

## And Kayin brought an offering....to Hashem...and as for Hevel, he also brought (an offering). (4:3,4)

The average student of *Chumash* perceives the first two brothers as paradigms of good and evil. The *Torah* presents Kayin as a *rasha*, evil person, and Hevel as a *tzaddik*, righteous man. Is that really true? The *Torah* emphasizes that “*Hevel also brought (a korban).*” This implies that he was merely emulating his brother’s actions. Does that earn him a virtuous reputation? We may also question why Hashem caused Hevel to die childless. We have no remembrance of Hevel, just as nothing remains of Kayin, whose descendants all died in the Flood. The world was propagated from Sheis, their brother. Does this not suggest that they were both blemished?

**Horav Moshe Shapiro, Shlita**, makes a profound observation into the characters of both Kayin and Hevel. He comments that they really did not possess the character necessary to be the progenitors of mankind. Their true nature can be derived from their names. The name Kayin is related to “*kinyan*,” acquisition. He saw himself as acquiring everything. He was the possessor, the aggressor, the acquirer. He took what he wanted whenever it pleased him. The world is filled with Kayins. They lead, but cannot be led. They impose themselves upon others, but will never defer to anybody. They are unyielding and intractable. They truly cannot work with others. Their personality is the source of much of the evil in the world.

Hevel was also not a saint. His name connotes vanity, a word used to describe triviality and weakness. Hevel was subservient. He did not have a mind of his own. Aggressive is not an accurate description for him. He was obsequious, non-combative, unambitious and complacent. He was a “yes” man, following what others were doing. He “also” brought a *korban*. By nature, leadership was not his forte.

Neither brother had a nature that was suitable to be bequeathed to the next generation. Each represented the extreme of his character. Kayin was bold--but brazen. Hevel had humility--but it was futile. He was not suppressing anything. He was humble because he had no drive.

The ideal is a symbiosis between Kayin and Hevel; of self-assertion with diffidence, forcefulness and unpretentiousness; aggressiveness with humility. One individual who attained these personality traits was -- Moshe *Rabbeinu*. He was the greatest leader. Yet, he was the humblest of all men. He combined both qualities in a harmonious blend. He was humble but could be combative if the circumstance warranted it. He was the quintessential leader who gave the *Torah* and spoke to Hashem, but did not flaunt his superiority. The *Arizal* notes that the *gimatria*, numerical equivalent, of Moshe - 345, equals that of Korach and Hevel. Korach was born to atone for Kayin’s sin. He was to yield to authority, submit to those greater than he, regardless of his remarkable wisdom. A leader must blend all qualities together. Korach, like his predecessor, did not. Kayin and Hevel did not have it.