Part 3 - REPERCUSSIONS

EXPOSITION [4:9-15}

9. Y-H-W-H SAID TO CAIN: ABEL YOUR BROTHER IS MISSING
HE REPLIED: I DID NOT REALIZE THAT BUT SHOULD I BE MY BROTHER'S PROTECTOR?

אֵי הֶבֶל אָחֶיךָ AY HEH-BHEHL A-CHEE-KHA (ABEL YOUR BROTHER IS MISSING): Y-H-W-H did not call to him. Unlike Adam (3:9), Cain was not hiding; Abel was the subject of the query, which did not begin with אַיֶּה A-YEI (WHERE; see Exposition 3:9 - A-YEH-KA) but with AY, a difference the Israelites understood. With A-YEI, one seeks a person or object not found where it was expected to be (cf. GENESIS 18:9, 19:5; ISAIAH 33:18; JEREMIAH 37:19). A questioner using AY is not just investigating an absence but a resulting deficiency (cf. EXODUS 2:20; JOB 14:10; ESTHER 7:5 *and note the poetic construct form in the somber lament [SAMUEL I 4:21]. Y-H-W-H is not asking about Abel's welfare; that is* מה שלום אחיך *MAH SH'LOHM A-CHEE-KHA [cf. GENESIS 29:6, 43:27; SAMUEL II 20:9; KINGS II 4:26]*). Y-H-W-H confronted Cain with the fact that there was now a major shortcoming in the community. Scripture did not explicate its nature nor did it have to. The ancients were well aware that an injury to one hurts all. As sexual congress is not just "an act between two consenting adults" but one which can affect the entire community (see Exposition 3:7), so the official taking of a life, even under judicial or political protocol. Those imposing it must consider its impact before this drastic step is taken, a lack of awareness that proved Cain's leadership inadequate.

לֹא יָדַעְתִּי LOH YA-DA-TEE (I DID NOT REALIZE THAT): *Conventional interpreters cast Cain's response as an arrogant denial of culpability, a reading not supported by the text. When one is asked the whereabouts of another, it is because he is the other's custodian, not the case here, or the one sought is not where he should be, which presumes a sufficiently close relationship so the one asked knows where the other is, not something readers would impute here. The view that Y-H-W-H just "started a conversation" or that Cain behaved like a child who thinks he knows something the questioner does not is to treat this as a story for juveniles.* YA-DA-TEE here is not about knowledge but appreciation (cf. EXODUS 3:7; SAMUEL I 29:9; AMOS 3:2), the only way this can be understood considering what took place - Cain admitted that he failed to grasp the gravity of his actions.

הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אָנֹכִי HA-SHOH-MEIR A-CHEE A-NOH-KHEE (SHOULD I BE MY BROTHER'S PROTECTOR?): The King James' "Am I my brother's keeper?" inspired countless homilies, sermons and movements promoting "universal brotherhood" and "man's responsibility to man" that strayed far beyond the Old English "keeper", whose meaning is much closer to the Hebrew and does not justify faulty transformations of this passage into an ethical dictum. It does not refer to protection against external threats *[that is* מָגֵן *MA-GEIN (SHIELD - cf. GENESIS 15:1; HOSEA 11:8; PROVERBS 6:11)]* or general safety *[that is* בֶּטַח *BEH-TACH (SECURE - cf. LEVITICUS 25:19; JUDGES 8:11; ISAIAH 14:30)]*. Nor did Cain allude to Abel's general support (תּוֹמֵךְ TOH-MEIKH - cf. AMOS 1:5; PSALMS 16:5; PROVERBS 3:18), welfare (סַעַד SA-AHD - cf. ISAIAH 9:6; PSALMS 119:117; PROVERBS 20:28) or happiness (אִישׁוּר EE-SHOOR - cf. GENESIS 30:13; KINGS I 10:8; ISAIAH 30:18). "To keep" entailed protection against an impending attack; *a medieval castle's keep was its most secure sector where residents found refuge during onslaughts*. Conventional interpretations would have Cain absurdly question if he was obligated to defend Abel against his own assault. Cain indeed asked whether he was obliged to protect Abel but this inquiry was a rebuttal to Y-H-W-H's proclamation: "Do I forego carrying out a community mandate because this man happens to be my brother? Does loyalty to family trump my duty to the body politic?"

10. AND HE SAID: WHAT DID YOU (REALLY) DO?
THE CLAMOR (RESULTING FROM THE SPILLING) OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIES TO ME FROM THE LAND.

מֶה עָשִׂיתָ MEH A-SEE-THA (WHAT DID YOU [REALLY] DO?): Most treat this as rhetorical objection, the next phrase a rebuttal confirmed by the repercussions of Cain's deed. Several Hebrew commentators realized that neither

the syntax nor the punctuation supports this reading. A query about a known outcome is מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ MAH ZOHTH A-SEE-THA (WHAT IS THIS YOU DID - cf. GENESIS 12:18; EXODUS 14:11; JUDGES 15:11; JONAH 1:10 [or variants cf. JUDGES 8:1; SAMUEL II 12:21] and note GENESIS 3:13). Y-H-W-H's question was a reprimand - and could only be posed as such if Cain knew why he was censured (cf. GENESIS 20:9, 31:26; NUMBERS 23:11; JEREMIAH 2:23).

קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן־הָאֲדָמָה QOHL D'MEI A-CHEE-KHA TZOH-A-QIM EI-LEYE MIN HA-A-DA-MAH (THE CLAMOR [RESULTING FROM THE SPILLING] OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIES TO ME FROM THE LAND): Hebrew readers recognized the anomalies - a singular subject with plural predicate, the superfluous prepositional phrase and an abstract QOHL (SOUND - cf. EXODUS 4:8; JEREMIAH 3:9; ZEPHANIA 1:14) paired with TZ'A-QAH, a cry of distress (cf. JEREMIAH 25:36, 48:3; ZEPHANIAH 1:10; PSALMS 77:1 [2 in the Hebrew]) but paid more attention to D'MEI, the plural construct of DAHM (BLOOD) used occasionally for an individual (cf. SAMUEL II 3:28, 16:8; KINGS II 9:26; HOSEA 1:4). The prohibition imposed on the A-DAM is explicit (2:16); by contrast, Cain was treated to a garrulous circumlocution universally construed as admonition. Whether they take it as a generality about the pitfalls of sin or a specific deterrent to killing Abel, the pundits had to presume Cain was aware of the heinous nature of his act, else verses 6 and 7 are pointless. It is therefore puzzling why Y-H-W-H did not inquire as He did with the A-DAM, "Did you commit the act that I proscribed?" (cf. 3:11). If He was only now conveying the severity of Cain's deed, He could not justify a punishment.

All societies sanction wrongful death; it could therefore be argued that this passage asserts that such is not just immoral but sinful *(hence the homiletics that magnified Cain's guilt)* and Y-H-W-H's declaration a rebuke for his shedding not only his brother's blood but of potential offspring. This might have appealed to Charles Darwin but raises fundamental ethical issues, for it implies that killing one in the prime of life is far more egregious *{many questioned why Abel could not have had a family [later passages suggest an existing population (4:14-17)]}.* Even for traditionalists who posit four actors in this vignette, the implications are disturbing. *A rather ingenious suggestion by* <u>*Malbim*</u> *[R. M. Weisser, 19th century Romania] that He intervened because there were no others to take redress for a crime against the community ignores these later verses.* Can we assign gradations to homicide? Is it less egregious to kill an elderly person with grandchildren? Or one who is sterile? While the murder of a young person is more tragic, it is outrageous to suppose Scripture considers it more heinous than that of a feeble octogenarian; instead of being alleviated, a textual difficulty is exacerbated.

A QOHL not associated with physical sound transmits an imperative (cf. EXODUS 4:8; JEREMIAH 3:9; PROVERBS 8:1) but when accompanied by TZ'A-QAH (SHOUT), it is a plea for aid (cf. SAMUEL I 4:14; JEREMIAH 25:36; ZEPHANIAH 1:10). The only viable reading here is that a "call" issued from those aroused by Abel's "blood"; *this is supported by the Masoretic punctuation - the Y'thibh on QOHL instead of the standard Pashta, noted by R. S. Hirsch (19th century Germany).* Some perceptive interpreters did see QOHL as an appositive charge but still erred in attributing it to the inert blood.

The plural construct D'MEI combines blood as life force carrier (DEUTERONOMY 12:23) with human interactions (cf. ISAIAH 4:4; EZEKIEL 16:36; HOSEA 1:4), sometimes imputing guilt (cf. SAMUEL II 16:8; KINGS I 2:5, 31). As in the colloquialism, "spilling blood" applies to taking human life in general, including strangulation, starvation or other trauma (cf. GENESIS 9:6; EZEKIEL 16:38; PROVERBS 6:17). Those unfamiliar with biblical Hebrew did not recognize its idioms and took this verse to refer to actual blood (*stabbing was wrongfully inferred from the vocabulary in the next verse; there is even a quaint whimsy that Cain stabbed Abel numerous times because he did not know where the soul would escape [Midrash Leqach Tobh - Tohbhia b. Eliezer, 11th cent. Turkey]).* The plural D'MEI forestalls this being a murder! Passages about literal blood covering characterize the material used as עָפָר A-PHAHR (any form of dirt, dust or ashes - LEVITICUS 17:13) for this and general aphorisms (cf. EZEKIEL 24:7; ZEPHANIAH 1:17; PSALMS 30:9 [10 in the Hebrew]). The proverbial "spilling of blood" is associated with אֶרֶץ EH-REHTZ (EARTH/GROUND - cf. NUMBERS 35:33; DEUTERONOMY 19:10; ISAIAH

26:21). These nouns combined point to heinous and brutal scourges (cf. EZEKIEL 7:23; JOEL 4:19; CHRONICLES I 22:8). It is thus clear that the plural construct D'MEI can be an equivalent for life - or lives, as in a community.

This passage has the only pairing of D'MEI and A-DA-MAH (LAND - see 2:5; two other associations [DEUTERONOMY 32:43; ISAIAH 15:9] further support our interpretation). QOHL is here a declarative appositive: A VOICE! The plural D'MEI is blood in its extended sense, Abel's "lives" manifested in his interactions with others. The verse reads: "An outcry! His colleagues protested his execution". The prepositional phrase MIN HA-A-DA-MAH, otherwise superfluous, does not denote the shout's origin but the conditions which led to it (cf. EXODUS 2:23; JEREMIAH 21:7; PSALMS 104:7), with the ramification expounded in the next verse.

11. NOW YOU ARE CURSED BY THE LAND WHICH HAS TAKEN YOUR BROTHER'S EXISTENCE OUT OF YOUR HAND.

וְעַתָּה אָרוּר אָתָּה V'A-TAH A-ROOR A-TAH (NOW YOU ARE CURSED): V'A-TAH propounds a condition or action to ameliorate an undesirable situation but to remain in effect only until it is rectified (cf. GENESIS 12:19; EXODUS 3:10; NUMBERS 14:17). Unlike the Eden decrees, Cain's was to last only until the detriment he caused was remedied.

מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה אֶת־פִּיהָ לָקַחַת אֶת־דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ מִיָּדֶךָ MIN HA-A-DA-MAH A-SHER PA-TZ'THAH ETH PEE-HA LA- QA-CHAHTH ETH D'MEI A-CHEE-KHA MI-YA-DEH-KHA (BY THE LAND WHICH HAS TAKEN YOUR BROTHER'S EXISTENCE OUT OF YOUR HAND): "Opened" is פָּתַח PA-THACH (root "Peh-Taph-Cheth - cf. NUMBERS 16:32; JOSHUA 10:22; JOB 3:1). PA-TZ'THAH (SPREAD - root "Peh-Tzadiq-Heh") is more deliberate and energetic (cf. NUMBERS 16:30; JUDGES 11:35; ISAIAH 10:14). As for the next verb, "(blood) soaked up" is בָּלַע BA-LA (SWALLOWED - cf. GENESIS 41:7; EXODUS 7:12; NUMBERS 16:30) or קִבֵּל QEE-BEIL (RECEIVED - cf. PROVERBS 10:20; ESTHER 4:4; CHRONICLES II 29:16). The root "Lamed-Quph-Cheth", in a transitive verb, requires וַתִּקַּח VA-TI-QAHCH ([IT] TOOK - cf. GENESIS 27:15; EXODUS 15:20; RUTH 4:16); the infinitive LA-QA-CHAHTH (TO TAKE) indicates a deliberate objective (cf. GENESIS 24:48; DEUTERONOMY 4:34, 9:9). *This cannot be on the part of the ground; a conscious act by an inert substance is a paganism no Israelite would abide.* Finally, MI-YA-DEH-KHA (FROM YOUR HAND) signifies transference of authority or control (cf. GENESIS 38:20; LEVITICUS 4:5; DEUTERONOMY 26:4), not at all appropriate here. *R. S. Hirsch (19th century Germany) recognized how problematic this word is and offered the adroit suggestion that Cain was reprimanded for presuming to decide when a life was to be "returned". While clever, this ignores the fact that man routinely does this, often with divine imprimatur (see Exposition to 2:17 - MOHTH TA-MOOTH), and the transitive verb that has the land doing this act. In Hirsch's version, the text would use one of the verbs mentioned above or* אָסַף *A-SAHPH (GATHERED - cf. GENESIS 25:8; PSALMS 26:19).* These anomalies rule out traditional interpretations.

12. SHOULD YOU (ATTEMPT TO) DEVELOP THE LAND IT WILL DENY YOU ITS POWER (ENERGY)
YOU SHALL CIRCULATE AND MOVE (CONTINUOUSLY) THROUGHOUT THE (INHABITED) WORLD

כִּי תַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה לֹא־תֹסֵף תֵּת־כֹּחָהּ לָךְ KEE THA-A-BHOHD ETH HA-A-DA-MAH LOH THOH-SEIPH TEHTH KOH-CHAH LACH (SHOULD YOU [TRY TO] DEVELOP THE LAND IT[S INHABITANTS] WILL DENY YOU [THEIR] POWER [ENERGY]: The expositors had Y-H-W-H recruiting the earth to enact Cain's "sentence" by augmenting Adam's (3:17-19) but this did not just make a harsh environment - Cain was denied his livelihood. It is also strange that Y-H-W-H's response centered on a detail *(the earth an accomplice "covering" Abel's blood)* rather than the actual homicide *(and begs the question: if Cain had drowned Abel, would he then be prohibited from fishing or bathing in rivers?)*, with the only practical effect that Cain would revert to being a hunter-gather, hardly a penal template. *The changes in the lives of the actors in the Eden story are stated without conditional preludes (3:14-21). By contrast, Cain was forewarned that any attempt to continue his occupation would be futile; he should have been told how to support himself, as Y -H-W-H did for his parents (see Expositions 3:14-21).* Interpreters also ignored the incongruous vocabulary. כֹּח KOH-AHCH (POWER/STRENGTH) refers to *input* of resources (cf. DEUTERONOMY 8:17; PROVERBS 20:29; ECCLESIATES 9:10 - *the only other time the word is used as here [JOB 31:39] is in an ambiguous proclamation which refers to the potential in assets or property; more telling is LEVITICUS 26:20, which clearly*

indicates that KOH-AHCH precedes and potentiates yields), while statements of earth holding back are explicit (cf. GENESIS 45:6; DEUTERONOMY 11:17, 29:22; JEREMIAH 19:9).

נָע וָנָד תִּהְיֶה בָאָרֶץ NA VA-NAHD TI-H'YEH BA-A-REHTZ (YOU SHALL CIRCULATE AND MOVE [CONTINUOUSLY] THROUGHOUT THE [INHABITED] WORLD): "A fugitive and a vagabond", the King James translation that is the most quoted or paraphrased, implies that Cain was fleeing pursuers. A fugitive is a נִמְלָט NIM-LAHT (cf. JUDGES 3:26; SAMUEL I 23:13; ISAIAH 20:6) or a בּוֹרֵחַ BOH-REI-ACH (RUNAWAY - cf. GENESIS 31:20; SAMUEL I 22:17; JONAH 1:10) - unlikely if Cain was only survived by his parents *(and perhaps some siblings)*. If there was a community, it would have to chase him down but fugitives in the biblical era were political, not felonious. *The ancients did not waste manpower pursuing truants nor was it necessary. Expulsion was a severe punishment; to the Romans, it was the equivalent of a death sentence. Political exile shows up in Egypt's 12th Dynasty (over 4,000 years ago - see the <u>Tale of Sinuhe</u>) and with prominent figures like Alcibiades of Athens or Socrates, who ended his life instead.* Variations like "restless wanderer/homeless vagrant" are ruled out by the syntax - two gerundial nouns, not one modified by an adjective. *There is some ambiguity whether this was decreed or a statement of Cain's new situation. If the former, Cain did not take it seriously (4:16-17); if the latter, the Israelites familiar with Levantine nomads that periodically migrated would not deem his situation unfavorable. A minority thinks these words refer to Cain's inner torment, the Septuagint's rendition [an error egregious even for the Greek translators]. The superfluous BA-A-REHTZ (THROUGHOUT THE WORLD) at the end of the verse is troublesome even under conventional translations (see introduction to v. 11) but rules out the "psychological" version. The "admonitions" [LEVITICUS Ch. 26; DEUTERONOMY Ch. 28] that mention it signify that the land itself would participate in Israel's chastisement, while foreign lands of exile contribute a predicted punishment as deterrent.*

NA VA-NAHD occurs only here *(and two verses later in Cain's objection)*. Only recently did a sagacious scholar note that these two nouns are inconsistent (*Biur Ya"Sha"R* - Isaac Samuel Reggio, 19th century Italy). NA applies to a swaying stationary object (cf. JUDGES 9:9; SAMUEL I 1:13; ISAIAH 24:20 - Everett Fox came close with "waver") and contrasts NOD, a swift, directed displacement (cf. HOSEA 9:17; NAHUM 3:17; JOB 15:23). A further complication is that, rather than V'HA-YEE-THA (AND YOU WILL BE) telling Cain what lay ahead (cf. GENESIS 17:4; DEUTERONOMY 28:29, 34; JUDGES 11:6), TI-H'YEH (YOU WILL BECOME) is a conditional imperative (cf. GENESIS 41:40; EXODUS 4:16; NUMBERS 36:8). Cain was not told what the future held in store for him; this object phrase preceding the verb "to be" makes this sentence an explicit instruction. Estranged from his erstwhile colleagues and no longer able to lead because he committed a grievous error in carrying out his duties, Cain was now tasked with spreading his lesson to other communities so his lapse in judgement is not repeated by others. Hiis reply, either an objection or a plea, addressed what he deemed a major obstacle to his carrying out this mission.

What was Cain's message? Scripture mandates various penalties for different infractions, restitution for injuries or regimens to rectify ramifications of sin but these apply only to the covenantal community. [The sacrificial protocols were for inadvertent sins committed through negligence – see *Leviticus Decompressed*.] Secular correctives preserve social stability but these must be applied sensibly and safely; if there is "collateral damage", even just affecting an offender's intimate circle, the penalty must be mitigated so that any resulting suffering by others should not be greater than that caused by the culprit. *This is still observed in tribal societies; the more "advanced" ones tend to ignore the precept that maintaining order and obedience through punishments should never outweigh the good of society. The Talmudic sages went to extraordinary lengths in applying this principle, even in enforcing Scriptural mandates, exerting their utmost to blunt punishments, the only exceptions being in situations of rampant criminality.*

13. CAIN SAID TO Y-H-W-H MY INIQUITY IS TOO GREAT, PREVENTING (MY) LEADERSHIP

גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשֹׂא GA-DOHL A-VOH-NEE MI-N'SOH (MY INIQUITY IS TOO GREAT, PREVENTING [MY] LEADERSHIP): Most have him complaining of a penalty too harsh; a minority hears him plaintively asking Him to abate or lessen it. Both are wrong. Scriptural declarations of onerous burdens do not resort to impersonal passive gerunds; they are explicit as to the affliction and its source (cf. NUMBERS 11:14; DEUTERONOMY 1:9, 12; ISAIAH 53:12). Cain would have said לֹא־אוּכַל שְׂאֵת LOH OO-KHAL S'EITH (I CANNOT BEAR [IT] - cf. JEREMIAH 17:27; EZEKIEL 10:16; PROVERBS

30:21). Pleas for clemency are equally overt and direct (cf. EXODUS 34:9; NUMBERS 14:19; KINGS I 8:50 and note the conversation in GENESIS 18:17- 33). Cain did not ask for a dispensation; he objected to his assignment.

The "Mem" prepositional prefix to the gerundial noun inspired interpretive paths of least resistance which required that it be a comparative to the adjectival phrase. Such usages imply a stronger power, greater size or measurable contest between entities compared (cf. NUMBERS 13:31; DEUTERONOMY 1:28; JOSHUA 19:9; ESTHER 1:19 and inverses GENESIS 19:9; JUDGES 1:13; KINGS II 6:1; ISAIAH 59:9). The same prepositional phrase evaluates individuals (cf. PROVERBS 26:12; JOB 32:4; CHRONICLES I 5:2), as does the adjective used here (cf. GENESIS 48:19) but they have distinct parameters, not nebulous resemblances (cf. GENESIS 19:19; OBADIAH 1:12; DANIEL 8:9, 10). עָוֹן A-VOHN is one of those Hebrew words that can be masculine (GENESIS 15:16; ISAIAH 30:13; JEREMIAH 16:18) or feminine (LEVITICUS 16:21; JEREMIAH 11:10). The feminine references iniquity associated with sin and wrongdoing; the masculine implies distortion, ruin or a warping resulting from errors in judgment or an inherent defect. Had Cain been referring to his transgression, he would have used the feminine G'DOH-LAH. The masculine GA-DOHL tells us he meant his own error in judgement. The gerund N'SOH (root "Nun-Sin-Aleph" ["lift/raise"]) is here as it was earlier in this episode, when Cain was instructed how to ensure his continuing as the community leader (4:7). Having failed that test, he now declared GA-DOHL A-VOH-NEE, my lapse was so great, I must refrain MI-N'SOH ("from leading"), hence the unusual form of the gerundial noun. He then explains why this also impaired his ability to carry out his new mission.

14. SINCE YOU SEVERED MY TIES WITH MY (ERSTWHILE) COMMUNITY AND I WILL BE HIDDEN FROM YOUR ATTENTION
SHOULD I (NEVERTHELESS) BECOME A MOVER AND ITINERANT
IT WILL BE THAT ALL WHO UNDERSTAND ME WILL (ATTEMPT TO) HAVE ME KILLED.

Traditionalists that posit a nuclear family as earth's sole inhabitants had to attribute the danger to wild animals menacing Cain after he left the safety of his home. If this worried him, he would have feared a חַיָּה רָעָה CHA-YA RA-AH (best translated "dangerous predator" - cf. GENESIS 37:20; LEVITICUS 26:6; EZEKIEL 5:17). He dreaded "all who find me" *(KOL here is not a universal but a wider class than the beasts; see Exposition 2:1 - VA-Y'KHOO-LOO).* This may be why some suggested that all animals would now menace him but this means they knew what Cain did and shared a desire to exact retribution. *Many believe animals sense impending storms or earthquakes before humans can but there are no myths of their ability to sniff out murderers else some societies would have resorted to quickly test guilt or innocence by placing a suspect among otherwise placid animals in a trial by ordeal. If Y-H-W-H temporarily installed this faculty into these normally harmless creatures, although nothing like this is even hinted at in the text, He had but to rescind this when importuned by Cain. And if this was the first homicide, how would Cain have known to expect this reaction from animals?* A second faction has Cain anxious about embarking into alien territory, reflecting a time when lone travelers were in danger of attack. In the milieu of the Israelites, hospitality to strangers was the ethos; traveling was risky but assaults on wayfarers is not reflected in Scripture (cf. GENESIS 29:4, 37:16; EXODUS 2:20; SAMUEL I 30:11 and note the public reactions in JUDGES 19). Cain had no reason to suspect he would be in more peril than other travelers but if he was due to locals knowing his guilt, that would mean they were divinely informed and predisposed to act against him but then we must again ask - how would he know this? The third approach gained more traction despite being the least credible. It ascribes Cain's fear to his anticipation that Abel's relatives or sympathizers would exact revenge. If this social bete noire had already reared its ugly head, Cain's conversation with Y-H-W-H is incomprehensible. Any rational person would immediately flee - no need for a divine edict – and if he had defenders, they would have sustained him if the earth he used to work no longer did. The interpretations all suffer the same fatal defect - they make no sense.

הֵן גֵּרַשְׁתָּ אֹתִי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה HEIN GEI-RASH-TA OH-THEE HA-YOHM MEI-AL P'NEI HA-A-DA-MAH (SINCE YOU SEVERED MY TIES WITH MY [ERSTWHILE] COMMUNITY): As in 3:22, HEIN is "since", while GEI-RASH-TA parallels 3:24 - "you have severed (my ties)". HA-YOHM (THIS DAY) seems superfluous; if for emphasis, it would open the phrase (cf. EXODUS 13:4; DEUTERONOMY 2:25; JOSHUA 3:7); when it follows a verb and direct object, it heralds a permanent change ("from this day" - cf. GENESIS 47:23; DEUTERONOMY 27:9; JOSHUA 22:29 and note this combination in SAMUEL I 26:19), an estrangement from P'NEI HA-A-DA-MAH (see Exposition 1:2), his community.

וּמִפָּנֶיךָ אֶסָּתֵר U-MI-PA-NEH-KHA EH-SAH-THEIR (AND I WILL NOT HAVE YOUR ATTENTION): "I will be hidden from Your face/presence" is taken to mean Cain would not have a relationship with Y-H-W-H. EH-SA-THEIR does not conform to these meanings, as a wanderer is not so much invisible as distanced; more appropriate is נִתַּק NEE-TAQ (CUT OFF - cf. JEREMIAH 2:20; EZEKIEL 17:9; ECCLESIATES 4:12), נִפְרָד NIPH-RAHD (SEPARATED - cf. GENESIS 13:9; JUDGES 4:11; SAMUEL II 1:23), הִרְחֵיק HIR-CHIQ (DISTANCED - cf. GENESIS 44:4; EXODUS 8:24; DEUTERONOMY 12:21) or אתנכר ETH-NA-QEIR (ESTRANGED - cf. GENESIS 42:7; KINGS I 14:6; PROVERBS 20:11). Others gave the passage a practical meaning - he was banished from the place offerings were brought. Designation of an exclusive ceremonial center was required of the covenantal community (DEUTERONOMY 12:5); prior to that, and for all others even now, sacrifice is permitted anywhere (cf. JOSHUA 8:30; JUDGES 6:24; SAMUEL I 7:17, 14:35).

וְהָיָה כָל־מֹצְאִי יַהַרְגֵנִי V'HA-YAH KHOL MOH-TZ'EE YA-HAR-GEI-NEE: If Cain feared for his life, he would say וַהֲרָגוּנִי VA-HA-RO-GOO-NEE (AND [HE/THEY] WILL KILL ME - cf. GENESIS 12:12, 20:11; KINGS I 12:27). The inverse syntax is necessitated by the adverbial V'HA-YAH (AND IT WILL BE); typically followed by a noun, adjective or both, when it precedes a subject-predicate clause, it sets conditions for the ensuing occurrence. Here, the verb rooted in "Mem-Tzadiq-Aleph" ("find") does not have the sense of "encounter" but "discovery/disclosure". *In GENESIS 18, when Y-H-W-H agreed to change His edict if "He finds" a minimum number of righteous, He did not do a survey but evaluated their behavior. Similarly, the happy man who "finds" his woman (PROVERBS 18:22, 31:10) contrasts his less fortunate fellow (ECCLESIATES 7:26).* Cain did not dread those he would run into but those grasping the ramifications of his message, one not always welcome - and which could expose him to fatal reprisal. *This reading is supported by Masoretic punctuation. Standard translations require a ZaqephGadol on V'HA-YAH and a Mei'rkha-SophPasuq on the rest of the verse, indicating an occurrence resulting from his condition and the verb "to be" modifying the "finders". The actual trope sequence combines the first three words to signify the condition leading to his execution, the final word standing by itself.*

Cain felt disqualified to be an emissary. No longer a member of his community, he will be seen as one expelled for a grievous infraction, seriously impairing his right to lecture others. His father had brought instruction and technology (see 2:10-14) but Cain no longer enjoyed Y-H-W-H's guidance. Anything he professed would be seen as his invention. The verse then reveals his apprehension of consequences. If he persisted in preaching, he would put himself in the same position he placed Abel (4:8), challenger to the authority and centrality of the leadership in every community he would visit - and exposing himself to the very reprisal he wreaked on his brother. All those discerning his message, toleration for diverse behavioral expressions in the community, would see a threat to its welfare and even its survival - and would exercise the ultimate sanction against this unwelcome messenger.

15. Y-H-W-H SAID TO HIM FOR THIS ALL WHO (ATTEMPT TO) KILL CAIN SHALL SUFFER SEVENFOLD (RETRIBUTION) Y-H-W-H THUS TURNED CAIN INTO A SIGN PREVENTING ALL WHO UNDERSTOOD HIM FROM STRIKING HIM.

This verse inspired a conjectural outpouring about three troublesome points. 1) Whom did Y-H-W-H forewarn? 2) What was the warning and how would vengeance be inflicted sevenfold? 3) What sign was Cain given and how was it a deterrent? Preoccupation with these queries diverted attention from more basic ones. Some commentators noted that Cain is referred to in the third person despite being the addressee. Another is that, while the dative can imply an indirect object when it is introduced (cf. GENESIS 1:28; EXODUS 14:3; EZRA 2:63), here it is superfluous; had this instruction been directed to others, לוֹ LOH ("to him") would be omitted. Ignored by all is why Y-H-W-H did not simply act as a מָגֵן MA-GEIN (SHIELD - cf. GENESIS 15:1; SAMUEL II 22:3, 31; HOSEA 11:8) or שֹׁמֵר SHOH-MEIR (GUARDIAN - cf. GENESIS 28:15; JOSHUA 23:11; ESTHER 2:8). If it was not fitting for Him to directly protect a murderer and He therefore resorted to indirect means, the punishment meted out to one avenging a victim by executing one whose sentence was "suspended" was far more severe than that of a wanton killer. This may not have bothered medieval clerics but would not go down well with the Israelites, for it turns the biblical ethos completely on its head - nor should any reader today accept such preposterous readings.

לָכֵן כָּל־הֹרֵג קַיִן שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקָּם LA-KHEIN KOL HOH-REIG QA-YIN SHIV-A-TA-YIM YOO-QAM (FOR THIS ALL WHO (TRY TO) KILL CAIN SHALL SUFFER SEVENFOLD): Unlike עַל־כֵּן AL KEIN (THEREFORE - 2:24), which supplies the reason for a practice or custom grounded in a condition or prior event (cf. GENESIS 11:9; EXODUS 5:8; LEVITICUS 17:12), LA-KHEIN introduces a deterrent or measure intended to achieve a goal and is often a communication (cf. EXODUS 6:6; NUMBERS 25:12; SAMUEL I 2:30), as here. Cain was given a formula to dissuade those intent on harming him; they would risk the same repercussions he suffered. Eliminating dissidents fosters more unrest, especially among their resentful sympathizers - and the problem would multiply sevenfold.

וַיָּשֶׂם יְהֹוָה לְקַיִן אוֹת VA-YA-SEHM Y-H-W-H L'QA-YIN OHTH (Y-H-W-H TURNED CAIN INTO A SIGN [SYMBOL]): All the struggles over this OHS (SIGN) could have been obviated if interpreters kept in mind that its form and symbolism had to be uniform and apparent to all (see Exposition 1:14 - L'OH-THOHTH). Enacting a sign requires וַיִּתֵּן VA-YEE-TEIN ("and he gave/put" - cf. GENESIS 9:12; DEUTERONOMY 6:22; JOSHUA 2:12) or the passive וְהָיָה V-HA-YAH ("and it was" - cf. GENESIS 7:11; EXODUS 12:13, 13:9; ISAIAH 55:13). When the root "Sin-Mem" ("put/place") is used with an abstract object or intransitive quasi-dative, it still needs the definite article indicator ETH or its pronoun form (cf. GENESIS 47:26; EXODUS 14:21; JOSHUA 8:12). Here, the verb modifies an indefinite object following a dative pronoun; this passage means "He provided *for him* a sign" (cf. JOSHUA 24:25; KINGS I 2:19; DANIEL 1:7). *A couple of 19th century Hebrew commentators did note that this nuance is found in the Talmud (B'REISHITH RABBAH 22:12; MIDRASH AGGADAH 4:15:2; LEQACH TOHBH 4:15:2) but, without a setting in which to insert a reading, they resorted to Cain himself being the sign of the repercussions and consequences of taking a life, a doctrine hampered by the fact that this text was only intended for the covenantal community, not for others that had their own mechanisms for dealing with homicide, unintentional or deliberate.*

לְבִלְתִּי הַכּוֹת־אֹתוֹ כָּל־מֹצְאוֹ L'BHIL-TEE HA-KOHTH OH-THOH KOL MOH-TZ'OH (PREVENTING ALL WHO UNDERSTOOD HIM FROM STRIKING HIM): Only a few Jewish commentators noted the shift from HOH-REIG (KILL) to MA-KEH (SMITE) and surmised that Cain was also protected from injury, although their proffered reasons do not fit the narrative. A generic MA-KEH can refer to homicide but not when it appears in the same passage with HOH-REIG or when the text states the nature of the strike (cf. EXODUS 21:12, 20 and note DEUTERONOMY 25:3, in which the blow is not intended to cause death and clarifies why the verb was changed here, for it was precisely this judicial protocol added here that puts this entire verse in a magisterial context). Cain was promised protection against being put to death *and the safety of his person*; it was for the latter that he was transformed into a "sign", a critical revision of traditional readings but one which defines the mandate he was charged to carry out.

The NA-CHAHSH (3:1-15) posed society's first test, his challenge to authority creating tension between innovation and social stability. This chapter records a rift arising from economic bifurcation. Cain was to admonish others that eliminating a challenger exacerbates social fissure, the essence of Y-H-W-H's statement. Just as important is that rivals are not stifled by the threat of physical retribution; Cain himself was the "sign", a walking rebuttal to punishments that do not change minds but cause widespread resentment. As noted, sanctions reverberate throughout the community; leaders must measure this against damaging fallout.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Without preamble, Y-H-W-H declared to Cain, in the presence of the others, that Abel, his brother, is missing, an impairment to their community. Cain first feigned ignorance but raised a riposte - showing favoritism to his brother by protecting him against a sanction demanded by communal interest would undermine the rule of law critical for the effective functioning of society. To this Y-H-W-H replied that Abel's students and colleagues cried out in protest from their homes. Cain would henceforth no longer have their support or co-operation but would be an itinerant bringing his message to other communities. Cain at first demurred, protesting that his failure disqualified him from acting in any didactic capacity. Since his ties to his erstwhile colleagues were severed, as

well as his ability to consult with Y-H-W-H, he would now run the risk of being subjected to the same treatment for introducing dissident teaching as the one his brother received at his hands. Y-H-W-H then reassured him that his own example would prevent others from pursuing such a path and he therefore had nothing to fear.

Expositors see Y-H-W-H's statement as a question designed to elicit confession (as the one to Adam was misunderstood - see Exposition 3:9), Cain then denying knowledge of Abel's whereabouts or condition, a childish attempt to deny responsibility. None realized how this derogates Scripture, projecting condescending superiority over naïve ancestors, certainly not how the Israelites read this. Indeed, several Hebrew commentators, attuned to the refinements of biblical Hebrew, realized that this interpretation is untenable; to imagine that Cain pretended not to know exactly why he was asked this question is puerile. *Imagine running into an acquaintance who asks you where your brother is {not how is he doing}; this means he expected the brother to be with you (which requires the interrogatory A-YEI) or had looked for him elsewhere and failed to find him (in which case he would have started with EI-PHOH - see Exposition 3:9). Some even attribute a certain arrogance to Cain, perceiving his response as lecturing Y-H-W-H that no one is more capable than He of attending to Abel's welfare.* This passage cannot be treated as a simplistic morality tale with juvenile actors; it is a drama involving mature personalities and a fundamental social and moral issue.

EXPOSITION [4:16-18]

16. CAIN WENT FORTH FROM BEFORE Y-H-W-H AND SETTLED IN A SECLUDED LAND NEAR EDEN.

וַיֵּצֵא קַיִן מִלִּפְנֵי יְהֹוָה VA-YEI-TZEI QA-YIN MI-LI-PH'NEI Y-H-W-H (CAIN WENT FORTH FROM BEFORE Y-H-W- H): There are numerous ways Scripture reports permanent parting or separation (cf. EXODUS 10:6, 11:8; LEVITICUS 22:3: DEUTERONOMY 17:18; SAMUEL I 8:18; ISAIAH 48:19; JEREMIAH 16:17; JONAH 1:3). The combination VA-YEI-TZEI... MI-LI-PH'NEI implies nothing of the sort (cf. GENESIS 41:46, 47:10; EXODUS 35:20; ESTHER 8:15). Cain's connection with Y-H-W-H was *not severed* - he went forth as His emissary.

וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־נוֹד VA-YEI-SHEHBH B'EH-RETZ NOHD (AND SETTLED IN A SECLUDED LAND): VA-YEI-SHEHBH (literally "and he sat") means residence (cf. GENESIS 37:1, 47:27; EXODUS 2:15; NUMBERS 21:31). Had Cain set off for the "land of wanderers" to a peripatetic life, the text would read וַיֵּצֵא... וַיֵּלֶךְ VA-YEI-TZEI... VA-YEI-LEHKH... (AND HE DEPARTED... AND HE WENT... - cf. GENESIS 11:31, 28:10; JUDGES 19:27; JEREMIAH 37:12) and had NOHD been a region of constant movement, it would be named נֹד NOH-DADE ("roam/travel" - cf. ISAIAH 10:14; HOSEA 9:17; NAHUM 3:17; more appropriate is שׁוֹט SHOAT ["circulate" – cf. NUMBERS 11:8; JEREMIAH 5:1; AMOS 8:12]). The inherent contradiction between a "dweller" and a "wanderer" bothered several commentators, especially Hebrew ones who discerned another oddity. Cain's settling down was volitional, not something Y-H-W-H caused (that would be הוּשַׁב HOH-SHEIBH [cf. GENESIS 47:6; LEVITICUS 23:43; SAMUEL I 2:8]).

More troublesome for pundits was their inability to nail down where Cain's new home was. Mentioned nowhere else in Scripture, it was assumed to be a particular venue whose name reflected infamous residents exiled there for committing forms of manslaughter and harking back to Cain's punishment. Whether with the traditional or critical approach, nothing in the text suggests there were other murderers on the planet; it could not be called NOHD based on one event. The alternative, that this is how readers knew it at the time of Scripture's canonization because it had become notorious for harboring these types (who apparently all voluntarily surrendered to be inmates in this makeshift prison) is belied by the fact that there was no such place recorded anywhere in history, documentary, archaeological or mythical. *Several Jewish scholars note the similarity between this and the cities of refuge (NUMBERS 35:11-28); those were established after the Israelites settled Canaan and only for those who committed involuntary manslaughter and in need of protection against vengeful relatives, only superficially analogous to Cain's situation.*

The expositors were so focused on the land of "Nod" matching the "Nod" condition imposed on him, they assumed the two shared motility. *The only one who proffered an adroit explanation was Cassuto [20th century Italy], who opined that conditions in Nod were so unstable and erratic that settlers might temporarily find shelter and sustenance but would soon be forced to move as local conditions deteriorated, so inhabitants had to continuously circulate throughout Nod. This does not explain*

why anyone would voluntarily relocate there; furthermore, if they could eke out a living that way, why would they be any worse off than the nomads with whom the Israelites were very familiar? But the Israelites knew how to read this verse; the added "Vav" vowel indicator in NOHD transforms a denominative proper noun into a descriptive one (cf. NUMBERS 13:32; DEUTERONOMY 8:8, 29:27; CHRONICLES II 6:36). The root "Nun-Daled" applies not only to volitional movement but to impelled motion, including repulsion or thrust. Thus, a נָדָּה NI-DAH is one kept at arm's length (LEVITICUS 18:19), an indecent act to be spurned (LEVITICUS 20:21), purifying waters sprinkled MEI NI-DAH ("sprinkled waters" - NUMBERS 19;9) or people isolated or quarantined [using the cognate בָּדָד BAH-DAHD (LEVITICUS 13:46. NUMBERS 23:9. DEUTERONOMY 32:12)]. Cain and his wife relocated to Nod *to live in seclusion*.

קִדְמַת־עֵדֶן QI-D'MAHTH EI-DEN (NEAR EDEN): Universally translated "east of Eden" *(and the title of John Steinbeck's great novel inspired by this narrative)*, that is מִמִּזְרָח MI-MIZ-RAHCH (FROM THE EAST - cf. JOSHUA 11:3; ISAIAH 41:2; DANIEL 11:44), לְמִזְרָח L'MIZ-RAHCH (TO THE EAST - cf. NEHEMIAH 3:26: CHRONICLES I 4:39, which can also be אֶל־הַמִּזְרָח EL HA-MIZ-RAHCH {DANIEL 8-9}) or מִזְרָחָה MIZ-R'CHA (EASTWARD - cf. NUMBERS 3:38; DEUTERONOMY 3:17; JOSHUA 11:8). The association of this construct noun with "east" may be due to Its occasional juxtaposition to the easterly direction (cf. EXODUS 27:13; NUMBERS 2:3; JOSHUA 19:13). While it can signify that by itself (e. g. 2:14 above), that depends entirely on context, as now explained.

The root "Qooph-Daled-Mem" denotes spatial or temporal proximity; in the construct QI-D'MAHTH, its meaning depends on context, which here seems to fix the location of Cain's new home, although no reason is stated or implied why we must know this. Had the commentators heeded the punctuation, they would have realized that this reading is incorrect, for it requires a ZaqeifGadol punctuation trope on VA-YEI-SHEHBH in the preceding phrase. To understand the propinquity of NOHD to Eden, the reader must keep in mind the mosaic painted in our Exposition. Contrary to standard interpretations, Cain was not exiled, did not become a wanderer or vagabond, nor was he ostracized. Reprising his father's role, he disseminated awareness of the consequences of misguided leadership and enforcement. Naturally, the best disciples were the "cherubs" (see 3:24) now residing in that area of Eden where they were placed after the garden was made off limits.

17. CAIN KNEW HIS WIFE AND SHE CONCEIVED AND BORE ENOCH
(CAIN) BECAME A CITY BUILDER AND CALLED THE NAME OF THE CITY LIKE THE NAME OF HIS SON ENOCH

וַתֵּלֶד אֶת־חֲנוֹךְ VA-TEI-LEHD ETH CHA-NOHKH (AND [SHE] BORE ENOCH): *Ha'emeq Dabhar* (R. N. Berlin, 19th century Lithuania) observed that Scripture named him, not his parents, thus telling us something about him (See Exposition 3:1 - V'HA-NA-CHAHSH). CHA-NOHKH is an adjective, "[one] trained", but that would not be known until he matured. No expositor wondered what he was trained for, essential for understanding a cognate used only two other times precisely because it refers to special matriculation (cf. GENESIS 14:14; PROVERBS 22:6). *Many Christian writers grappled with the fact that Cain must have married his sister. Such conjectures are unnecessary (see 1:26-27). Scripture discouraged incest (Exposition 2:23-24) but this was a recommendation, not a prohibition. The ban on sexual relations among siblings applies only to the covenantal community; early readers were not taken aback by this passage.*

וַיְהִי בֹּנֶה עִיר VA-Y'HEE BOH-NEH IR (AND [CAIN] BECAME A CITY BUILDER): Critics of Cain's new vocation all miss a crucial point the Israelites, still agrarian when Scripture was canonized, realized: a city depends on surpluses collected from its surrounding communities. *This was given ritual reinforcement when the Israelites brought First Fruits to the temple (EXODUS 23:19) and consumed the second tithe within the capital (DEUTERONOMY 14:22-26).* Cain could not "build a city" by himself; its raison d'etre is the hierarchy managing its flow of goods and people. Cain was still a "spearhead" (see 4:1 – QA-YIN), this project not sinful abandonment by a wanderer but advancing human development. *Christian writers saw Cain's act as further rebellion - he quit wandering and settled down; realizing this deprived him of the promised divine protection, he provided his own, a city within which he was safe. While "Ayin-Yud-Reish" ("city") is cognate to "Ayin-Vav-Reish" ("skin"), which has the expanded sense of a protective membrane (cf. EXODUS 26:14; EZEKIEL 37:6; JOB 2:4), the Israelites knew that many*

cities lacked this feature (cf. EZEKIEL 38:11; ZECHARIAH 2:8; ESTHER 9:19). Had Cain been concerned for his safety, he would have built a מִבְצָר *MIBH-TZAR (STRONGHOLD - cf. NUMBERS 13:19, JOSHUA 10:20; ISAIAH 25:12),* מָעוֹז *MA-OZ (BULWARK - cf. JUDGES 6:26; ISAIAH 25:4; EZEKIEL 30:15) or* מְצוּדָה *M'TZOO-DAH (FORTRESS - cf. SAMUEL I 22:4; EZEKIEL 12:13; JOB 39:28). It never occurred to these exegetes that he did this after his son was born; a family man cannot remain homeless nor could he inflict this life on his family. If his motivation was security, the second part of the verse would read VA-YEI-LEKH AHR-TZA NOHD QI-D'MAS EI-DEN U- BHA-NAH MIBH-TZAR VA-YEI-SHEHBH B'THOH-KHOH (AND WENT TO THE LAND OF NOHD EAST OF EDEN AND BUILT A CITADEL AND DWELT THEREIN - cf. JOSHUA 2:15; SAMUEL II 7:2). The Israelites had more reason to reject any idea this construction was defensive. One pernicious tactic they knew well was the siege; a vengeful group of relatives could compel Cain's surrender (cf. DEUTERONOMY 20:19-20; JEREMIAH 10:17; MICHA 7:12).*

וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הָעִיר כְּשֵׁם בְּנוֹ חֲנוֹךְ VA-YIQ-RA SHEM HA-IR K'SHEM B'NOH CHA-NOHKH (AND HE CALLED THE CITY'S NAME LIKE THAT OF HIS SON ENOCH): *When a city was given the name it was called henceforth, the text adds the ETH modifier (cf. GENESIS 28:19; JUDGES 1:17; KINGS I 16:24); a "Beth" prefix points to a town's nature or function (cf. GENESIS 12:8; JOSHUA 21:9; JUDGES 18:29). AHL KEIN ("therefore") provides a reason for the label (cf. GENESIS 11:9; EXODUS 15:23; JOSHUA 5:9), while AHL ("upon") indicates ownership or control (cf. DEUTERONOMY 3:14; SAMUEL II 15:32; KINGS I 16:24) or a memorial (cf. GENESIS 21:31; SAMUEL II 18:18; ESTHER 9:26).* The comparative "Kaph" prefix used here means a locale was given a name already well-known (JOSHUA 19:47; SAMUEL II 7:9; DANIEL 4:5). Accordingly, Cain did not name the city in honor of his son but to emphasize its role - an urban society that became culture's incubator, fostering interactions not feasible in rural or hunter-gatherer societies, conferring many benefits but harboring pitfalls.

18. AND TO ENOCH WAS FOSTERED IRAD AND IRAD RAISED MHUYAEL
AND MHUYAEL RAISED MTHUSHAEL AND MTHUSHAEL RAISED LEMECH.

וַיִּוָּלֵד לַחֲנוֹךְ אֶת־עִירָד VA-YEE-VA-LEID LA-CAH-NOHKH ETH I-RAD (AND TO ENOCH WAS FOSTERED IRAD): This is not just genealogy; *Birkath Asher* (Asher Wassertheil - 20th century Israel) noted the peculiar juxtaposition of the ETH direct object indicator with a passive VA-YEE-VA-LEID ("was born"), one which occurs only two other times. Joseph's sons (GENESIS 46:20) and Aaron's (NUMBERS 26:60), raised by their parents but influenced by their environments, emerged as personalities that integrated all forces shaping their maturation. This happened to IRAD; IR (CITY) with a "Daled" suffix is an adjectival "urban dweller/man". *Those who saw a "wild ass" were confused by the similarity to A-ROHD; that requires reversed positions of the "Reish" and "Yud".* IRAD became leader of a burgeoning municipality.

Some Hebrew writers (e. g. *Goor Aryeh* [R. J. Loew - 16th century Prague]; *Mizrachi on Rashi* [Elijah Mizrachi - 16th century Turkey]) noted that "begat" is in the Qal form [YA-LAHD], not the expected HOH-LEED (cf. GENESIS 11:27; NUMBERS 26:29; RUTH 4:18-22), and correctly surmised that these are not names but types (an observation others shared) indicating progressive stages. *This entire Parsha (Chapter 4 in standard editions) has no breaks. Conventional interpretations would dictate a minor space at verses 15 and 23; their absence makes this a continuous narrative with one theme.*

M'CHOO-YA-EL ("EL is erased" [cf. GENESIS 6:7; EXODUS 17:14; NUMBERS 5:23] referring to the deity). When societies grow in population and become stratified, temporal powers are indispensable to preserve order, not to mention to organize protection against external threats. There are no hints of this in the text but these developments inevitably follow the detachment of urbanites from their sources of sustenance and allow them to form the belief they control events and outcomes.

M'THOO-SHA-EL ("EL is forgotten" - cf. GENESIS 41:51; DEUTERONOMY 32:18; ISAIAH 44:21); society became secular, relying on its own powers and skills, with no need for ritual or ceremony.

With LE-MEHKH ("toward the lowest"), the individual is eclipsed, his independence "reduced" (cf. LEVITICUS 25:25; PSALMS 106:43; ECCLIASTES 10:18) and subservient to those wielding power, important for understanding what follows.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Cain went forth from before Y-H-W-H to assume his duties but later settled in a secluded territory near Eden. He and his wife had a son called ENOCH, whereupon Cain initiated the urban form of habitation, attributing it to his son as educator. ENOCH fostered IRAD, the essential urban dweller, who in turn sired MHUYAEL, representing a generation that erased the divine from their lives; he begot MTHUSHAEL to a society where EL was forgotten, and MTHUSHAEL fathered LEMECH into a completely secular, mundane human existence.

EXPOSITION [4:19-22}

19. LEMECH TOOK FOR HIMSELF TWO WIVES
THE NAME OF THE ONE (WAS) ADA AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND (WAS) TZILA.

וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ לֶמֶךְ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים VA-YI-QACH LOH LEH-MEHKH SHTEI NA-SHEEM (LEMECH TOOK FOR HIMSELF TWO WIVES): Expositors sought a rationale for this superfluous verse. *Christian writers who condemned Lemech for violating the monogamy ideal misunderstood 2:23-24 (see Exposition). Scripture takes polygamy for granted (cf. EXODUS 21:10; DEUTERONOMY 21:15; SAMUEL I 1:2); it features in the lives of major personalities (cf. GENESIS 25:1, 30:14- 15; SAMUEL II 5:13; KINGS I 11:3).* Some Jewish sources attribute to Lemech an ancient practice of men taking one wife for procreation and another for "recreation", a thesis refuted by historians and anthropologists, whose consensus is that polygamy was necessitated by high infant mortality rates, the need for homestead workers and extending kinship ties. Only *Ha-Emeq Dabhar* (R. N. Berlin - 19th century Lithuania) boldly asserted that Lemech fulfilled the mandate of expanding the number of the world's human inhabitants. *Any thematic digression requires a minor space to mark a new PAR-SHA, verses 19 to 24, and then a space to indicate a return to the previous motif.*

When the transitive VA-YI-QACH ("took") modifies people, it is persuasion or recruitment (see Exposition 2:15). If followed by a dative personal pronoun in a reflexive mode, LOH ["unto himself"], the "taking" was purposeful (cf. GENESIS 6:2; JUDGES 19:1; CHRONICLES I 2:19). This is also the only time a direct object of this verb is doubled - Lemech took "two women" that the text then names.

שֵׁם הָאַחַת עָדָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית צִלָּה SHEM HA-A-CHAHTH A-DAH V'SHEM HA-SHEI-NEETH TZI-LAH (THE NAME OF THE ONE [WAS] ADA AND THE NAME OF THE SECOND [WAS] TZILA): Translations of A-DAH as "adornment/ornament" are superficial. Talmudic sages took it as a gerundial "pass on/delegate" (from the Aramaic cognate - cf. JEREMIAH 47:7; MICAH 6:9; DANIEL 7:14) that points to progress (cf. B'REISHEETH RABBAH 23:2:26; YALKUT SHIMONI 38:6), although they relegated it to a conjugal format rather than the advancements recorded in the next three verses. A similarly facile approach prevented correct renderings of TZI-LAH; "her shade/shadow" requires a Mapiq point in the "Heh" (cf. ISAIAH 44:16; HOSEA 4:13). They fundamental meaning of TZEIL is "protrusion/projection" (see Exposition 1:27 - B'TZAHL-MOH); Tzila continued mankind's development where Ada left off.

20. ADA GAVE BIRTH TO YABAL; HE WAS FATHER TO TENT DWELLERS AND MERCHANTS.

21. HIS BROTHER'S NAME (WAS) YUBAL
HE WAS FATHER TO THOSE ADEPT WITH STRINGED AND WIND (MUSICAL) INSTRUMENTS.

22. TZILA SHE ALSO GAVE BIRTH TO TUBAL CAIN WHO HONED TOOLS OF COPPER AND IRON
TUBAL CAIN'S SISTER (WAS) NAAMA.

Lemech's children transformed society; Yabal introduced commerce and trade, his brother Yubal fashioned the first musical instruments. Tzila's son launched metal tool technology; his sister ameliorated the world her brothers created by injecting refinement and civility into society (cf. SAMUEL II 1:23, 26; PSALMS 133:1; PROVERBS 3:17 - note the text is not the standard V'SHEM A-CHOH-THO ["his sister's name" - cf. KINGS I 14:21; EZEKIEL 23:4; CHRONICLES I 4:3, 7:16] so the reading could just as easily be "and Tubal Cain's sister was pleasant").

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DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION
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Lemech married two women, Ada and Tzila. Ada gave birth to Yabal, the founder of trade and commerce. His brother Yubal mentored the first musicians. Tzila gave birth to Tubal Cain, who forged metal tools, while his sister was the pleasant Naama.

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EXPOSITION [4:23-24]
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23. LEMECH SAID TO HIS WIVES: ADA AND TZILA HEAR MY VOICE WIVES OF LEMECH HEARKEN TO WHAT I SAY FOR THE MAN I (HAD) EXECUTED WOUNDED ME BUT THE LAD SHALL REPAIR THE BREACH.

שְׁמַעַן קוֹלִי SH'MA-AN QOH-LEE (HEAR MY VOICE): The verse's lyricism is not just poetic flourish; its meaning depends on how SH'MA-AN ("hear") and QOH-LEE ("my voice") are joined. If the objective is primarily sound perception, the verb is transitive and followed by ETH (direct object indicator - cf. GENESIS 3:8; NUMBERS 7:89; DEUTERONOMY 4:36). If giving a directive, QOHL needs a prepositional "Beth" prefix (cf. GENESIS 21:12; NUMBERS 14:22; DEUTERONOMY 4:30), while a general exhortation is prefixed by a dative "Lamed" (cf. GENESIS 3:17; JUDGES 2:20; JEREMIAH 18:19). If it is none of these, the speaker solicits a response (cf. EXODUS 28:35; DEUTERONOMY 4:12; JUDGES 18:25), assistance or cooperation (cf. EXODUS 32:18; LEVITICUS 5:1; NUMBERS 20:16). Lemech appealed to his wives; readings of boastfulness, excuses or justifications for his act are untenable.

הַאֲזֵנָה אִמְרָתִי HA-ZEI-NAH IM-RA-THEE (HEARKEN TO WHAT I SAY): Parallelism is ubiquitous in biblical poetry but it is never mere repetition. HA-ZEI-NAH ("mind/regard") drew attention to the connotations of the entreaty and its implementation (cf. DEUTERONOMY 1:45; ISAIAH 51:4; NEHEMIAH 9:30 and note ISAIAH 32:9).

כִּי אִישׁ הָרַגְתִּי לְפִצְעִי KEE ISH HA-RAG-TEE L'PHITZ-EE (FOR THE MAN I [HAD] EXECUTED WOUNDED ME): KEE here is "because" *[the Masoretes made sure readers understood this by punctuating it with a "Moonach", separating it from the rest of the clause, and placing a "Pashta" on the verb HA-RAG-TEE instead of the noun ISH].* Had his action been retaliatory against injury or threat, he would say הִכֵּיתִי HI-KEE-THEE (I SMOTE - cf. EXODUS 3:20; JUDGES 15:16; JEREMIAH 21:6), קטל QA-TAL (SLEW - cf. PSALMS 139:19; JOB 13:15; DANIEL 3:22) or הֵמִית HEI-MEETH (PUT TO DEATH - cf. GENESIS 18:25; EXODUS 16:3; LEVITICUS 20:4). HA-RAG indicates execution (see 4:8). *KEE as causative is difficult; there is no prior condition or event requiring explanation. Some translators omit it entirely, not a valid approach to a text in which every word is essential. Most used the neutral "for"; only the Septuagint correctly rendered it "because", letting the reader intuit the antecedent.* Had Lemech been justifying himself, the prepositional phrase would be first (cf. GENESIS 49:6; PSALMS 10:8; JOB 16:10) and the order of verb and its object inverted (cf. GENESIS 49:6; EXODUS 32:27; ESTHER 9:6). He offered a preliminary reason for his appeal to his wives, namely, he had a man executed for a major infraction.

וְיֶלֶד לְחַבֻּרָתִי V'YEH-LED L'CHA-BOO-RA-THEE (BUT THE LAD SHALL REPAIR THE BREACH): Of the terms for hurt [חַבֵּל CHA-BEIL (INJURE - ISAIAH 13:5), נֶגַע NEH-GA (AFFLICTION - GENESIS 12:17), מכאב MAHKH-OHBH (PAIN - EXODUS 3:7), פָּגַע PA-GA (STRICKEN - SAMUEL II 1:15), מָחַץ MA-CHATZ (CRUSH - JUDGES 5:26), הִכָּה HEE-KAH (STRUCK - GENESIS 14:17), נִקַּר NEE-QAR (PIERCED - JOB 30:17), שָׁבוּר SHA-BHOOR (BROKEN - PSALMS 147:3)] or emotional distress [צער TZA-AHR (AGONY - JEREMIAH 14:3), מָצוֹק MA-TZOHQ (DISTRESS - DEUTERONOMY 28:53), לַחַץ LA-CHATZ (OPPRESSION - EXODUS 3:9), מָצוֹר MA-TZOR (DESPERATION - DEUTERONOMY 28:53), אֵיד AYD (CALAMITY - PROVERBS 1:26), דַּאֲבָה DAH-AH-BHA (LANGUISH - JEREMIAH 31:12), מָרָה MAH-RAH (EMBITTER - EXODUS 1:14), עָגַם A-GAM (GRIEVE - JOB 30:25)], Lemech chose the most obscure. Its root ("Cheth-Beth-Reish" - "join") is the opposite of what Lemech was assumed to express *[evidenced by some cognates - חֹבֶרֶת CHOH-BHEH-RETH (JOINT - EXODUS 26:4), מַחְבֶּרֶת MACH-BEH-RETH (CODEX - EXODUS 26:4), חָבֵר CHA-BHEIR (FRIEND - JUDGES 20:11), חֶבְרָה CHEHBH-RAH (ASSOCIATION - ISAIAH 1:23)].* What exactly, then, was the nature of his "bruise"?

CHA-BOO-RAH has two forms *(easily missed in casual readings and not discernible at all in translation)*. The variant with a "Vav" vowel indicator {חַבּוּרָה} appears three times; typically translated "bruise", it is the *monetary* damage caused by a blow (EXODUS 21:25; ISAIAH 1:6; PSALMS 38:5 [6 in the Hebrew]). CHA-BOO-RAH sans the "Vav", which

also appears thrice (here and ISAIAH 53:5; PROVERBS 20:30), is the mark left from an assault and therefore sometimes translated as "stripe", what it looks like from afar. These are related to the root in that a streak or blemish seems to join two sides. A second characteristic of this wound, which sets it apart from the others, is its impermanence; even with a lasting scar, the injured limb is restored or reasonably functional. This obviously does not accord with the conventional interpretations of what Lemech was presumed to have said.

When we encounter such a linguistic disparity, we probe the root's meaning to gauge the verse's extended sense (see Exposition to 1:5 - EH-REHBH and BOH-QER) and conclude that the "lad" was to be the CHA-BOO-RAH to heal a social scab, the residue of the breach opened by his father *(hence the dative "Lamed" prefix).* Lemech promoted this by beseeching his wives to take this young man under their wings, just as they did their children and perhaps others. Exacting a punishment on a parent makes it imperative that the community act in loco parentis for surviving children, which Lemech did with this request - and which provides the unstated premise, as now amplified.

24. FOR CAIN SHALL REDRESS SEVENFOLD AND LEMECH (SHALL DO SO) SEVENTY-SEVEN.

The consensus that this verse is an a fortiori polemic gives all schools a framework for interpreting Lemech's speech. The many examples of this syllogism have similar phrasing (cf. EXODUS 6:12; NUMBERS 12:13-14; DEUTERONOMY 31:27 - the latter's AHPH [best translated in these contexts as "certainly"] used over two dozen times) but none with this verse; in fact, the "Vav" conjunctive prefix to LEHMEHKH rules out the first half of the verse as predicate to the second. The reader is left with the feeling that the scholars were not convinced they got it right, a suspicion entirely justified, for except societies in which the vendetta is an accepted social dynamic, none penalized accidental manslaughter - Lemech had nothing to fear or justify. *Even a successful GOH-EL HA-DAHM ("Redeemer of the Blood") is guiltless (NUMBERS 35:27).*

Vengeance is perceived to be harm or injury as retaliation or reprisal. Biblical retribution is more nuanced, its purpose to redress in a way that effects restoration or discourages reoccurrence (cf. EXODUS 21:21; NUMBERS 31:2-3; ISAIAH 34:8 - the assertion that Scripture disparages vengeance is misguided). This informs our understanding of Lemech's declaration - he was intent on outdoing his ancestor. Cain established a protocol for healing societal fractures; Lemech extended it to all affected by a relative's misstep, especially children who had to be reintegrated into the social fabric. His wives, successful mentors of progeny who made major contributions to the advancement of civilization, he now charged to take an orphan under their wings, establishing the community's responsibility towards its disadvantaged, a vital elevation of humanity's ethical level.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

Lemech importuned his wives to hearken to him and be attentive to his plea. He had a man executed for committing an affront to his leadership; he now needed their assistance in seeing to the proper education and upbringing of that man's son, thus filling society's breach.

EXPOSITION [4:25-26]

25. ADAM CONTINUED LIVIING WITH HIS WIFE AND SHE BORE A SON AND CALLED HIS NAME SETH
FOR E-LO-HIM EMBEDDED FOR ME A DIFFERENT SEED TO REPLACE ABEL FOR CAIN HAD HIM EXECUTED.

וַיֵּדַע אָדָם עוֹד אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ VA-YEI-DA A-DAM OHD ETH ISH-TOH (ADAM CONTINUED LIVING WITH HIS WIFE): Chapter 4 is thematically homogeneous. Adam and Eve never ceased living as man and wife, contrary to the view that this passage affirms resumption of relations they had abstained from and which would repudiate His mandate to populate the earth - and His blessing. OHD here can only have the sense of continuity (cf. GENESIS 7:4; EXODUS

11:1; SAMUEL II 5:13). *An act that reprised previous ones yet was set apart requires* וַיֹּסֶף *VA-YOH-SEHPH (AND HE REPEATED - cf.* *GENESIS 25:1; NUMBERS 22:15; JUDGES 11:14).* The couple lived conjugally before and after their departure from Eden.

וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן VA-TEI-LED BEIN (AND [SHE] BORE A SON): Biblical passages must also be scrutinized for what is not stated. Missing here is וַתַּהַר VA-TA-HAR (SHE CONCEIVED - cf. GENESIS 4:1, 17; EXODUS 2:2; ISAIAH 8:3); pregnancy mentioned prior to a birth (cf. GENESIS 16:4; NUMBERS 11:12; JUDGES 13:3) indicates that both parents were involved in preparations for the child's arrival, rearing and development, while a possessive foreshadows its succession to a parent's status or mission. Here, an unadorned VA-TEI-LED BEIN tells us that Adam sired children but no longer led the community (see Exposition 3:19 - AHD SHOO-BH'KHA; note the only other times this phrase occurs, without accoutrements, in similar situations where the mother is the dominant parent - GENESIS 19:37; JUDGES 13:24). She was the one who named him and explained his role.

כִּי שָׁת־לִי אֱלֹהִים זֶרַע אַחֵר KEE SHAHTH LEE E-LO-HIM ZEH-RA A-CHEIR (FOR ELO-HIM EMBEDDED FOR ME A DIFFERENT SEED): Interpreters see Seth replacing Abel as the progenitor from which mankind emerged. The punctuation belies this, for that requires KEE - TelishQetana, SHAHTH LEE E-LO-HIM - Maqef-Qadma-V'Azla, ZEH-RA A-CHEIR TAH-CHAHTH HEH-BHEHL - Mahpakh-PashtaZaqef-Qatan and his name would have a Qamatz vowel, not a Tseirei (cf. Dan GENESIS 30:6; Gad 30,11). We expect the standard נָתַן לִי NA-THAHN LEE (GAVE TO ME - cf. GENESIS 15:3, 29:33; SAMUEL I 1:27; ISAIAH 8:18) or even the obscure הַב לִי HABH LEE (GENESIS 30:1). "Established/set/placed" and the like do not capture SHAHTH LEE. The radical root "Shin-Taph" applies to firm embedding. The few times this occurs involve specific preparations and an implied or explicit pronoun or prefix indicating for whom (cf. EXODUS 7:23; HOSEA 6:11; JOB 38:36), as here. *The name Y-H-W-H appears ten times in this PAR-SHA, the first one invoked by the woman in connection with Cain (4:1); she reverted to E-LO-HIM when naming Seth. [She did this once before - Y-H-W-H E-LO-HIM was changed to E-LO-HIM when she talked with the NAH-CHAHSH in Eden]. This transition to the Name associated with rules and regulations, both in nature and in society, means man's lofty orientation was abandoned.*

זֶרַע אַחֵר ZEH-RA A-CHEIR (A DIFFERENT SEED): Abel's replacement is בֵּן אַחֵר BEN A-CHEIR ("another son" - GENESIS 30:24) or, if a successor, בֵּן שֵׁנִי BEIN SHEI-NEE ("second son" - GENESIS 30:7, 12). If in his own category *(not a substitute)*, he would be עוֹד בֵּן OHD BEIN ("again a son" - SAMUEL II 5:13, 9:3; RUTH 1:11). ZEH-RA (SEED) is used when a parent is not worried about having a child but ensuring the family's continuity (cf. GENESIS 7:3, 15:3; LEVITICUS 22:13; SAMUEL I 1:11, 2:20 and note the combined usage in GENESIS 17:19). As the couple already had grandchildren, this was not a concern. In fact, the "Qatan" trope on A-CHEIR marks the end of the phrase and obviates the traditional interpretations because there is no reference that gives meaning to "other" seed *(a prime example of how correct biblical exposition is impossible without careful attention to the punctuation)*. The Masoretes insured readers understood Eve was not referencing Abel; Seth was a *completely different type and personality* (cf. SAMUEL I 10:6; ISAIAH 65:22; JEREMIAH 6:12).

תַּחַת הֶבֶל TA-CHAHTH HEHBHEL (REPLACING ABEL): TA-CHAHTH immediately after A-CHEIR is both redundant and inconsistent. *The only other time this occurs (JOB 34:24), the speaker predicts changes due to supplanted leadership, what the woman now foresees for Seth.* A substitute for a brother is חֵלֶף CHEI-LEHPH (IN PLACE OF - cf. LEVITICUS 27:10; KINGS I 5:28; *a succeeding Muslim leader is a Chaleeph {Caliph}*). TA-CHAHTH signifies a replacement who does *not* reprise the predecessor (cf. GENESIS 36:33; ESTHER 2:17). When it opens a phrase (as the punctuation indicates), it goes beyond positions or substitutions to elements of consequence or recompense that require changes in orientation or attitude (cf. NUMBERS 25:13; DEUTERONOMY 21:14, 28:47; JEREMIAH 5:19). Seth was to move his generation to a new course; why she felt this was necessary is explained next.

כִּי הֲרָגוֹ קַיִן KEE HA-RAH-GOH QA-YIN (FOR CAIN HAD HIM EXECUTED): This is not superfluous; the verb HA-RAH-GOH, which should be, as it is elsewhere, הָרְגוֹ HOR'GOH (cf. EXODUS 21:14; NUMBERS 31:18; JOSHUA 10:11) is here

in the intense form, not manslaughter or homicide but judicial execution (EXODUS 23:7; ESTHER 9:10; NEHEMIAH 9:26). Eve understood that Cain had Abel put to death for insubordination (4:3-8) but a lapse in judgment as to how to properly apply sanctions necessitated his exile. Able had veered from the right path (3:14-15) and incurred guilt by abandoning His format for introducing new ideas and techniques, launching them on his own terms and perhaps partially to blame for what he brought upon himself *(as opined by a fair number of Hebrew commentators)*. As her insights helped Eve formulate a decision regarding the conversation with the Nachahsh, the tree in the garden and her behavior in league with her husband (3:6-7), so here she made an informed judgement *(Adam was now relegated to the background, no longer active in community leadership)*, the entire responsibility hers. She realized that the Y-H-W-H principles that animated Cain (4:1) had to be set aside in favor of the austere E-LO-HIM orientation (see Exposition 2:4) in her "other seed" that would supplant both Cain and Abel.

26. TO SETH WAS ALSO BORN A SON AND HE CALLED HIS NAME ENOSH
THEN CALLING UPON THE NAME OF Y-H-W-H BECAME UNFASHIONABLE.

וּלְשֵׁת גַּם־הוּא יֻלַּד־בֵּן U-L'SHEIS GAM HOO YOO-LAHD BEIN (TO SETH WAS ALSO BORN A SON): Three curiosities were separately noted by several Hebrew scholars who offered tenable, but unintegrated, explanations; *analytical techniques are invaluable but must always pass the test of intelligent synthesis.* GAM HOO (ALSO HE) indicates a happening after, and inspired by, a previous one (see 4:4), yet here it follows a passive verb rooted in "Yud-Lamed-Daled" ["beget"], a cumbersome form used only twice again (GENESIS 10:21; SAMUEL II 21:20) and implying a development beyond the actor's control. The added emphasis on the "son" tells us that some outcomes were anticipated and desired but not others.

אֱנוֹשׁ EH-NOHSH: Of the six words for human being, this one alludes to man at his most common or basest (cf. ISAIAH 8:1; JOB 7:17) or his frailty (cf. ISAIAH 13:7; PSALMS 66:12; JOB 4:17). It also generally provides the plural of "man" (and the feminine plural [נָשִׁים NA-SHEEM - GENESIS 18:11; EXODUS 1:19 – this has no female singular] and typically references men of status, means and prominence (cf. NUMBERS 13:3; DEUTERONOMY 1:13; EZRA 10:16). The singular is used only as a class noun or poetic symbol; Seth was therefore very ambivalent in how he named his son, apprehensively forecasting an ambiguous future. EH-NOHSH is man the mortal being, one who can ascend to great heights or fall to the depths.

אָז הוּחַל לִקְרֹא בְּשֵׁם יְהֹוָה OZ HOO-CHAHL LIQ-RAH B'SHEIM Y-H-W-H (THEN CALLING ON THE NAME OF Y-H-WH BECAME UNFASHIONABLE): Four interpretations of this emerged. Some posit that people began incorporating divine names into personal ones, although such occurs only in this chapter (5:12). A larger group asserted that this marked the onset of prayer to one recognized divine sovereign displacing sacrificial appeasement of invisible actors in nature. A third circle of scholars see the opposite, the attribution of powers to supernatural agents. Finally, there are those who understood it simply as a trend to more profane religious expression. All these, and their variants, attempt to reconcile the grammatical irregularities in this phrase which stem from the one word found nowhere else in Scripture.

The passive HOO-CHAHL indicates the outcome of a process not requiring human intervention, *as YOO-LAD (WAS BORN) earlier in this verse or the burning bush Moses saw not being אֻכָּל OO-KAHL [consumed - EXODUS 3:2]).* This cannot be said of the activity described in this passage, for the infinitive after the verb points to an impending change, belying the standard interpretations. That the verb is singular further undermines these readings, as the text is clearly referencing a population and requires the plural הֵחֵלּוּ HEI-CHEI-LOO (THEY BEGAN - cf. SAMUEL I 3:2; ESTHER 9:23; EZRA 3:6) or even the obscure הַחִלָּם HA-CHEE-LAHM (THEY BEGIN - GENESIS 11:6). Also needing clarification is OZ (THEN) as adverbial conjunction; in biblical syntax, it signals an ongoing condition precedent (cf. GENESIS 12:6, 13:7; EXODUS 4:10, 9:24; JOSHUA 1i8) or an event or activity after another (cf. GENESIS 24:41; EXODUS 4:26, 12:44; LEVITICUS 26:34), not at all applicable to this verse which records no provocation. Those who understand this

passage as proclaiming the onset of profanation or spiritual degradation are closer, as can be seen from the added "Vav" vowel indicator after the "Heh". *Ibn Ezra (R. Abraham b. Ezra, 12th cent. France) rightly objects that this requires an immediate direct object but that can only be a Divine name; that this is not the case is shown by the second verb as an infinitive rather than the gerundial קריאה Q'REE-YAH (CALLING - cf. ISAIAH 6:4; JEREMIAH 1:15; JONAH 3:2).*

Eve shifted from referencing Y-H-W-H (4:1) to invoking E-LO-HIM, although Y-H-W-H is immediately recalled in the next verse. As with the NAH-CHAHSH and the forbidden tree (3:1-21), where she made the decision, seconded by her husband, that the status quo needed change, here too she concluded that Cain's Y-H-W-H leadership mode had to be modulated to an E-LO- HIM format. She did not anticipate the repercussion, for He now fell out of fashion as an object of devotion *[as ideas of religion, sin or holiness are disdained by much of academia and "progressives"]*. *HaK'Thabh v'HaQabalah* (R. Jacob Mecklenburg, 19th cent. Germany) was more charitable, arguing that it was no longer "in vogue" because people felt they were not sufficiently pious to merit His attention.

<u>DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION</u>

Adam had been living with his wife, who now bore a son whom she called Seth, for E-LO-HIM had lodged with her a different sort of seed to replace Abel, a type Cain had expunged with his execution of Abel. And to Seth was also born a son and he called his name Enosh. Then calling in the name of Y-H-W-H became outmoded.

The next 10 Parshas (5:1-6:4) end this chapter with a recital of Adam's descendants under this rubric. Standard interpretations impute a bifurcation, a degraded line emanating from Cain and one of an imagined higher order from Seth; this is unwarranted, with no textual basis. Scripture records Adam's offspring inventing technology, commerce and art, while ignoring any philosophy or social ethics; these require Y-H-W-H introspections, which were now absent, resulting in the outcome described in the culmination of this chapter.