אדם עם הצבור
שכן מצינו במשה רבינו שציער עצמו עם
הצבור
וכל המצער עצמו עם הצבור זוכה ורואה
בנחמת צבור

משנה סנהדרין ד:ה

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי ללמדך שכל
המאבד נפש אחת מעלה עליו הכתוב
כאלו אבד עולם מלא. וכל המקיים נפש
אחת מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו קיים עולם
מלא...

בראשית ד:ט

ויאמר ה' אל קין אי הבל אחיך
ויאמר לא ידעתי השמר אחי אנכי



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A Conversation with the Late Dr. Abraham Heschel (NBC program no. 205, aired 4 February 1973)

[Find clips of this interview [here](#). This quotation comes at 1:40-2:07]

I would say to young people a number of things, and I have only one minute. I would say let them remember that there is a meaning beyond absurdity. Let them be sure that every little deed counts, that every word has power, and that we do, everyone, our share to redeem the world, in spite of all absurdities, and all the frustrations, and all the disappointment. And above all, remember that the meaning of life is to live life as if it were a work of art.

A Prayer for Healing

Please refer to your *siddur* to find an appropriate *Mi Shebeirach*.