

THE STORY OF THE SONS OF ADAM IN SOME JEWISH AND ISLAMIC TEXTS

נְבִיאֵ אֲבִי אָדָם

ספור קין והבל

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Genesis 4

¹Now the man knew his wife, Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gained a male child with the help of the Lord."²She then bore his brother, Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil. ³In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil; ⁴and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Lord paid heed to Abel and his offering, ⁵but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed.

Cain was much distressed and his face fell.

⁶And the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you distressed, and why is your face fallen?"

⁷Surely, if you do right, there is uplift. But if you do not do right sin crouches at the door; its urge is toward you, yet you can be its master."⁸Cain said to his brother Abel...and when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹The Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"¹⁰Then He said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!" ¹¹Therefore, you shall be more cursed than the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹²If you till the soil, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall become a ceaseless wanderer on earth."

¹³Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is too great to bear!" ¹⁴Since You have banished me this day from the soil, and I must avoid Your presence and become a restless wanderer on earth – anyone who meets me may kill me!" ¹⁵The Lord said to him, "I promise, if anyone kills Cain, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on him." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who met him should kill him. ¹⁶Cain left the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

בראשית פרק ד

(א) וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד אֶת קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת יְקֹוֹק :

(ב) וַתִּסְפֹּף לָלֶדֶת אֶת אָחִיו אֶת הָבֶל וַיְהִי הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה :

(ג) וַיְהִי מִקְרָץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה לִיקְוֹק :

(ד) וְהֶבֶל הֵבִיא גַם הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת צֹאנוֹ וּמִחֻלְבָּהוּ וַיִּשַׁע יְקֹוֹק אֶל הֶבֶל וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ :

(ה) וְאֶל קַיִן וְאֶל מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו :

(ו) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹוֹק אֶל קַיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לְךָ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָּנֶיךָ :

(ז) הֲלוֹא אִם תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תִּשְׁוֹקֶתוּ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל בּוֹ :

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בַּהֲיוֹתָם בְּשָׂדֵה וַיִּקַּם קַיִן אֶל הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ :

(ט) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹוֹק אֶל קַיִן אֵי הֶבֶל אָחִיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי הֲשֹׁמֵר אָחִי אָנֹכִי :

(י) וַיֹּאמֶר מַה עָשִׂיתָ קוֹל דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים אֵלַי מִן הָאֲדָמָה :

(יא) וַעֲתָה אָרוּר אַתָּה מִן הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָה אֶת פִּיהָ לְקַחֲתָ אֶת דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ מִיָּדְךָ :

(יב) כִּי תַעֲבֹד אֶת הָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִסַּף תֵּת כֹּחָהּ לְךָ נֶעַ וְנָד תִּהְיֶה בְּאָרֶץ :

(יג) וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל יְקֹוֹק גְּדוֹל עֲוֹנֵי מִנְשָׂא :

(יד) הֲוֹ גִרְשִׁית אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנֵיךָ אֶסְתֵּר וְהִיִּיתִי נֶעַ וְנָד בְּאָרֶץ וְהָיָה כֹל מִצְאֵי יַהַרְגֵנִי :

(טו) וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יְקֹוֹק לָכֵן כָּל הַרְגַּ קַיִן שְׁבַעֲתַיִם יִקָּם וַיִּשָּׂם יְקֹוֹק לְקַיִן אוֹת לְבַלְתִּי הַכּוֹת אוֹתוֹ כָּל מִצְאוֹ :

(טז) וַיֵּצֵא קַיִן מִלְפָּנֵי יְקֹוֹק וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאָרֶץ נוֹד קִדְמַת עֵדֵן :

<p>Sura 5 (The Set Table)</p> <p>²⁷Tell them the tale of the two sons of Adam as it really was. Both presented an offering. It was accepted from one of them, but it was not accepted from the other, who said, "I'm going to kill you!" The former answered, "God only accepts from the conscientious."</p> <p>²⁸Even if you stretch out your hand to kill me, I am not stretching out my hand to kill you, for I fear God, the Lord of the worlds. ²⁹I would rather you bring on my sin as well as your sin, so you will be one of those destined for the Fire, for that is the reward of the unjust.</p> <p>³⁰But he did not hold back from killing his brother. He murdered him and became one of the lost. ³¹Then God sent a raven to scratch up the ground to show him how to hide his brother's naked remains. He said: Woe is me! Am I not able even to be like raven to hide the naked corpse of my brother? So he regretted [what he had done]. ³²Because of that, We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a human being for other than murder or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all humankind, and whoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all humankind. Our messengers came to them with proofs, but many of them throughout the land are still excessive.</p>	<p>سورة المائدة</p> <p>وَأْتِلْ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبَلُ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلم يُتَقَبَّلَ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ {27}</p> <p>لَئِن بَسَطتَ إِلَيَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ {28}</p> <p>إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ {29}</p> <p>فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ {30} فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُوَارِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَا أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِيَ سَوْءَةَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ {31}</p> <p>مَنْ أَجَلٌ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ {32}</p>
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Mishnah (dated ca. 200 CE).

<p>Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5</p> <p>We observe [from the story of] Cain who killed his brother, "the bloods of your brother call out." The word is in the plural [to teach] his blood and the blood of his descendants. Therefore Adam was created alone, to teach you that anyone who destroys one human soul [or, in another reading, "one Israelite soul"] is considered as if he destroyed an entire world, and anyone who establishes one human soul is as if he has saved an entire world.</p>	<p>משנה סנהדרין ד', ה'</p> <p>...מצינו בקין שהרג את אחיו, שנאמר (בראשית ד, י) דְּמֵי אָחִיךָ צֹעֲקִים, אינו אומר דם אחיך אלא דמי אחיך, דמו ודם זרעיותיו... לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך, שכל המאבד נפש אחת מבני אדם [בגרסה אחרת "נפש אחת מישראל"], מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו אבד עולם מלא. וכל המקים נפש אחת מבני אדם, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו קים עולם מלא.</p>
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סנהדרין לז.
 לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל מעלה
 עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל
 מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא.

Jewish Midrash (dated ca. 800 CE).

Pirkey deRabbi Eli'ezer 21

The dog that would watch over Abel's flock guarded his corpse from all the beasts of the field and from all the birds of the heavens. Adam and his helpmate were sitting and weeping and mourning for him, and they did not know what to do, for they were unaccustomed to burial. A raven whose fellow-bird died said, "I will teach this man what to do." What did he do? He took his fellow and dug in the earth, covered him and buried him before their eyes. Adam said, "I'll do what this raven did." And he took the body of Abel, dug in the earth and covered it. The Holy One rewarded the ravens with a good reward in this world. What good reward did He give them? When they bear their young and see that they are white, they flee from them thinking that they are the offspring of a serpent. The Holy One then appoints for them gnats and gives them their sustenance so they eat, as it is said (Job 38:41) *Who provides for the raven its food?...*

פרקי דרבי אליעזר, פרק כ"א

... הכלב שהיה משמר צאנו של הבל היה משמר נבלתו מכל חיית השדה מכל עוף השמים, והיה אדם ועזרו יושבים ובוכים ומתאבלים עליו ולא היו יודעים מה לעשות שלא היו נהוגין קבורה, עורב אחד שמת רעהו אמר אלמוד לאדם זה מה לעשות, מה עשה נטל רעהו וחפר בארץ וטמנו לעיניהם וקברו, אמר אדם כעורב הזה אני עושה ונטל את נבלתו של הבל וחפר בארץ וטמנה, ושלים הב"ה לעורבים שכר טוב בעולם הזה, ומה שכר טוב נתן להם, שהן מולידין את בניהם ורואין אותם לבנים ובורחין מלפניהם וסבורים שהם בני נחש, והב"ה מזמין להם יתושים ונותן להם מזונם ואוכלין, שני (איוב ל"ח, מ"א) מי יכין לעורב צידו...