

who are called the *I*³³ killed him, for if You had accepted my sacrifice as You accepted his, I would not have been envious of him." The Holy One, blessed be He, replied immediately: *What have you done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me* (ibid., v. 10). This verse indicates that he inflicted numerous wounds upon Abel.

The words *Crieth unto Me* (*elai*), however, may be interpreted as "Crieth against Me (*'alai*)."³⁴ For example, if two men are fighting together and one of them is killed while a third person stands by and does not attempt to separate them, against whom does everyone complain? Do they not complain against the third person? Hence *Crieth unto Me* actually means *Crieth against Me*.

Cain said to Him: "Master of the Universe, never before have I encountered death, nor have I beheld a dead person; how could I possibly know that if I pummeled him with a stone he would die?" The Holy One, blessed be He, answered immediately: *Cursed art thou from the ground . . . when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth* (ibid., v. 12).

Thereupon Cain cried out: "O Lord of the universe, do You have informers who denounce men to You? My father and mother are the only living human beings on earth, and they do not know that I slew him; how do You, who abidest in heaven, know?" The Holy One, blessed be He, answered: "Fool! I bear the entire world as it is said: *I have made and I will bear; yea, I will carry and will deliver* (Isa. 46:4)." Forthwith, Cain cried out: "You bear the entire world, yet my sin You are unable to bear. *My sin is greater than I can bear* (Gen. 4:13)." "Since you have confessed and repented," said the Holy One, blessed be He, "go into exile from this place." Thus it is said: *And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelled in the land of Nod* (ibid., v. 16). Wherever he wan-

33. *I am the Lord your God* (Exod. 20:2).

34. God shares the blame for not intervening. See Gen.R. 22:9.

dered, the earth would quake beneath his feet; the animals and the beasts would tremble in fright, and would inquire of each other: "What is this?" And they would whisper: "He is Cain, who murdered his brother, Abel. The Holy One, blessed be He, has decreed concerning him: *A fugitive and a wanderer you shall be.*" Then they would say to each other: "Let us devour him." They would gather together to attack, but as they approached, tears would well up in his eyes and he would cry out: *Whither shall I go from Thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in the netherworld, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there would Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand hold me* (Ps. 139:7-10).

10. **Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the land . . . and the Lord said unto him: "Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." and the Lord set a sign for Cain (Gen. 4:14-15).**

There are some who say that the word "Sabbath" was placed as a sign upon his countenance, as it is said: *My Sabbaths, for it is the sign between Me and you, throughout your generations* (Exod. 31:13), and that just as the Sabbath pleaded in behalf of Adam,³⁵ it pleaded in behalf of Cain. Others, however, insist that He fastened a horn upon his forehead.³⁶

After Cain slew Abel, the body lay outstretched upon the earth, since Cain did not know how to dispose of it. Thereupon, the Holy One, blessed be He, selected two clean birds and caused one of them to kill the other. The surviving bird dug the earth with its talons and buried its victim. Cain learned from this what to do. He dug a grave and buried

35. The Sabbath pleaded with God to spare Adam's life lest the glory and the sanctity of the Sabbath be impaired by his death.

36. Bereshit Rabbah lists seven signs placed on Cain.