

"The blood of your brother cries out to Me from the ground." (4:10)

The word *d'mei* is written in the plural, lending itself to be translated as "bloods." *Chazal* infer from this plural distinction that Kayin's violent crime was not directed at Hevel alone. Indeed, he is held responsible for shedding the "blood" of all future generations. In an alternative interpretation, *Chazal* indicate that Hevel bled from different wounds. Not knowing how to kill his brother, Kayin flung sticks and rocks which inflicted many wounds upon his entire body. Only after he struck his neck did Hevel die. Hashem, upon demanding justice from Kayin, emphasized that each and every wound, every bit of pain that Hevel suffered, cried out for retribution.

Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, z.l., cites *Horav Yoel Sharin, z.l.*, who applies this idea in interpreting the *pasuk* in *Tehillim 9*, "*The avenger of blood has remembered them. He has not forgotten the cry of the humble.*" When Hashem is "*doresh damim*," avenges the blood from a murderer, He does not forget the *tzaakas anavim*, cries of the humble and afflicted. Every wound, every tear that was shed from pain and fear, every bit of suffering incurred by the victim's family will all be avenged. Hashem is *ohns arus*, He avenges the bloods and metes out punishment for every drop of blood that has been shed, for it all contributes to the eventual death.

We suggest that this concept and its ramifications apply to other forms of "murder" as well -- character assassination and the destruction of another's self-esteem and dignity. One need not be mortally wounded to suffer irreparable damage. At times our mouths can destroy lives or we may exert our power to hurt others who just happen to be an obstacle in the timetable we have set for our personal success. Sometimes, our victims suffer slowly, their blood being shed drop by drop. Together with our hapless victims, their wives and children also suffer. We must remember that the *Doresh Damim* will exact punishment for every vestige of misery we have caused to our fellow Jew and his family.