

Hashem turned to Hevel and his offering, but to Kayin and his offering He did not turn... this annoyed Kayin exceedingly, and his countenance fell... Kayin rose up against his brother Hevel and killed him. (4:4,8)

The **Chasam Sofer**, ז"ל, teaches us a profound lesson, which, coming at the beginning of the Torah, should serve as a guide for us on how to view life through the lens of Torah. Hevel offered a *korban*, sacrifice. Hashem was pleased with Hevel's offering. At the end of the day – where did this *korban* get him? What benefit did Hevel accrue as a result of Hashem's turning to his *korban*? [This is a question likely to be asked by someone whose belief in Hashem and faith in the Torah system are, at best, deficient. A believing Jew does not ask such questions, because he has faith in Hashem.] Now, let us see what his *korban* achieved for Hevel. On page two, we see Hevel lying on the ground, bleeding to death from all of the stab wounds inflicted upon him by his jealous brother, Kayin. So, to wrap up Hevel's short life: Hashem turned to His *korban*. This was followed by Hevel's untimely demise in the most painful manner. He left the world alone, leaving over no wife, no progeny, no legacy, nothing by which to be remembered. This is the seeming end of a very sad story.

Let us now look at Kayin, Hevel's brother and murderer. Hashem did not turn to Kayin's *korban*. This catalyzed Kayin's envy and ire, resulting in his murder of his brother, Hevel. He escaped and was on the "run" for seven generations, during which time his family propagated. He saw the birth of thousands of his descendants, the homes they built, the cities they had established. In the end, he, too, died – but after having lived a full life replete with *nachas* and seeing the transmission of his legacy (whatever it was worth). It almost makes one wonder: Hevel the *tzaddik*, righteous and pious, dies an untimely, miserable death, leaving hardly anyone to mourn him. Kayin, his messed up brother, lived for seven generations and was the progenitor of thousands of descendants. Is it fair?

The *Chasam Sofer* asks us to turn the page and view the Hevel/Kayin tragedy from the Torah's perspective. Hevel died, but his pure, holy *neshamah* ascended to Heaven to be *misgalgel*, transmigration of the soul, into Shes, son of Adam and Chavah, who established the world. True, it took 130 years for this to take place, but Hashem has His reasons. After Shes died, Hevel's *neshamah* returned in the body of none other than Noach *ish tzaddik*, who played a leading role in the saving of the world. Noach, too, died, but Hevel's *neshamah* returned once again after hundreds of years, this time in the body of our quintessential leader, Moshe *Rabbeinu!* Not bad for a legacy! The word *neshamah* is an acronym for: *nun* – Noach; *shin* – Shes; *mem* – Moshe; *Hay* – Hevel!

By the way, do you know what happened to all of Kayin's thousands upon thousands of descendants? They perished in the *Mabul*, Flood! So, who had the legacy – Kayin or Hevel?

This teaches us, explains the *Chasam Sofer*, that it is all about *Olam Habba*, the World to Come. What we see here – or do not see here – is meaningless. It is what we will one day see (if we are worthy) in *Olam Habba* that matters.