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## THE FIRST MURDER & EVIL INCLINATIONS

Genesis IV:1-16 ספר בראשית פרק ד (1)

- (א) וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת יְהוָה:  
(ב) וַתִּסֹּף לָלֶדֶת אֶת אָחִיו אֶת הָבֶל וַיְהִי הָבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה:  
(ג) וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לַיהוָה:  
(ד) וְהָבֶל הֵבִיא גַם הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמִחֲלִבְהֶן וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל הָבֶל וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ:  
(ה) וְאֶל קַיִן וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו:  
(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל קַיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָּנֶיךָ:  
(ז) הֲלוֹא אִם תֵּיטִיב שְׂאת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לִפְתּוֹחַ חֹטְאת רֵבִץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשַׁל בּוֹ:  
(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּקָּם קַיִן אֶל הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ:  
(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל קַיִן אֵי הָבֶל אָחִיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אֲנִי כִּי:  
(י) וַיֹּאמֶר מָה עֲשִׂיתָ קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן הָאֲדָמָה:  
(יא) וְעַתָּה אָרוּר אַתָּה מִן הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה אֶת פִּיהָ לִקְחוֹת אֶת דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ מִיָּדְךָ:  
(יב) כִּי תַעֲבֹד אֶת הָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִסַּף תֵּת כֹּחָהּ לָךְ נָע וְנָד תִּהְיֶה בְּאָרֶץ:  
(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל יְהוָה גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשׂוֹא:  
(יד) הֵן גִּרְשַׁת אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנִיךָ אֶסְתֵּר וְהָיִיתִי נָע וְנָד בְּאָרֶץ וְהָיָה כָּל מֹצְאֵי יַהַרְגֵנִי:

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְהוָה לָכֵן כָּל הָרֶג קַיִן שְׁבַעֲתַיִם יִקָּם וַיִּשֶׂם יְהוָה  
 לְקַיִן אֹת לְבִלְתִּי הַכּוֹת אֶתוֹ כָּל מִצָּאוֹ:  
 (טז) וַיֵּצֵא קַיִן מִלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ נוֹד קִדְמַת עֵדֵן:

4:1 The man knew his wife Eve. She conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'I have gained a man with God.'

4:2 She gave birth again, this time to his brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd, while Cain was a worker of the soil.

4:3 An era ended. Cain brought some of his crops as an offering to God.

4:4 Abel also offered some of the firstborn of his flock, from the fattest ones. God paid heed to Abel and his offering,

4:5 but to Cain and his offering, He paid no heed. Cain became very furious and depressed.

4:6 God said to Cain, 'Why are you so furious? Why are you depressed?'

4:7 Surely if you do right there is uplift. But if you do not do right, sin couches at the door; Its urge is toward you, yet you can be its master.

4:8 Cain said [something] to his brother Abel. Then, when they happened to be in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

4:9 God asked Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?'

'I do not know,' replied [Cain]. 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

4:10 God said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is screaming to Me from the ground.

4:11 Now you are cursed from the ground that opened its mouth to take your brother's blood from your hand.

4:12 When you work the ground, it will no longer give you of its strength. You will be restless and isolated in the world.

4:13 Cain said, 'My sin is too great to bear!'

4:14 Behold, today You have banished me from the face of the earth, and I am to be hidden from Your face. I am to be restless and isolated in the world, and whoever finds me will kill me.'

4:15 God said to him, 'Indeed! Whoever kills Cain will be punished seven times as much.' God placed a mark on Cain so that whoever would find him would not kill him.

4:16 Cain went out from before God's presence. He settled in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden.

#### YOUR TORAH NAVIGATOR

1. Who is the villain of this story?
2. We don't know what Cain and Abel said to each other. Create the dialogue that precipitated the murder. In other words try to imagine what they said to each other right before Abel was killed by Cain.
3. If you were God, what would you have done?
4. Would the story have come out differently?

Now that you have learned this passage, present the dialogue you have created for your peers. The dialogue should explain convincingly what motivated Cain to murder his brother.

## מדרש רבה בראשית פרשה כב פסקה ז Midrash Genesis Rabba 22:7

(ז) ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו ויהי בהיותם וגו' על מה היו מדיינים אמרו בואו ונחלוק את העולם אחד נטל הקרקעות ואחד נטל את המטלטלין דין אמר ארעא דאת קאים עליה דידי ודין אמר מה דאת לביש דידי דין אמר חלוץ ודין אמר פרה מתוך כך ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו ויהרגהו רבי יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי אמר שניהם נטלו את הקרקעות ושניהן נטלו את המטלטלין ועל מה היו מדיינים אלא זה אומר בתחומי בהמ"ק נבנה וזה אומר בתחומי בהמ"ק נבנה שנא' ויהי בהיותם בשדה ואין שדה אלא בהמ"ק היך מה דאת אמר (מיכה ג) ציון שדה תחרש ומתוך כך (בראשית ד) ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו וגו' יהודה בר אמי אמר על חוה הראשונה היו מדיינים אמר רבי איבו חוה הראשונה חזרה לעפרה ועל מה היו מדיינים אמר רבי הונא תאומה יתירה נולדה עם הבל זה אומר אני נוטלה שאני בכור וזה אומר אני נוטלה שנולדה עמי ומתוך כך ויקם קין:

**Genesis 4:8 Cain said [something] to his brother Abel. Then, when they happened to be in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.** What were they arguing about? They said: Let's divide up the earth. One took the land and the other took the chattel. One said: The land you're standing on is mine. The other said: The clothes you're wearing, are mine. One said: Take off your clothes. The other said: Fly off the land...and during the altercation **Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.**

In disagreement, Rabbi Yehoshua of Sikhnin said in the name of Rabbi Levy: They both took some land and they both took some chattel, but they argued about where the Temple would be built... One said: It should be built on my side. The other said: It should be built on my side...and during the altercation **Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him...**

Rabbi Huna said: A female twin was born with Abel. One said: I will take her for I am the first-born. The other said: I will take her for she was born with me...and during the altercation **Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.**

### YOUR MIDRASH NAVIGATOR

1. Take each of these opinions and summarize each position in one word.
2. In each situation can you imagine a compromise? If you can, what would it be?
3. Why do these conflicts lead to murder?
4. Does the murder offer resolution?
5. What do all these opinions have in common?
6. What does this Midrash say about the origins of evil?

**Sin couches at the door:** Antoninus said to Rebbe: When does the evil inclination take control of people? From the time of conception or the time when the fetus comes out? Rebbe answered: From the time of conception. Antoninus retorted: If that's so, the baby should kick his mother's belly and come out! So, it must be take control when the baby comes out. Rebbe said: Antoninus has taught me this and there is a verse that supports it: **sin couches at the door.**

(Talmud, Sanhedrin 91b)

Rebbe Reuven Ben Atztrobbi says: How does a person

distance himself from the evil inclination in his belly for the first drop that a man places inside a woman is the evil inclination, but the evil inclination only dwells at the heart's doorway, as it is written:

**sin couches at the door.** (Avot D'Rebbe

Natan Ch. 15)

**urge is toward you:**

the urge of the sin—this is

And God said to Cain: Why are you upset? Why has your face fallen? Surely if you do right there is uplift. But if you do not do right, **sin couches at the door;** Its **urge is toward you, yet you can be its master.** (Genesis 4:6-7)

referring to the evil inclination which will always constantly and fervently yearn to make you stumble. **yet you can be its master:** If you wish, you can be its master.

(Rashi on this verse)

Any man who lives without a wife, and his sword is drawn, the evil inclination controls him. He goes out with him to the marketplace while Satan stands and anticipates that he will annihilate him as it is written: **sin**

**couches at the door;** Its **urge is toward you,**

and Satan sends him to drink from a cup that is not his and causes him to be lost from the world, as it is written: An adulterer lacks a heart.

(Proverbs 6:32)

### Evil From Without And Evil From Within

Rabbi Ami said: The evil inclination does not lurk in the alleys but in the middle of the highway and as soon as he sees a person fix his hair or scan with his eyes, he follows closely behind and says: This one is mine. What is the reason? "If you see a person who thinks he is wise, there is more hope for a fool than for him." (Proverbs 26:12) Rabbi Avin said: Anyone who indulges his urges in his youth, will serve those urges when he is old. What's the reason? "A servant who is spoiled in his youth will come to a bad end." (Proverbs 29:21) (Genesis Rabba 22:7)

"Both small and great are there and a **servant is free from his masters.**" (Job 3:19) As long as a human lives, he is a servant to two urges. A servant to his Creator and a servant to his desires. When he serves his Creator he enrages his desires and when he serves his desires, he enrages his Creator. When he dies, he is liberated. The **servant is free from his masters.** (Midrash Ruth 3:1)

Rabbi Nachman Bar Shmuel Bar Nachman in the name of Shmuel Bar Nachman said: "And it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) 'And it was good'—refers to one's good inclination, 'and it was very good'—refers to one's evil inclination. You mean that an evil inclination is very good?!?!?!?! If it were not for the evil inclination one would not build a house, marry and have children, nor engage in commerce. Thus Solomon wrote in *Kohelet* "skillful enterprise come from men's envy of one another." (Geneis Rabba 9:7)