

Can one imagine coming home one day and finding the police at your door, informing you that one son of yours has been murdered and the other son is a murderer. You would no doubt be devastated by this revelation; your life would be shattered as you contemplate about your future. Adam HaRishon and Chava [Eve] teach us what to do, they lived through that experience. After feeling devastated and shattered they continued with their lives and had a third son.

The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni [4:38] investigates the event like a homicide and crime scene. The Midrash wonders, how was it that Kayin [Cain] was able to so readily do away with his brother? Presumably, we are dealing with a confrontation between physically stronger and weaker, that Hevel [Abel] was a victim of brute force which he was incapable of overcoming.

Not so at all, say the Sages of the Midrash, the very opposite was true. Hevel was actually stronger of the two. How then do we explain the result of the conflict? Our Chazal [Sages] found the clue by carefully reading the text and reconstructing the murder scene. The Torah states. “*Vayomer Kayin El Hevl Achiv* .[And Kayin spoke to Hevel his brother],-“And it came to pass when they were in the field, that Kayin rose up against Hevel his brother and killed him” [4:8]. What the Torah does not reveal to us is the content of Kayin’s remarks. He spoke- but what did he say? To the ordinary reader it will never be known, but our Chazal were far more perceptive. The Torah would not simply allude to a conversation and then ignore it. Chazal saw the answer in very text itself and explain precisely how a weaker Kayin could have overpowered the stronger Hevel, “*Vayomer Kayin El Hevel—OCHIV*”- What Kayin said to Hevel was- that he was his **brother**, he played upon Hevel’s mercy and kindness. He counted on Kayin’s compassion. He used the pretext of friendship and family in order to make possible his vision of the “final solution”.

For that reason, the Midrash adds, the text reads, “**VAYAKAM KAYIN**” “and Kayin **AROSE**” –Stronger. Hevel had already forced Kayin to his knees. “But at that last moment, says the Midrash, Kayin begged for mercy and the gentle Hevel released his hold upon him. As soon as he arose, he surprised Kayin, caught him off guard and slew him”. The Midrash end with a summation of what lesson we must learn from this event, “*Tav L’vish Loh Taavid*” “[Do the evil no good, lest the evil fall upon you]” (Breishit Rabba 22:8).

Hevel died because he didn’t understand that when dealing with the wicked there must be limits to goodness; to be a “nice guy” when dealing with killers, is in effect, to commit suicide. When confronted with stone throwing “cousins” whose intention is to kill, then no mercy must be shown. If I would have a license to carry a gun and had a gun, and would be confronted with stone throwing terrorists I would not hesitate to use it. I know it’s against Israeli law to use a lethal weapon against stone throwers but I would rather go to jail than risk being killed. *Haba l’hargecha Hashkem V’Horgo*-No mercy, that’s basic self-defense.

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim,  
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