

Kayin brought an offering to Hashem of the fruit of the ground... and as for Hevel, he also brought. (4:3,4)

We note from the *pesukim* that Hevel was a righteous person. The mere fact that Hashem acquiesced to Hevel's sacrifice serves as a barometer of His approbation of Hevel. If so, why was he taken so soon? Hevel's life was cut short due to his brother's irrational jealousy. He did not live long enough even to establish a legacy of offspring. Kayin, on the other hand, lived seven more generations, from which was established the future of the world. To the average spectator, the disparity between the subsequent history of Kayin, the murderer, and Hevel, the innocent victim, is glaring. Furthermore, Kayin did not simply kill Hevel in one swoop. *Chazal* teach us that it was an extremely painful experience for Hevel, since Kayin did not know how a life is taken, from where the *neshamah* leaves. He stabbed Hevel many times all over his body until he struck him in the neck.

Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita, explains that such questions plague the minds of those who have recently embarked on a life of Torah observance. Apparently, prior to their "rebirth," their material/physical lifestyle had been wonderful. Now that they have eschewed their life of abandon, nothing seems to go right. They are financially challenged, emotionally misunderstood, and physically vulnerable.. So they ask: Why? Is this what we have to look forward to now that we have become *frum*, observant?

We have no acceptable reply to these questions. Every Jew suffers in one way or another. Those who think that the fellow who is wealthy, has *yichus*, pedigree, and lives in an ivory tower has it better, is very naïve. We all have *pekelech*, "parcels" of situations, troubles, issues – any name that you want to call it. Why? Ask Hashem. This is the way in which He guides the world. A believing Jew knows this; thus, he maintains his deep conviction despite the challenges to his faith.

Therefore, right from the onset, from the moment the Torah commences to relate the story of mankind, we are confronted with the first protrusive question to our faith – why Hevel? Why not Kayin instead? Why do bad things happen to good people? This question, which has apparently been around for quite some time is based upon the misconception that we mortals have been able to accurately determine the meaning of good/bad. We do not know the correct definition of good people – or bad things. We are not made aware of the reward and punishment in this world, in order that it not preclude our ability to choose wisely between good and evil. If the reward were to be immediate and the punishment likewise, what challenge would there be to being an observant Jew? We must reiterate constantly in our hearts and minds that we are clueless concerning the way in which Hashem runs the world. We have no idea what is involved; even if we were to know what has been factored into Hashem's decisions, our mortal minds could not even begin to grasp it. So, it is best that we do what is asked of us and leave the "decision- making" to Hashem.