

## **And Kayin brought an offering to Hashem of the fruit of the ground. As for Hevel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and from their choicest. And Hashem turned to Hevel and his offering, but to Kayin and to his offering He did not turn. (4:3-5)**

The Torah informs us that Kayin brought of the fruit of the ground as an offering to Hashem. From the fact that the Torah underscores that Hevel's sacrifice was derived

from the choicest animals, we derive that Kayin's offering was of a mediocre quality. Thus, Hashem turned to Hevel's offering, rather than to Kayin's, because Hevel brought from the finest of his animals. This seems a bit difficult to accept. Since when is there a competition among "good," "better," and "best" before Hashem? The Almighty cares only about attitude, not product. The individual's intentions determine the true nature of the sacrifice – not its monetary value. The Torah in *Vayikra* 2:1 commences stating the laws of the *Korban Minchah*, Meal-offering, with the statement, *V'nefesh ki sakriv Korban Minchah l'Hashem*, "When a *nefesh*/person offers a Meal-offering to Hashem." *Rashi* notes that nowhere concerning any of the *korbanos nedavah*, free-willed offerings, does the Torah use the word *nefesh*, which also means soul. He explains that given the simplicity of the ingredients which comprise a *Korban Minchah*, the sacrifice is indicative of the financial status of the individual who brings it. This person is even too poor to afford anything more than these simple ingredients. Because such a person extends himself to bring an offering, despite his current poverty level, the Torah assigns a special value to his deed, considering it as if he actually offered his *nefesh*, soul, on the Altar.

Kayin seems to have manifested the appropriate intentions when bringing his offering. It was just deficient in quality. Why did Hashem not turn to it? *Horav Bunim, zl, m'Peshischa*, explains that the answer is in the motivating factor which inspired the *korban*. Concerning Kayin, the Torah says that he brought an offering "of the fruit of the ground." Only after Kayin "aged" and realized that he was ultimately going to end up in the ground, did he decide to think of Hashem. Hevel, however, brought from the firstborn sheep, the young, healthy animals. This is a reference to when Hevel brought his *korban*: when he was young and vibrant, filled with life. It was at this point that he decided to share with Hashem.

Are we any different? Do we wait until we can do little else before we start visiting the *bais ha'medrash*? Clearly, one should go whenever he can, but it is so much more meaningful when one attends the *bais ha'medrash* when he is filled with the zest of life. Hashem should not have to play second fiddle to everything else in our lives. Our prime time should be devoted to Him.