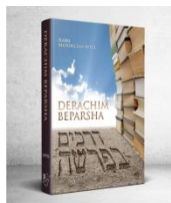


דרכים בפרשה בראשית

R' Mordechai Appel, is an
alumnus of the Telzer
Yeshiva and the author
of Derachim Beparsha.



והבל הביא גם הוא מבכורות צאנו ומחלבהן (ד:ד)

The Torah tells us that Kayin brought a korban to Hashem, and then says, "והבל הביא גם הוא." Hevel also brought a korban. Why does the Torah add the words "גם הוא"? Why not simply tell us that Hevel brought a korban?

The Malbim explains that there was a big difference between the two korbanos. Kayin brought from the produce of the ground, while Hevel brought from the firstborn and the best of his flock. The difference was not simply what they brought, but what their korbanos expressed. Kayin brought from what grew in his fields, while Hevel went out of his way to bring the best he had. A korban is not something Hashem needs. It is our way of showing that we recognize everything we have comes from Him, and that we want to give Him our best. Hevel's korban showed that this was the way he approached avodas Hashem.

Perhaps we can take the words "גם הוא" a little further.

Kayin was the first to bring a korban. Hevel saw what his brother had done, and he, too, brought a korban. But he didn't just copy his brother. He brought from the best of his flock. We can look at the word "גם" as a *remez* to a deeper idea: Hevel saw what his brother had done and built on it. He took his brother's idea and did even better.

Kayin, however, reacted very differently when he saw his brother's success. The Torah tells us, "ויחר לקין מאד ויפל פניו." Kayin became very upset. Instead of looking at Hevel's korban and thinking about what he could learn from him, he became bothered by the fact that his brother had done better.

We all know how this works. Someone tells us that a fellow had a very successful year in business, and we immediately have an explanation. He got lucky with the timing. The market was good. And if you

knew what he paid for that property, you would understand that it wasn't such a brilliant deal after all. By the time we finish explaining his success, we are left wondering how he managed to make any money at all! The one thing we haven't thought about is whether there might be something we could learn from him.

The Gemara in Bava Basra (22a) teaches us, "קנאת סופרים תרבה חכמה." Seeing someone else succeed in learning Torah can push us to learn more ourselves. Rabbeinu Yonah explains that when we see someone else learning Torah and doing mitzvos, we can use that feeling of jealousy to push ourselves to do better, too.

There is a big difference between seeing someone else's success and wishing he didn't have it, and seeing that success and thinking, "I would like to do that, too." One keeps us busy looking at the other fellow. The other helps us work on ourselves.

Perhaps this is the difference between Kayin and Hevel. Hevel saw what his brother had done and built on it. Kayin saw what his brother had achieved and became upset. The same situation could have helped one brother grow, but instead caused the other to fall.

Hashem's response to Kayin is especially important: "הלא אם תיטיב שאת." The Ramban explains that Kayin still had the chance to improve his actions and rise again. He had not lost his chance. He could still do better. He didn't need to take anything away from Hevel in order to succeed himself.

This is something we need to remember. Another person's success does not mean we have failed. Instead of spending our time wondering why he is doing so well, we can ask ourselves what we can learn from him.

The words "גם הוא" remind us that there is room for another person to succeed, too. Hevel did not need Kayin to fail in order to bring a korban. He could take what his brother had started and do his best.

Sometimes the person we find hardest to learn from is the very person who has the most to teach us.

מרדכי ע. אפפיל, Good Shabbos