CHAPTER 3

Part 2 - RIVALRY

EXPOSITION [4:1-2]

1. THE A-DAM HAD KNOWN CHAVAH HIS WIFE
SHE CONCEIVED, BORE CAIN AND SAID I REARED A MAN WITH Y-H-W-H (IDEALS).

… וְהָאָדָם יָדַע V'HA-A-DAM YAH-DA… (THE A-DAM HAD KNOWN,,,): The verb in the completed past means this preceded the couple's departure from Eden. *R. M. Alsheikh [16th century Turkey] noted that the text is not the expected וַיֵּדַע אָדָם VA-YEI-DA A-DAM (AND ADAM KNEW - cf. GENESIS 4:17, 25; SAMUEL I 1:19) but furnished an esoteric rationale. Some offered the preposterous suggestion that this was man's inceptive sexual act, oblivious to the fact that animals needed no collective indiscretion to inaugurate their procreation or that His blessing (1:28) had to wait for a setback before it could be realized. Others insinuated a menage a trois with the serpent, a pagan construal nothing less than appalling. A major theological casualty is the thesis that sex was the core Eden transgression, for if the conception preceded the tree incident, any imputation of a sin or "fall" is absurd*. As many Hebrew writers surmise, this text refers to an earlier conception and birth, else it would use the formula אַחַר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה A-CHAHR HA-D'VA-RIM HA-EI-LEH (AFTER THESE EVENTS - cf. GENESIS 15:1; ESTHER 2:1, 3:1; EZRA 7:1).

חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ CHA-VAH ISH-TOH (CHAVAH HIS WIFE): The wife also named tells us this occurred after the "tree" incident (3:20) and that Cain's birth preceded their departure *(their expulsion did not immediately follow their trespass).*

קַיִן QA-YIN (CAIN): Many observed that he is introduced as QA-YIN and wrongly inferred that the text then tells us why his mother so dubbed him. Only *Ha-Emeq Dabhar* (R. N. Berlin - 19th century Lithuania) noted that, as no naming is ascribed to a parent, the name attests to his character, a standard biblical mode (see Exposition 3:1 - V'HA-NA-CHAHSH). QA-YIN is a tool that punctures. *TOO-BHAL QA-YIN (GENESIS 4:22) forged sharp metal instruments (cf. also SAMUEL II 21:16); the feminine form קִינָה QI-NAH is a dirge that "pierces the heart" (cf. JEREMIAH 7:29; EZEKIEL 19:1; AMOS 5:1).* Cain was to succeed his parents as the community *spearhead*.

וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת־יְהֹוָה VA-TOH-MEHR QA-NEE-THEE ISH ETH Y-H-W-H (AND [SHE] SAID I REARED A MAN WITH Y-H-W-H [IDEALS]): Presumptions that she said this at Cain's birth are ruled out by ISH, always a mature man (cf. GENESIS 25:27, JUDGES 20:22; KINGS I 2:2 - *she did not call him בֵּן BEN [SON - cf. GENESIS 30:1], יֶלֶד YEH-LED [CHILD - cf. EXODUS 2:6] or צֶאֱצָא TZEH-EH-TZA [SCION - cf. JOB 27:14], perhaps why some took ISH to be her husband but that does not fit the context*). *QA-YIN does not reflect "acquisition"; that requires the root "Qaph-Nun-Heh" (e. g. אֶלְקְנֶה EL- QA-NAH - EXODUS 6:24; קָנָה QA-NAH - JOSHUA 19:28).* When a condition or event inspires a name, the text first records that, then עַל־כֵּן AL KEIN (THEREFORE) precedes the naming (cf. GENESIS 25:30, 30:6, 31:48). If the name is a harbinger, it is followed by לֵאמֹר LEI-MOHR (TO SAY) and then the desired outcome (cf. GENESIS 5:29, 30:24; CHRONICLES I 4:9). In a third variation, a speaker justifies, then proceeds with, the name (cf. GENESIS 30:11, 13, 18, 38:29). Finally, in the standard formula, a name is affixed, then explained with כִּי KEE (BECAUSE - cf. GENESIS 29; EXODUS 2:22; HOSEA 1:9). This text conforms to none of these; we are told of Cain's birth and CHA-VAH's statement. The interpreters' error is their assumption that this verse begins a chapter *(those who read the Hebrew scrolls should have known better)*; it starts a PAR-SHA which follows the chapter's prelude (3:22-24). QA-NEE-THEE is acquisition by exchange (cf. GENESIS 25:10; EXODUS 12:44; LEVITICUS 22:11) or development/establishment (cf. GENESIS 14:19; EXODUS 15:16; DEUTERONOMY 32:6). CHA-VAH made this remark when Cain was an adult. The presumptive spearhead of the cherubs (3:24), a community oriented to E-LO-HIM principles (see Exposition 1:1 - E-LO-HIM; 3:1-5), relinquished his position to embrace a higher Y-H-W-H ideal - honoring his parents *(by accompanying them to their new home)*. CHA-VAH lauded the "man" she raised, who transcended E-LO-HIM standards for the more refined Y-H-W-H ideals.

2. SHE FURTHER RAISED HIS BROTHER ABEL
ABEL BECAME A SHEPHERD WHILE CAIN WAS A LAND DEVELOPER.

וַתֹּסֶף לָלֶדֶת VA-TOH-SEHPH LA-LEH-DEHTH (SHE FURTHER RAISED): A second birth would be שֵׁנִית SHEI-NEETH (SECOND [TIME] - cf. GENESIS 30:7, 12; EXODUS 1:15; ECCLESIATES 4:15), עוֹד פַּעַם OHD PA-AM (ONCE AGAIN - cf. GENESIS 4:25, 29:33; SAMUEL II 5:13; HOSEA 1:6) or גַּם GAM (ALSO - cf. GENESIS 22:24; CHRONICLES I 20:6). VA-TOH-SEHPH ["she added"] is deliberate (cf. GENESIS 4:12; EXODUS; DEUTERONOMY 3:26 and the memorable GENESIS 30:24 - not repetition of an act {תּוֹסֶף עוֹד TOH-SEHPH OHD - GENESIS 38:5} but an outcome). CHAVAH realized Cain could lead cherubs (3:24) but their standards had to be moderated for the diverse society he now joined. She therefore provided a deputy, one with a different perspective. *Abarbanel [15th century Spain] observed that CHAVAH resumed her position as spokesman to which Adam had appointed her (see Exposition 3:20 - CHA-VAH) for, other than siring children, Adam is now in the background - CHAVAH is the primary supporting actor in the rest of the PAR-SHA.*

אֶת־אָחִיו אֶת־הָבֶל ETH A-CHIV ETH HA-BHEHL (HIS BROTHER ABEL): Typically, the relationship follows the name (cf. GENESIS 14:16; KINGS I 1:10; EZRA 8:17). When that order is reversed, the person's status is more important (cf. GENESIS 21:10, 32:11; JUDGES 9:5) and the second ETH separating the nouns shows a dichotomy (cf. GENESIS 22:2, 12; SAMUEL I 2:34 and note GENESIS 32:12). HEH-BHEHL was to be a "brother" to QA-YIN in mentoring the community but would temper, and sometimes oppose, his brother's teachings.

HEH-BHEHL is "vapor" (ISAIAH 57:13; PSALMS 144:4), its transience extended to "futile" (ISAIAH 30:7; PROVERBS 31:30; JOB 9:29) or "vain" (DEUTERONOMY 32:21; JEREMIAH 2:5; ECCLESIASTES 1:2). The Aramaic "Heh-Bheth" is "give/hand over"; embedded in Hebrew cognates, it suggests transitoriness and was adapted for spurious rites and material pursuits (cf. ISAIAH 49:4; JOB 7:16; ECCLESIASTES 1:14). Cain instructed others in techniques for exploiting the environment he learned from his parents; Abel taught them that ideas are also influenced by fashion, which is transient and fickle (cf. DEUTERONOMY 32:21; KINGS I 16:13; JEREMIAH 2:5; JONAH 2:9).

וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה... VA-Y'HEE HEH-BHEHL ROH-EI TZOHN V'QA-YIN HA-YAH... (ABEL BECAME A SHEPHERD WHILE CAIN WAS...): The VA-Y'HEE... HA-YAH ["And X became... and Y was..."] formula typically presents contrasting or complementary aspects, without the usual import of the verb "to be" (cf. GENESIS 15:17; EXODUS 1:5; JOSHUA 21:10). We are not told that Abel tended sheep and Cain farmed (cf. GENESIS 37:2; EXODUS 3:1; SAMUEL I 17:34) but that one *had become a shepherd*, the other *a land developer* (cf. GENESIS 46:32; KING I 7:14, 9:21; ZECHARIAH 13:5 – a farmer is אִכָּר EE-KAHR ["tiller" - ISAIAH 61:5; JEREMIAH 14:4; JOEL 1:11] or יוֹגֵב YOH-GEIBH ["yeoman" - KINGS II 25:12; JEREMIAH 52:16]). The pristine nuclear family {even with two sisters} posited by traditionalists needed but a ram and ewe to supply its needs; to say Abel was a shepherd would be like a street vendor styling himself a merchant. The text implies that both served a sizable community and *these activities their occupations*. In societies that just graduated from hunter-gatherer to primordial agriculture, all tasks were still shared. To dispel any notion that the boys had favorites, each later offering his and the divine reaction showing a preference, we are told unequivocally that each had a sole pursuit, negating explanations of one gift favored over the other. It was not the contents of the offerings which determined His response, nor their motivations or level of "faith". But the most important, and subtle - thus easily missed, aspect of this development was specialization, which has pronounced benefits - and pitfalls, for it breeds social stratification, the motif of the ensuing drama.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

The A-DAM and CHAVAH lived as man and wife before departing Eden and raised their son Cain to be the spearhead of the next generation. When he chose instead to accompany them to the A-DAM's homeland, CHAVAH declared that she had reared a leader who exemplified the tenets of Y-H-W-H but she groomed a second leader, Cain's brother Abel, who became a shepherd, while Cain had been a land developer.

<u>EXPOSITION [4:3-5]</u>

3. WHEN HARVEST TIME ENDED CAIN BROUGHT OF THE FRUIT OF THE LAND A MEMENTO TO Y-H-W-H.

וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים VA-Y'HEE MI-QEITZ YA-MIM (WHEN HARVEST TIME ENDED): The "Ethnachta" trope on YA-MIM (DAYS) is a more abrupt pause than translations imply [it should be a "R'bhee-ee"]; what ensued was an established protocol *and consistent with MI-QEITZ (root "Qoph-Tzadiq-Tzadiq", "to cut off" - cf. EXODUS 39:3; DEUTERONOMY 25:12; JUDGES 1:6)*. It was not a day he decided to bring a gift (that is וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם VA-Y'HEE HA-YOHM [THE DAY CAME - cf. SAMUEL I 1:4; KINGS II 4:8; JOB 1:6] and that the harvest was over requires בִּימֵי קָצִיר BEE-MEI QA-TZEER (DAYS OF REAPING - cf. GENESIS 30:14; JOSHUA 3:15; JUDGES 15:1) or אָסִיף O-SEEPH (INGATHERING - cf. EXODUS 23:16; ISAIAH 17:5; ESTHER 9:28). MI-QEITZ is a culmination (cf. GENESIS 8:6; EXODUS 12:41; JUDGES 11:39); YA-MIM (DAYS) makes it a variable period precursing an event or activity (cf. KINGS I 17:7; JEREMIAH 13:6), the end of the harvest [its cognate קַיִץ QA-YITZ {SUMMER} alludes to the seasonal in-gathering (cf. EZEKIEL 7:6, AMOS 3:15; MICAH 7:1). The prepositional "Mem" prefix converts a temporal ending into a prelude to what follows (cf. GENESIS 8:6, 41:1; ESTHER 2:12).

וַיָּבֵא VA-YA-BHEI ([CAIN] BROUGHT): A personal offering requires וַיַּעַל VA-YAH-AL (HE [CAUSED TO] RISE - cf. GENESIS 8:20; EXODUS 40:29; JUDGES 13:19) or וַיַּקְרֵב VA-YAQ-REIBH (HE BROUGHT NEAR - cf. LEVITICUS 6:7; NUMBERS 5:25; JUDGES 3:17). This was a delivery to a ceremonial site (cf. GENESIS 47:1, 7; EXODUS 40:21; KINGS I 7:51). If the first such, the phrase would begin וַיִּקַּח VA-YEE-QAHCH (HE TOOK), describe what, where and to whom brought (cf. GENESIS 8:20; EXODUS 18:12; SAMUEL I 15:21) and would record the building of the indispensable altar (GENESIS 8:20, 12:7; EXODUS 17:15, 24:4; NUMBERS 23:14). The "Qadma-V'azla" punctuation separates the remainder of the verse and tells us Cain had previously performed this rite.

מִנְחָה MIN-CHAH (MEMENTO - radical root "Nun-Cheth", "set/place down"; cf. GENESIS 2:15 - VA-YA-NEE-CHEI-HOO): A MIN-CHAH set before Him is not an honorific, gratuity or tribute. *Those are מַתָּנָה MA-TA-NAH (GIFT - cf. EXODUS 28:38; LEVITICUS 23:38; NUMBERS 18:29), מַשְׂאֵת MAHS-EISS (BENEFACTION - cf. GENESIS 43:34; AMOS 5:11; ESTHER 2:18), נְדָבָה N'DA-BHAH (DONATION - cf. EXODUS 35:29; LEVITICUS 7:16; NUMBERS 5:13), תְּשׁוּרָה T'SHOO-RAH (PRESENT - cf. SAMUEL I 9:7) or שַׁי SHAI (TRIBUTE - cf. ISAIAH 18:7; PSALMS 68:29 [30 in the Hebrew]).* It puts all the donor's resources at His disposal; unlike blood sacrifices, in which animals are surrogates, a MIN-CHAH subordinates one's assets to Y-H-W-H. This undermines notions of a defect in Cain's gift or character; a MIN-CHAH represents an entire estate, that it be the best or most prized thus unnecessary. *First Fruits were just that (GENESIS 23:19, 34:26; EZEKIEL 44:30); the landowner did not have the option of choosing the finest.*

4. ABEL BROUGHT ALSO HE OF HIS FLOCK'S FIRSTLINGS AND OF THEIR MILK GIVERS
Y-H-W-H RESPONDED TO ABEL AND TO HIS MEMENTO.

וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא גַם־הוּא V'HEH-BHEHL HEI-BHEE GAM HOO (ABEL BROUGHT ALSO HE): The brothers did not act simultaneously, else GAM (ALSO) would open the verse (cf. EXODUS 12:32; DEUTERONOMY 1:37; ESTHER 1:9). When it follows a proper noun and transitive verb, then precedes a pronoun, it indicates a reaction (cf. EXODUS 1:10, 7:11; JUDGES 6:35; SAMUEL I 19:21). *Expositors unfamiliar with agrarian life did not realize Abel's sheep were born six months before or after Cain's harvest. Lambing takes place in early spring, crop harvests in autumn. Assertions that conditions were different then are unviable; Scripture forestalls erroneous conclusions (cf. GENESIS 30:14; JUDGES 15:1).* Abel acted well after, but because of, Cain. If Cain brought his selection six months prior to Abel's flock lambing but it was deficient, Y-H-W-H did not see fit to tell him. If it was only inadequate compared to Abel's, it is hard to believe Y-H-W-H retrofitted a contest. If Abel's lambs came first, he did nothing for six months but was then inspired by Cain. What Cain achieved was due primarily to his own efforts (see DEUTERONOMY 8:17); Abel expended little - his flock's increase was natural. If anyone should have expressed gratitude, it was Abel - and the Divine reaction is baffling.

Discoveries of 10,000+ year old ceremonial centers at Gobelki Tepe and Karahan Tepe [Turkey] leave no doubt these were common in the Levant long before Scripture was canonized. Conjectures as to motivations for sacrifice stem from assumptions that biblical

narratives are residuals of earlier practices and their purposes; there is no sign the Israelites entertained these beliefs or shared those of their pagan neighbors. Biblical accounts must be understood in the context of the creedal system of its intended audience; all others, even those of peoples geographically proximate, are irrelevant. Incentives for personal *sacrifices and donations - toward construction of His habitat (EXODUS 25:8), expressions of generosity (EXODUS 35:21), support of the priestly hierarchy (LEVITICUS 7:16) or gratitude for alleviation of distress or danger or realizing a boon (PSALMS 54:6 [8 in the Hebrew]) - are explicit. Textual nuances were grasped by early readers who still had temple protocols and agricultural precepts to inform their understanding. The thesis that these actions sprang from innate inclinations is refuted by anyone today looking inward or to acquaintances - people do not harbor such impulses. Nor are there indications Adam did this, for he surely would instruct his sons how to do it properly, obviating any deficiency in Cain's performance or Y-H-W-H's adverse reaction. Suggestions that this echoes pagan feeding or appeasing gods would sound ludicrous to the Israelites.*

מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ MI-B'KHOH-ROHTH TZOH-NOH (OF HIS FLOCK'S FIRSTLINGS): Distinguishing the B'KHOHR memorializes His saving Israel's firstborn in Egypt (EXODUS 13); firstlings are not intrinsically special, *perhaps why some render B'KHOH-ROHTH "the best" but this denotes people in elect, singular positions (cf. GENESIS 25:31; EXODUS 4:22; PSALMS 89:27 [28 in the Hebrew]).* Early readers caught the subtlety here - Cain brought generic P'REE HA-A-DA-MAH (FRUIT OF THE LAND - cf. DEUTERONOMY 26:2, 10; JEREMIAH 7:20; MALACHI 3:11), Abel from TZOH-N<u>OH</u>, "*his* flock". *Traditionalists who insist that one nuclear family informs this story should find this dissonant; the concept of property has no place in such a scenario. Even in a small community, a shepherd would not own a flock; it would be a common possession.* These sheep were all his. Cain acted as group representative (see 3:1 - QA-YIN); Abel's donation was personal.

וּמֵחֶלְבֵהֶן U-MEI-CHEH-L'BHEI-HEN (AND OF THEIR MILK GIVERS): The presumption that the root "Cheth-Lamed-Beth" here means "fat" gave rise to two defective translations. The minority asserts Abel burned sheep innards (e. g. LEVITICUS 6:5; NUMBERS 18:17; KINGS I 8:64); this requires an altar, always explicitly stated even if the sacrifice itself is not (cf. GENESIS 8:20, 12:7, 13:18; EXODUS 17:15; NUMBERS 23:14; JOSHUA 8:30; JUDGES 6:24) and would certainly be mentioned in Scripture's first such sacrament. The Israelites knew fat incineration was routine in such services (cf. LEVITICUS 4:19, 31, 6:5, 7:31) but the "Vav" conjunction and "Mem" ["of"] preposition make this a second item, not part of the first; if they were the "choicest', the grammar implies additional, hardier sheep. *Those ignoring syntax to insist these were the choicest <u>of</u> the first born must explain why the text is not* מחלבי בכורות צאנו *MEI-CHEH-L'BHEI B'KHOH-ROHTH TZOHNO or simply* מבחר צאנו *MI-BH-CHAR TZOH-NOH (CHOICEST OF HIS FLOCK - cf. EZEKIEL 24:5). It would also be the only time the word is used this way. Better - and unambiguous - are* אֲבוּסִים *AH-BHOO-SIM (STOCKY - cf. KINGS I 5:3; PROVERBS 15:17),* שמינים *SH'MEI-NIM (FATTENED - cf. GENESIS 49:20; DEUTERONOMY 32:15; DANIEL 11:24),* בְּרִיאוֹת *B'REE-OHTH (WELL-NOURISHED - cf. GENESIS 41:2; EZEKIEL 34:3; DANIEL 1:15) and* חָסֹן *CHAH-SOHN (STOUT - cf. ISAIAH 1:31; AMOS 2:9).* Both readings have two defects, each cited by one scholar. *Minchath Shai* [R. Yedidiah Norzi, 17th century Italy] noted the absence of the diacritical "dagesh" in the "Beth", making the "b" a softer "bh" (cf. EXODUS 30:34; LEVITICUS 8:16, 25). *RaDaQ* [R. David Kimche - 13th century France] claims the missing "Yud" after the "Beth" is a stylistic quirk, the noun still plural (cf. LEVITICUS 6:5; KINGS I 8:64; CHRONICLES II 7:7). *Minchath Shai*, a compendium of Masoretic morphology and cantillation, contains no explanations, technical or literary but *RaDaQ* is usually voluble, hence out-of-character for him to point out an absent letter but proffer no reason, more puzzling in that, while one deviation can be overlooked, two cannot.

Klei Yaqar [R. S. Luntschitz, 17th century Prague] boldly asserted that the noun here takes its other meaning, "milk" (cf. EXODUS 23:19; DEUTERONOMY 32:14; PROVERBS 27:27), dispelling the difficulties posed by "fats/fattened" but raising another - milk is never an element in biblical rituals. He therefore proposed the whimsical theory that it was an ancient pagan practice - and why mixing milk and meat was later forbidden to Israelites (EXODUS 34:26), quite a stretch considering that Abel's offering was "accepted", hence not idolatrous. *The injunction forbids <u>cooking</u> meat in milk [and its subsequent use or consumption], a custom not found in any heathen rite*. A bigger problem is that newborns cannot produce milk. Abel nevertheless did bring milk - in the form of mature ewes that nourished the firstborn. *Conventional interpretations require the verse to open with a "Pashta" on V'HEH-BHEHL, then "Zaqef-Qatan". The actual sequence, starting with a "Qadma" on V'HEH-BHEHL and ending with a "Tipchah" on TZOH-NOH, separates U-MEI-CHEH-L'BHEI-HEHN into a group distinct from the first. Animals designated as MIN-CHAH are not sacrificed; the menagerie Jacob sent to Esau was homage [GENESIS 32:19]. Those who see the few MIN-CHAH references implying animal sacrifice are wrong. Eli's sons (SAMUEL I 2:17)*

misappropriated both animal and meal offerings. MALACHI [1:10-13, 2:10] bemoans His rebuff of all offerings. The high priest's MIN-CHAH meal offering was burned [LEVITICUS 6:16], not as sacrifice, but to preclude its mundane use, like CHEI-REM ["proscription" - cf. DEUTERONOMY 7:26] objects that are obliterated, buried or submerged). In early agricultural societies, meat was a luxury *{Pharaoh had two dreams forecasting seven years of plenty followed by seven of want (GENESIS 41:1-7). The first seven years were symbolized by cattle - the second by ears of grain. "Pharaoh awoke" after the first; only after the second did he display anxiety. He was not perturbed by the first dream because a dearth of cattle would only affect the wealthy; a blight on crops threatened everyone [cf. Exodus 16:3; Deuteronomy 12:20]},* while milk exemplified prosperity (cf. Exodus 3:8; Isaiah 7:22; Ezekiel 25:4). Sheep were often marks of wealth (cf. DEUTERONOMY 7:13, 28:4), assets that advanced humanity from subsistence to surplus but also saw egalitarianism give way to inequality, disparities of influence, then hierarchies dominated by the powerful. With his own flock of sheep, Abel made himself one of the wealthier members of his pristine commune, perhaps the wealthiest. He brought sheep for the same reason Cain brought crops. Early readers knew that this formal ceremony evinced a symbiosis; for devoting its resources to Him, the populace expected reciprocity - but Abel raised the stakes. Meat consumption, reserved for special occasions, sacrificial ceremonies and celebrations *("sacrifice" did not originally mean giving something to obtain advantage but making it sacred, effected by "sharing" the feast with a god),* was now converted from luxury to staple.

וַיִּשַׁע VA-YEE-SHA ([HE] RESPONDED): The "Pee-el" [intense] verb indicates palpable reaction, not passive satisfaction or acceptance *[perhaps why some suggest a heavenly fire consumed the offering but this phenomenon is restricted to spectacles whose purpose transcended the sacrificial aspect or was solicited (cf. LEVITICUS 9:24; JUDGES 6:21; 13:19-20; KINGS I 18:38; CHRONICLES I 21:26).* VA-YEE-SHA is a response to a plea, overt or implied. *The word's obscurity misled translators; even Rashi (R. S. Itzchaki, 11th century France) forced a reading of EXODUS 5:9 in which he contested its equivalence to the same verb here, a section some claimed was inserted into his text. What confused them is the "Beth" preposition in the Exodus passage, rather than the dative "Lamed" found everywhere else with this verb, something Rashi himself elaborates on unnecessarily in a futile attempt to reconcile these texts with the common view that, in Exodus, Pharaoh referenced the Israelites. In that case, he would say* דִּבְרֵי הֶבֶל *DI-BH'REI HEH-BHEHL (VAIN SPEECH - cf. ZECHARIAH 10:2; JOB 35:16; ECCLESIASTES 1:2) or* דְּבָרִים רֵיקִים *D'BHA-RIM REI-QIM (EMPTY TALK - cf. DEUTERONOMY 32:47; ISAIAH 55:11; PSALMS 2:1). He cautioned his staff not to listen to* דִּבְרֵי שֶׁקֶר *DI-BH'REI SHEH-QER, perceptible falsehoods, not speculations that may come to naught (cf. DEUTERONOMY 19:18; ISAIAH 9:14; MICAH 6:12). He warned them not to accept false reports from sympathetic Egyptian taskmasters as to how many bricks the Israelites produced.* It is understandable that commentators struggled with the form of the divine reaction. A tiny number suggested that the outcome of Abel's endeavors surpassed that of the previous season, while Cain's did not, an explanation proffered with some hesitancy, since this only became apparent much later; the Israelites understood this intuitively.

אֶל־הֶבֶל וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ EL HEH-BHEHL V'EL MIN-CHA-THOH (TO ABEL AND TO HIS MEMENTO): When every noun in a sequence has an EL (TO) preposition, different aspects of each are alluded to (cf. - GENESIS 24:4, 38; LEVITICUS 25:41; DEUTERONOMY 9:27 and note how Jacob refers to Esau in GENESIS 32:12 and how his family is grouped in GENESIS 33:2). The divine response had a dual nature. Abel's flock noticeably increased in the next year but those that joined in his public observance also enjoyed a more prosperous harvest.

5. BUT TO CAIN AND HIS MEMENTO HE RESPONDED NOT
CAIN WAS GREATLY DISTRESSED AND BECAME DEPRESSED.

לֹא שָׁעָה LOH SHA-AH (HE RESPONDED NOT): This was not rejection. *That is* נִאֵר *NEE-EIR (REJECT - cf. PSALMS 89:39 [40 in the Hebrew]; LAMENTATIONS 2:7),* זָנַח *ZA-NACH (ESCHEW - cf. HOSEA 8:3; ZECHARIAH 10:6; LAMENTATIONS 2:7),* מָאַס *MO-AHSS (SPURN - cf. NUMBERS 11:20; JUDGES 9:38; ISAIAH 7:15),* לֹא קִבֵּל *LOH QEE-BEIL (ACCEPTED NOT - cf. JOB 2:10; ESTHER 4:4),* לֹא רָצָה *LOH RA-TZAH (DESIRED NOT - cf. LEVITICUS 7:18; JEREMIAH 14:10; AMOS 5:22) or* לא פנה *LOH PA-NAH (TURNED NOT [TOWARD] - cf. LEVITICUS 20:6; NUMBERS 16:15; JOB 5:1).* But Cain did notice that the improved economic positions of Abel and his associates contrasted sharply with the lack of same for him and his followers.

וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד VA-YEE-CHAHR L'QA-YIN M'OHD (CAIN WAS GREATLY DISTRESSED): כַּעַס KA-AHS (ANGER - cf. SAMUEL I 1:6; PROVERBS 17:25; NEHEMIAH 3:37), זַעַם ZA-AHM (WRATH - cf. ISAIAH 10:5; NAHUM 1:6; ZEPHANIA 3:8), זַעַף ZA-AHPH (RAGE - cf. JONAH 1:15; MICAH 7:9; DANIEL 1:10), חֵמָה CHEI-MAH (FURY - cf. GENESIS 27:44; NUMBERS 25:11; ESTHER 1:12), הִתְאַנַּף HITH-A-NAHPH (INCENSED - cf. DEUTERONOMY 1:37, 4:21, 9:20) or קֶצֶף QEH-TZEHPH (IRE - cf. GENESIS 40:2; EXODUS 16:20; ESTHER 1:12) are better suited for the standard translations. VA-YEE-CHAHR is a more nuanced vexation {*When paired with* אַף *AHPH (NOSTRIL - cf. EXODUS 11:8; SAMUEL I 20:34; ISAIAH 7:4), it alludes to a physical manifestation; when followed by a noun with a "Beth" prefix, its target is identified (cf. GENESIS 30:2; EXODUS 4:14; SAMUEL II 6:7)*} or discomfiture (cf. NEHEMIAH 3:33, where the king's disquiet induces anger) and typically precedes a dative "Lamed" prefix (cf. NUMBERS 16:15; SAMUEL I 15:11; JONAH 4:1). When the adverb M'OHD (VERY) is also present, as here, the text imputes a situation demanding redress (cf. GENESIS 34:7; SAMUEL I 18:8; NEHEMIAH 4:1, 5:6), for Cain faced a challenge to his leadership, one apparently endorsed by Y-H-W-H Himself.

וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו VA-YI-P'LOO PA-NAV (AND BECAME DEPRESSED): Unlike עָצוּב A-TZOOBH (SAD - SAMUEL I 20:3), זַעַף ZA-APH (DEJECTION - KINGS I 20:43), רָצוּץ RA-TZOOTZ (DESPONDENT - DEUTERONOMY 28:33) or עָגוּם A-GOOM (SORROWED - cf. JOB 30:25), the idiom rooted in "Peh-Nun-Heh" ["face/turn to" - *a word pair in a figure of speech appearing nowhere else in Scripture*] tells us how Cain's agitation was perceived by others (cf. GENESIS 40:7; DEUTERONOMY 1:17; ISAIAH 3:3; JOB 14:20 and Exposition of AL P'NEI [1:2]), a subtlety missed by commentators [and not perceptible in translations]. A series of verbs in the incomplete past indicates sequential acts, not simultaneous ones (cf. GENESIS 25:34; EXODUS 2:12; SAMUEL I 17:8). Cain's initial anger turned into despondence; he could find no way to reassert his position, hence his leadership was discredited.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

After the harvest, Cain brought some of it to the public site. Abel also brought of his flock's first born and milk providers. Y-H-W-H responded to Abel and his memento but not to Cain and his. This angered Cain greatly and depressed him.

EXPOSITION {4:6-7]

6. Y-H-W-H SAID TO CAIN: WHY ARE YOU DISTRESSED? AND WHY ARE YOU DEPRESSED?

לָמָה... וְלָמָה... LA-MAH… V'LA-MAH… (WHY… AND WHY…): מַדּוּעַ MA-DOO-A (WHY) seeks the cause of a condition or outcome (e. g. GENESIS 40:7; EXODUS 1:18, 2:18, 3:3; NUMBERS 12:8, 16:3). LA-MAH asks what inspired an action (e. g. GENESIS 12:19, 27:45; JOSHUA 7:7; JUDGES 12:3) but with a diacritic ("dagesh") in the "Mem", which moves the accent to the first syllable and emphasizes the dative aspect of the "Lamed" [as here], it questions motive (GENESIS 29:25; EXODUS 2:13; JOSHUA 7:10 and cf. EXODUS 5:22; NUMBERS 11:11 where both occur in one verse). When repeated, two questions are asked (cf. GENESIS 12:18-19; SAMUEL I 1:8; PSALMS 42: 9 [10 in the Hebrew]). Cain was not asked why he was angry or dejected but what he hoped to accomplish with lingering resentment and deliberate abandonment of his followers. These are not rhetorical questions intended as reprimand and implying that Cain was at fault and could redress his situation, hence no excuse for his attitude. Some Hebrew writers correctly object that Cain was rightly perturbed; Y-H-W-H spurned his gift and, if He did this in a public venue, magnified his embarrassment and gave him ample reason to be aggrieved (cf. NUMBERS 12:14). Those proposing this were inattentive to the form of the interrogative. Another school understands this as a warning. This fails for two reasons. Even when anticipated due to manifest anger or discontent, the reaction to be thwarted is defined (cf. GENESIS 27:41, 37:18; EXODUS 2:15). Second, those few occasions when He delivered a warning, it was explicit (GENESIS 20:3, 31:29; NUMBERS 22:12); the text does not use ornate verbiage not readily understood.

The most ubiquitous reading has Cain receiving a "roadmap to righteousness". This does not fit the narrative at all, for then the only interpretation is that what he brought was not good enough, a deficiency attributed to his lack of "faith", a contrived doctrine. Christian clerics were so thrilled to discover their dogma confirmed by Scripture they failed to see its tautological absurdity. Cain's remorse would have to be accompanied by a faith hitherto absent but after getting His personal assurance, the necessity for faith evaporated. *Readers of our prologue will recall that David's encounter with Goliath was also viewed as a triumph of faith, the commentators forgetting that David, already anointed to succeed the incumbent king, harbored no doubts that he would prevail. In fact, he went to great lengths to conceal any divine intervention on his behalf.* Furthermore, our text offers no clue as to what offence Cain had committed, especially problematic if we are correct in that the divine indifference only became apparent months after Cain brought his offering. And if Cain was truly given a "recipe for success", any precocious youngster would know what he had to do - replenish his gift in a second ceremony.

<div align="center">

7. IF YOU BUT IMPROVE (YOUR) LEADERSHIP
FOR IF YOU DO NOT BETTER (IT) DISCORD WILL SPRAWL THROUGH (THIS) BREACH
BUT HIS INCLINATION IS TO (FOLLOW) YOU AND YOU WILL (BE ABLE TO) GUIDE HIM.

</div>

הֲלוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת HA-LOH IM TEI-TIBH S'EITH (IF YOU BUT IMPROVE [YOUR] LEADERSHIP): The "Vav" vowel indicator in HA-LOH makes a composite with "Lamed-Vav" [LOO - "if only"], adding a layer of meaning that turns it into "if you but..." (cf. NUMBERS 14:2; DEUTERONOMY 32:29; JUDGES 8:19). Discouraged by the poor results for his followers compared to Abel and his adherents and frustrated by lost prestige, Cain retreats from leadership, evoking Y-H-W-H's advice (see Exposition3:15-19). The most simplistic reading is that Cain was encouraged to "do good"; that is עֲשֵׂה־טוֹב A-SEI TOHBH (cf. JOSHUA 9:25; JUDGES 8:35, PSALMS 14:1), יָשָׁר YA-SHAR (STRAIGHTFORWARD - cf. DEUTERONOMY 12:28; KINGS II 10:3; CHRONICLES II 31:20) or תִּשְׁמֹר TISH-MOHR (ADHERE [TO] - cf. GENESIS 17:9; DEUTERONOMY 8:2; JOSHUA 1:8). Some suggest he was urged to repent, although nothing in the text indicates what for - and that is תָּשׁוּב TA-SHOOBH (RETURN - cf. JEREMIAH 4:1; HOSEA 12:7; JOB 22:23). These savants miss the import of a transitive [and intense "Pee-el"] verb that modifies the indefinite gerundial noun S'EITH. It has nothing to do with forgiveness; that is נִסְלַח NIS-LACH (FORGIVEN - cf. LEVITICUS 4:20, 5:10; NUMBERS 15:25) or יְכֻפַּר Y'KHA-PEIR (PARDON - cf. EXODUS 30:10; LEVITICUS 1:4; NUMBERS 28:22). *The radical root "Sin-Aleph" refers to absolution only when in verb form and accompanied by a noun indicating the infractions "lifted" (cf. GENESIS 18:24; EZEKIEL 4:4; HOSEA 14:3).* Others suggest uplifting (תָּרֹם TAH-ROHM - cf. NUMBERS 15:19; EZEKIEL 45:1; MICAH 5:8) or acceptance (קֻבַּל QEE-BEIL - cf. JOB 2:10; ESTHER 4:4, 9:23). These [and other mistranslations] treat S'EITH as a verb describing the anticipated result of Cain's remorse; it is a gerund relating to physical or figurative "raising" (skin swelling {LEVITICUS 13:2}, lifted burden {GENESIS 44:1}). In a social context, it is leadership ("carrying" a community - cf. GENESIS 49:3; NUMBERS 11:17; DEUTERONOMY 1:9), precisely what Y-H-W-H counseled. As He did for the protagonists in the last chapter, Y-H-W-H gave Cain a format for his new situation, one with which he could regain his former position. "If he but" took the initiative, he would be restored *(biblical style sometimes omits the succeeding phrase of the "if... then" formula when such is readily apparent - cf. GENESIS 21:23, 26:29; EXODUS 18:23, 32:32; NUMBERS 11:22, 22:33).*

לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ LA-PEH-THACH CHA-TOTH ROH-BHEITZ (DISCORD WILL SPRAWL THROUGH [THIS] BREACH): The extant translations, "Sin crouches/couches/lies/waits/is present at the door/opening/entrance", are wrong. PEH-THACH is not a "door"; that is דֶּלֶת. *In GENESIS 19:6, the two words clearly have disparate meanings.* "Entrance" or "opening" is better but the dative "Lamed" prefix with a "Patach" vowel [in place of the indicative "Heh"] obviates any obstruction; the prepositional prefix makes it a destination, not the position of a barrier *(that is בַּדֶּלֶת BA-DEH-LEHTH ["at the door" - cf. DEUTERONOMY 15:17; KINGS II 6:32])*. The feminine CHA-TOTH is not "sin"; that is the masculine חֵטְא CHEIT (LEVITICUS 1:17; DEUTERONOMY 19:15, 21:22; LAMENTATIONS 1:8). Its verb, however, is masculine. Only Sa'adya Gaon [10th century Egypt] and ShaDaL [S. D. Luzzatto, 19th cent. Italy] noted this; both gave forced answers which, while

plausible, do not address the additional difficulty that the possessive suffixes of the gerundial noun and pronoun in the next phrases are also masculine. *The usually precise and insightful Everett Fox failed here with his "crouching demon".* CHA-TOTH is multifaceted, its exact meaning depending on context. *Also note that "sin" personified is a metaphor found nowhere else in Scripture and would not have resonated with the Israelites*. ROH-BHEITZ is not "crouch"; that is כָּרַע KA-RA (GENESIS 49:9). Rather than a tense squat, ROH-BHEITZ is a placid, stretching lounge (cf. EXODUS 23:5; ISAIAH 11:6; EZEKIEL 29:3) - and should be the feminine רֹבֶצֶת ROH-BHEH-TZEHTH (cf. GENESIS 49:25; DEUTERONOMY 22:6, 33:13).

The prepositional phrase opening the clause (instead of ending it, as it should) tells us the location is more important than subject and predicate, refuting the "crouching sin" rendering. But why refer to a portal at all? The text should be חטאתך לפניך CHA-TO'TH-KHA L'PHA-NEH-KHA (YOUR SIN [IS] BEFORE YOU - cf. EXODUS 17:6; JOSHUA 1:5; ZECHARIAH 3:8) or נֶגְדֶּךָ NEH-G'DEH-KHA (CONFRONTS YOU - cf. GENESIS 47:15; ISAIAH 59:12; PROVERBS 4:25). If Cain "opened the door" to sin, the verse would have to use DEH-LEHTH (DOOR) - but it does not. The "opening" is the crux here but the middle word dictates its thrust. CHA-TOTH is "defect/deficiency", people found wanting (cf. KINGS I 1:21; ECCLESIASTES 10:4), affronts or flawed performance (cf. GENESIS 31:36; EXODUS 5:16; SAMUEL I 14:38) and sin-offerings (LEVITICUS Ch. 4) brought only for transgressions due to negligence - *deficiencies* in care and attention. CHA-TOTH here must relate to the verb ROH-BHEITZ and stem from Cain's failure to act - an existing shortcoming, not one which may develop. This "defect" was the discord which followed Cain's anger and his abandoning his followers and which can spread through a community; if that was meant, the text would use the correct verb, ROH-BHEH-TZEHTH. *More forceful dissemination is מַרְבִּיץ MAR-BITZ (SPREAD - cf. ISAIAH 54:11; JEREMIAH 3:12); this too is not the intent here.* The masculine verb predicate has an implied subject (cf. ISAIAH 8:4; JOB 3:10). Discord spread by the people is like a singular intelligence pushed toward a PEH-THACH ("opening" in its most general sense - cf. GENESIS 8:6; EXODUS 2:6; 21:33; PSALMS 119:130), creating a breach that permanently ruptures the social order.

וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ V'EI-LEH-KHA T'SHOO-QA-TOH V'A-TAH TIM-SHOHL BOH (BUT TO YOU HE WILL DEFER AND YOU WILL GUIDE HIM): A declaration like 3:16 forestalled an anticipated objection by Cain that Y-H-W-H had after all preferred the offerings of Abel and his contingent.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Y-H-W-H asked Cain what purpose his anger served and what outcome he expected if his disappointment and frustration blunted his leadership, for the discord this sowed would lead to a permanent fissure in the community. He was then assured that Abel was disposed to defer to his leadership and accept his guidance.

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The next passage is unanimously read as a condemnation of homicide and endorsement of the "Brotherhood of Man" and mutual responsibility. These are rounded off with an admonition that man must overcome his innate impulses in the interest of social stability. These teachings are laudable but they are *not* in this text.

Many biblical precepts have motivations unique to Israel's history - imperatives (cf. LEVITICUS 23:43; NUMBERS 15:39- 41; JOSHUA 5:3), prohibitions (cf. GENESIS 32:33; DEUTERONOMY 23:4-9) and sometimes both (cf. EXODUS 12:14-20, 20:8-11, 31:14; DEUTERONOMY 5:12-15). This is not the case for civil laws, so it is no surprise that Scripture treats these perfunctorily (cf. EXODUS 20:13; NUMBERS 35:16; DEUTERONOMY 22:26 and note that GENESIS 9:6 does not state a reason for the penalty but the rationale for granting society license to impose it. In all textual occurrences, the gravity of these offenses is taken for granted; prohibitions and penalties are given context to set parameters for their applications). The Israelites did not need a story to justify an injunction against murder. All societies have deterrents or censures but none considered it an offense against the gods; these were social infractions, the remedies ranging from vendettas to compensatory payments to expulsion. Ancient codes mandating capital punishment intended deterrent and reprisal. Some might argue that this was the point, His telling Cain that he was contemplating not just a social trespass but a sin, thereby establishing this principle

for violation of His ordinances, including מִשְׁפָּטִים MISH-PAH-TIM ("judgments", generally civil law or social conventions - cf. LEVITICUS 18; KINGS I 6:12; EZEKIEL 5:6) but this is belied by Cain condemned to exile, a sanction dreaded in ancient societies but most definitely a punishment for wrongs against others.

The "Brotherhood of Man" was also read into this narrative, possibly inspired by the seven appearances of אח AHCH (BROTHER). This designation only makes sense if there was a sizable population. "Brother" is only meaningful when most people are not; if "all are brothers", the word is superfluous. If it is an anachronism meant to buttress the idea of universal brotherhood, it is inconsistent with the restrictive way the word is used throughout Scripture (cf. GENESIS 37:26; DEUTERONOMY 23:21; SAMUEL II 1:26).

Much has been made of Y-H-W-H's lecture to Cain, as if He had to reveal man's own nature to him. This may have served medieval polemicists but societies were always aware of the need to curb man's lusts and desires - and the same applies to sibling rivalry, a scourge recognized by parents everywhere. Sigmund Freud understood that society's primary task was socializing its young; this is not something about whici Scripture had to inform its readers. The issues it addresses are far more profound and fundamental.

EXPOSITION [4:8]

8. CAIN SPOKE TO ABEL HIS BROTHER - IT OCCURRED WHEN THEY WERE IN THE FIELD
CAIN CONFRONTED ABEL HIS BROTHER AND CAUSED HIM (TO BE PUT TO) DEATH.

וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו VA-YOH-MEHR QA-YIN EL HEH-BHEHL A-CHIBH (CAIN SPOKE TO ABEL HIS BROTHER): This formula, which appears hundreds of times, always introduces a statement; here, the text abruptly turned to an event (a transition accentuated by the "ethnachta" pause on A-CHEEBH [HIS BROTHER]). Many contrive a lacuna in which Cain induced Abel to join him "in the field" *(Sectarian manuscripts and some early translations interpolate this, possibly influenced by SAMUEL I 20:11),* either as a friendly gesture to lower Abel's guard or shield his act from his parents' view. It did not occur to these pundits that "in the field" is where these two would normally be during the day pursuing their occupations; indeed, the construction and syntax of the next phrase implies exactly that. And if Cain wanted to give Abel a false sense of security, the order of the first two phrases in this verse should be reversed *[required if he intended to provoke Abel into a physical altercation, as some surmise]* and would be punctuated Mahpakh-Pashta-Zaqef-Qatan-Meirkha-Tipcha-Ethnachta (cf. GENESIS 22:20; NUMBERS 25:19; ESTHER 1:1).

More astute writers agreed with Ibn Ezra [12th century Spain] that Cain recounted what Y-H-W-H told him; some even venture that Abel, "favored" by Y-H-W-H's "accepting" his offering, became haughty, to which Cain reacted by telling him he could gain the same favor. These readings maintain continuity but then the verb would be וַיַּגֵּד VA-YA-GEID (AND [HE] RELATED - cf. GENESIS 9:22; EXODUS 4:28; NUMBERS 11:27) and the phrase order inverted. Furthermore, having received instructions directly from Y-H-W-H, Cain had but to carry them out to demonstrate he was as worthy as Abel - how better to put him in his place? Cain could even claim superiority - he merited divine assistance! *The belief that he was so jealous that he lost control fits later readings of this as a display of human frailty but is inconsistent with the text or Israelite perceptions; true, he was initially upset but the divine assurance surely assuaged his anger.*

Cain, impelled by Abel's behavior, did report what Y-H-W-H told him. Perceiving himself as favored (and spurred by Cain's withdrawal from leadership), Abel tried to supplant Cain as community head or formed his own group of followers, splitting the community. Cain reasserted his position in accordance with Y-H-W-H's directive. The sentence ends with an Ethnachta punctuation, indicating that it stands by itself but, more important, with A-CHEEBH (HIS BROTHER) - Cain still considered Abel a brother, his second in command.

וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה VA-Y'HEE BI-H'YOH-THAHM BA-SA-DEH (IT OCCURRED WHEN THEY WERE IN THE FIELD): The preceding pause and incomplete past VA-Y'HEE (IT TOOK PLACE) mean that the next incident happened later,

not simply when they were "in the field" *(that is כַּאֲשֶׁר KA-A-SHEHR [WHEN/WHILE - cf. GENESIS 12:11, 24:22; JOSHUA 2:7, 3:7; JUDGES 3:18], כְּבֹאָם K'BHOH-AHM [AS THEY CAME - cf. KINGS II 6:20; JEREMIAH 41:7] or וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם VA-Y'HEE HA-YOHM [AND THE DAY CAME - cf. SAMUEL I 1:4; KINGS II 4:8; JOB 1:6])* - and is irrelevant (as noted, they were normally there). BI-H'YOH-THAM (WHILE THEY WERE) is more nuanced. It sets conditions for an action (cf. GENESIS 34:25; JOSHUA 5:13; EZEKIEL 6:8), sometimes performed despite adverse conditions (cf. LEVITICUS 26:44; SAMUEL I 2:27; PSALMS 105:12). Here, its meaning is determined by BA-SAH-DEH (IN THE FIELD), whose scope depends entirely on context; it either locates a daily activity (cf. GENESIS 23:17; EXODUS 1:14; JUDGES 1:14, 13:9; SAMUEL II 11:11, 23) or, as here, a place of assembly (cf. GENESIS 29:2; SAMUEL 1 6:1; JEREMIAH 40:13; MICAH 4:10).

וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו VA-YA-QAHM QA-YIN EL HEH-BHEHL A-CHEEBH (CAIN CONFRONTED HIS BROTHER ABEL): An assault is אָרַב AH-RAHBH (AMBUSHED - cf. DEUTERONOMY 19:11; JUDGES 9:32; EZRA 8:31), הִתְנַפֵּל HITH-NA-PEIL (FELL UPON - cf. GENESIS 43:18) or וַיִּפֹּל VA-YI-POHL (AND THREW DOWN - cf. GENESIS 49:17; JOB 1:19). VA-YA-QAM (HE ROSE) is an open confrontation, which may be defensive (cf. EXODUS 2:17; JUDGES 10:1; KINGS I 11:14, 23), aggressive (cf. NUMBERS 16:25; JOSHUA 24:9; JUDGES 9:43) or prosecutorial [possibly precursing judicial execution - cf. JOSHUA 8:3; JUDGES 8:21; JEREMIAH 41:2]. EL (TO) follows VA-YA-QAHM only here. Many glossed over this, claiming it is the same as עַל AL (UPON) and interpolating their own reading by changing the word - and totally subverting the meaning of this clause. Cain did not assault his brother; he indicted him before the community for staging his own form of devotion and fomenting a schism. Cain also knew that he was accusing AH-CHEEBH - his brother.

VA-YA-HAR-GEI-HOO (AND CAUSED HIM [TO BE PUT TO] DEATH: רֶצַח REH-TZAHCH is wrongful death (premeditated murder [EXODUS 20:13; DEUTERONOMY 22:26; JUDGES 20:4] or manslaughter [NUMBERS Ch. 35; JOSHUA Ch. 20-21]). הֶרֶג HEH-REHG (KILLING) is a broader homicide spectrum (cf. NUMBERS 31:19; JEREMIAH 4:31). Capital punishment is mandated with מוֹת תָּמוּת MOHTH YOO-MAHTH (cf. GENESIS 26:11; EXODUS 21:16; LEVITICUS 20:2 and see Exposition to 2:17); the more generic הָרֵג HOH-REIG can apply to political executions (cf. GENESIS 12:12, 20:11 - this extends to vendettas {GENESIS 34:25} and note LEVITICUS 20:15, where the human perpetrator is subject to judicial execution - MOHTH YOO-MAHTH, whereas the animal that participated in a forbidden act is "put to death" - תַּהֲרֹגוּ TA-HA-ROH-GOO). Abel was executed by the community for the perceived threat he posed to it.

<div align="center">DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION</div>

Cain related to his brother Abel the content of the communication he received from Y-H-W-H to the effect that he was to resume his position as community leader. Abel did not fully accept this, whereupon Cain, in the presence of the community, accused his brother Abel of insubordination and condemned him to be executed.