

The Way of Cain

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1 Yochanan (1 John 3:10-12) *By this the children of Elohim and the children of the devil are revealed: Everyone not practicing righteousness is not of Elohim; also the one not loving his brother. Because this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what did he kill him? Because his works were evil, but the things of his brother were righteous.*

We all know that our world today is flawed and in trouble. However, those flaws are not a part of its true essence. All the murder, hate, rape, prejudice, imperialism, and anger were not built into the original creation. Elohim looked at the world of at creation and said:

- “And behold, it was very good- *ve’hineh-tov me’od*” **Gen.1:31**

Today, as we look around us, we cannot say that the world is very good. Unfortunately the First Commandment of the world is, “*What exists is the Reality-Thou shalt have no other elohims before it.*” To imagine a different reality is greeted with hostility and cynicism. How then can the status quo be changed? The healing and restoration (*tikkun olam*) will be done by flawed human beings like you and I. The message of the Torah is one of transcendence and compassion, and calls for Yisrael to be the ones who are the healers and repairers. Yisrael and the Torah become the tools of social transformation and restoration. It is only within the context of a social setting that the choices between good and evil have to be made. It is also within that context that man’s responsibility to his fellow man must be viewed.

- **Isa 58:6-12** *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of YHWH shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and YHWH will answer; thou shalt cry, and He will say: 'Here I am.' If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedness; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in darkness, and thy gloom be as the noon-day; And YHWH will guide thee*

continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places, thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

In **Bereshith 6:5** it says, “*Va’ayar YHWH ki rabah ra’at ha’adam ba’arets ve’chol yetzer machshavot libo rak ra kol ha’yom.*” The thoughts of mankind became focused upon evil all day .Man failed to recognize each other as human beings created in the image of Elohim. Torah teaches the truth that ALL mankind came from a single father and mother created in the image of Elohim. The sin of non-recognition prevailed upon the earth. This is called “racism”. Racism is the need to deny the other’s right to be taken care of by finding some aspect of the other person which makes the other not really a human being like ourselves. Racism and its proponents are more than willing to provide an outlet for anger, jealousy, and rage by urging people to direct it at some demeaned “other” who is the cause of our own non-recognition.

- **Gal 5:13-15** *For, brothers, you were called to freedom. Only do not use the freedom for an opening to the flesh. But through love serve one another. For the whole Torah is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Lev. 19:18 But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you are not consumed by one another.*

This distorted consciousness manifested in the words of *Kayin* (Cain) after slaying his brother *Hevel* (Abel), “*Am I my brother’s keeper (watchman)?*”¹ Notice the question remains unanswered by Elohim. This is the same classic response by those who turn their backs on the homeless, the widow, the orphan, and the starving. The Torah is very clear that we are our brother’s keeper. The origins of cruelty lie in the sin of not recognizing in one another the image of Elohim that is an essence of our own being. We turn our backs on the hurting and do not hear their pain. It is alienation from the Higher Self and other people that causes a feeling of rejection. The resulting action is violence towards those whom we feel are the source of our rejection. The root of violence of

¹ H8104

שמר shâmar **BDB Definition:** 1) to keep, guard, observe, give heed1a) (Qal)1a1) to keep, have charge of

1a2) to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save life1a2a) watch, watchman (participle)1a3) to watch for, wait for1a4) to watch, observe1a5) to keep, retain, treasure up (in memory)1a6) to keep (within bounds), restrain1a7) to observe, celebrate, keep (Sabbath or covenant or commands), perform (vow)1a8) to keep, preserve, protect1a9) to keep, reserve1b) (Niphal)1b1) to be on one’s guard, take heed, take care, beware1b2) to keep oneself, refrain, abstain1b3) to be kept, be guarded1c) (Piel) to keep, pay heed1d) (Hithpael) to keep oneself from.

any form is the unbearable feeling of rejection and alienation.² Only a murderer renounces the Torah obligations of brotherhood. His own feelings of rejection, alienation, unworthiness, and sin caused *Kayin* to violate the interpersonal relationship instructions of the Torah. YHWH warned *Kayin* to change his psychological outlook and not feel disappointed, dejected, rejected or alienated or sin would overtake him. By harboring these emotions of envy, anger, and violence *Kayin* opened the door of his heart to sin. Sin is the inflated presumption of the Ego which takes over the functions of the Self.

- **James 1:14-15** *But each one is tempted by his own lusts, being drawn out and being seduced by them. Then having conceived lust brings forth sin. And sin being fully formed brings forth death.*
- **Gen 4:5 -7** *but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And YHWH said unto Cain: 'Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee is its desire, but thou mayest rule over it.'*

In slaying his brother *Hevel*, *Kayin*³ destroyed generations of his descendents. A murder not only kills his victim, but something within the survivors' souls as well. Their lives will never be the same as before. Elohim says that *Hevel's* bloods (plural-*dmei*) are crying to Me from the ground. A more correct translation would read, "The sound/voice (singular)! Your brother's bloods (plural) are screaming/crying (plural)!" We may not hear their cries for justice, but YHWH does hear the cries of innocent blood and future generations that are destroyed due to mankind's neglect for his brother. We are all aware of the cries of the aborted unborn, but how many of us pay heed to the cries of the unborn future generations that have been murdered by corporation greed, starvation, violence, war, and diseases around the world? The bloods of these innocent people that have been ignored screams from the ground to our Father in the heavens.

- "He who destroys a single human life is as if he destroyed a while world." **Talmud**
- "One man's blood is equal to all creation"- **Midrash**
- **Matt 19:19** *Honor your father and your mother," and, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*
Ex. 20:12-16; Lev. 19:18; Deut. 5:16-20
- **Psalms 94:3-9** *YHWH, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked exult? They gush out, they speak arrogancy; all the workers of iniquity bear themselves loftily. They crush Thy people, O YHWH,*

² One of the classical archetypes of alienation is the concept of "wilderness".

³ The gematria of *Kayin* (קַיִן) is 160. It has the same numerical value as the word silver (כֶּסֶף) in **Gen 37:28**. This account also speaks of sibling rivalry when Yosef's brothers sold him into slavery because of envy, rejection, and jealousy. It is amazing what man will do to his fellow man for money and greed.

and afflict Thy heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. And they say: 'YHWH will not see, neither will the Elohim of Jacob give heed.' Consider, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye understand? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?

YHWH asks *Kayin*, “*What have you done?*” When confronted with his sin *Kayin* justifies his violent behavior towards his brother with an insolent answer. We can try to justify our lack of compassion and love towards our neighbor with false excuses, but in the end we will be held accountable for our actions in this life. Survivors of the Holocaust not only remember the murderous Nazis, but also the cold indifference of their neighbors who looked on and did nothing as they were being led away to the camps and their deaths. Those who stand by idly and watch the innocent die due to the cruelty and injustices of mankind are also accountable for their silence. When people see others only in terms of what others can do to satisfy their needs, then they become expendable. If they are expendable, then they are not deserving of our love and care, and can be eliminated from society. The Torah juxtaposes the command to “*love your neighbor,*” next to the prohibition “*not to stand idly by while another is in need.*” (**Leviticus 19:16-18**). YHWH demands man to answer for his deeds while upon the earth.

- **Lev 19:16** *Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor: I am YHWH.*
- **Gen 9:5 -6**: *And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of Elohim made He man.*

We, as Yisrael, have a commandment to attain the qualities of goodness and kindness. We are to rid ourselves of jealousy, hatred, falsehood, conceit, and prejudice, and strive to acquire the virtues of humility, kindness, truth, and love for all humanity. How can this be achieved? Only by recognizing the primacy of the soul of a person and the subordination of the body can one attain this quality of love. If we regard the body as preeminent then we can only have conditional love for another.

From this perspective we can only see two distinct human beings. When we recognize the primacy of the other person’s soul, then we possess genuine unconditional love for one another. Only when one’s Ego (*yeshus*) has been nullified can the quality of essence be revealed in a person. By identifying with the “other” and shedding one’s autonomous limitations, the essence of the soul is revealed.

We are all caretakers of this world and its inhabitants, responsible to deal with the problems. We cannot neglect the ethical instruction given to us in the Torah. Everything on earth offers an opportunity for you to connect with others and to grow. Every person you encounter is there because you need it at that time. If someone needs help, it's part of your test in life, a message for you. The **Talmud** asks, "*Why was Adam created alone? So that every person should say, 'the entire world was created just for me.'*" This is a recognition that everything -- including the needs of every other human being -- was created for you.

- **1 John 2:9-11** *The one claiming to be in the light, and hating his brother, is in the darkness until now. The one loving his brother rests in the light, and no offense is in him. But the one hating his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness blinded his eyes*
- **1 John 4:20-21** *If anyone says, I love Elohim, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one not loving his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love Elohim whom he has not seen? And we have this commandment from Him, that the one who loves Elohim also loves his brother.*