

# *Lo Ta'amod 'al Dam Re'ekha*

## Editorial Introduction

**Mordechai Halperin, M.D.**

“In the early hours of the morning of March 14, 1964, a young woman named Kitty Genovese was attacked on her way home in Queens, New York. The unknown assailant made several separate attacks on her over a period of about forty minutes, and she finally died of the stabs he had inflicted on her. As the police subsequently ascertained, at least thirty-eight neighbors had heard her screams for help, some may have also seen her struggle, yet no one intervened – not even to call the police.”

*Aaron Kirschenbaum, “The Bystander’s Duty to Rescue in Jewish Law”  
ASSIA-Jewish Medical Ethics 3, no. 2 (1998)*

“As far as normative criteria are concerned, the obligation to save life is established in the codex of Jewish law as a legal obligation which obligates whoever happens to chance upon a situation where he can intervene and save life.”

*Eliezer Ben-Shlomo, “The Obligation to Save Life”  
ASSIA-Jewish Medical Ethics 3, no. 2 (1998)*

Until recently, Israeli law did not obligate rescuing someone whose life is in danger except for parents, who must come to the rescue of their children; firefighters, who must come to the rescue when they are summoned; and the driver of a car involved in an accident or the driver of a car who passes by an accident, who must come to the rescue of those injured. Aside from these three exceptions, there was no legal obligation to save the life of one’s fellow man. All this changed in June 1998, when the *Lo Ta'amod 'al Dam Re'ekha* Law was passed by the Knesset.

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