

1) In the story Prelude: Who are the perpetrators? Who are the victims? Who are the bystanders? Why is this story important to consider while we live in the safety and security of our Jewish community in Canada?

After reading the short story Prelude, I've come to the conclusion that the gang (a group of nine boys) are the perpetrators. They continuously pick on Harry and on his family. Towards the end of the story, they even go to the extent of pushing all the newspapers off the Silversteins's newsstand. In addition, I believe that the victim of the story is the Silverstein family. They are known to be good citizens of the town. But regardless, they are repeatedly targeted at by the gang. Throughout the story, the gang throws rocks and other objects, make mean comments towards Syl and her family and physically torment Harry by holding him against the street floor. Harry then realized it was all planned out, they, the Silverstein family is being aimed at. Furthermore, I reckon that the bystanders are the citizens of the town. We see that they remain there, standing and watching without helping. Syl even says "Why don't you help us? What are you standing there for?" But none of them moved." (Prelude, page 11). They are aware of the situation that is unfolding as they witness the gang kick and hold Harry down, while Harry is screaming for help, yet none of the citizens react.

I think that even though we live in a safe and secure Jewish community anything is possible. Antisemitism elutes from small comments or actions others do towards us. At the time they may seem insignificant and go unnoticed. The problem starts when the perpetrators have taken it too far. Perhaps we can't relate to it specifically in today's society but we can't be oblivious to the fact that it can easily happen again.

4) Are we bystanders if we fail to show either moral or physical courage in helping victims of accidents or crimes? If we don't stop our car on a busy highway to help an injured person or animal, if we don't try to help the victim of a mugging or an assault, if we don't try to pull someone from the subway tracks, putting our own life in danger?

According to google, the definition of a bystander is "a person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part". Meaning, regardless if you partake in the incident or just stand there you are considered to be a bystander. So to answer the question, I believe that you are still considered a bystander if you fail to show fear towards a bodily figure or emotional harm from others. You acknowledge the situation, watch and consciously decide that you will not partake.

If we don't stop our car on a busy highway to help an injured person or animal, if we don't try to help the victim of a mugging or an assault. In all these examples, the bystander had the potential to say something and take action. Sometimes all it takes is one minute out of your day to save a life or a comment to brake up a fight. Unfortunately, I've come to realize that nowadays many people are selfish. Their own time and life is extremely valuable and overrides others'. Many people do not take the time to attempt to help others. In addition, some bystanders don't want to take the risk of putting themselves in danger perhaps they think that if they involve themselves the situation can escalate or they worry that they will be hurt.