

**USING THE THE STORY OF KAYIN TO UNDERSTAND THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE
AND MORAL INJURY:
FACILITATING SPIRITUAL HEALING FROM TRAUMAS OF WAR**

Steven Altarescu

Academy for Jewish Religion

Senior Project

January 2014

I thank Rabbi Jill Hammer for her support and inspiration.

I thank Brooke Lewis for her editing work and practical ideas on writing.

I thank my wife and soul mate Laurie Levy for her incredible support and confidence in me and her thoughtful, careful and patient editing.

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build all the bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks
(Masters of War by Bob Dylan)

It's always the old to lead us to the war
It's always the young to fall
Now look at all we've won with the sabre and the gun
Tell me is it worth it all
For I marched to the battles of the German trench
In a war that was bound to end all wars
Oh I must have killed a million men
And now they want me back again
But I ain't marchin' anymore
(I Ain't Marchin Anymore by Phil Ochs)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Part One: Kayin as the Archetype for Moral Injury and its effects | 7 |
| Part Two: Rabbinic Commentaries on Kayin | 15 |
| Part Three: Re-Thinking Theological Concepts | 21 |
| Part Four: Modern Psychology and the Roots of Violence | 33 |
| Part Five: Military Service and Moral Injury | 43 |
| Part Six: Treatment and Recovery From Moral Injury | 56 |
| Conclusion | 69 |
| Appendix: Scriptural Parelleling | 72 |
| Texts Cited and Bibliography | 79 |

Introduction

Our world, throughout history and unfortunately in our time as well, is saturated with violence, murder and war. Our Torah also reflects this pervasive violence. As readers of the Torah text and as living beings in this world we often separate ourselves from the horrors of war and violence. This paper will explore the roots of violence based on the story of Kayin in the Torah and how modern psychology and the experience of traumatized veterans assist us to understand this issue in a deeper and relevant way.

While there are many stories of violence and war in the Torah, I have chosen to explore the character of Kayin. The story of Kayin is the first incidence of violence and murder in the Torah and can be understood as an archetype of the development of rage and violence in a person. The story of Kayin is a significant archetype because it is based on one's relationship to God as the foundation of one's moral universe, and, in my view, how the rupture in this relationship leads Kayin to shame, rage and eventually violence. The value of an archetype is that it represents a way of understanding an experience that is common to all humanity. The psychologist Carl Jung understands archetypes as coming from our collective unconscious and they are expressed through stories and symbols, our experiences of self, the world and the divine.

The Torah teaches us about the roots of violence through a consideration of the ways in which violence is associated with the relationship between men and their authority figures: God, fathers, government, commanding officers, etc. People look to God and their parents for moral support – especially in times of grief and loss – to represent a moral universe for them. When those whom we expect to present us with a moral universe are found to be unjust, and when our grief and loss are not supported, we may experience shame, profound anger and destructive and/

or self-destructive behavior. This constellation of feelings and behaviors as a result of the breakdown of one's moral universe is referred to as 'moral injury'.

I will look at the Biblical story of Kayin is not interpreted from Kayin's point of view, a perspective not found in rabbinic commentaries in any kind of sympathetic or empathic way. Instead, the rabbis tend to blame and demonize Kayin. I will also explore how modern psychological research and clinical experience can give us insight into the relationship between what I view as God's unsupportive response to Kayin and Kayin's subsequent destructive behavior.

I will then explore the analogous situation of soldiers, who also feel unjustly treated by God resulting in them being filled with shame and anger, and ultimately leads them to resorting to violence. The Torah presents Kayin's story – the first act of killing – in the context of one person's relationship to God, the representative of a just and moral universe. Similarly, the moral universe of soldiers breaks down when the actions they take and witness, in their military service fill them with shame, resulting in destructive behavior to themselves and/or others. I will look at how they lose the moral basis for their service from their authority figures (commanding officers, and the government), and the violence that results from these disruptions in their moral universe

I will also explore concepts and methods for counseling people when they are experiencing the shame, grief, loss and trauma associated with moral injury. This will include some of the research and therapeutic work that has been done with trauma victims and veterans. I will focus on what it means for men to lose the blessing of their father and/or authority figure and how we can use Biblical texts to re-imagine a God who can embody empathy in order for men to feel understood and supported while expressing their shame and losses. The God that I

see us needing encompasses both what is traditionally seen as feminine/maternal and masculine/paternal personality characteristics. My reading of the Torah is that God needs us as partners to restore God's feminine side, a concept that speaks of the need to restore the side of empathy, support and compassion in each of us.

Part One: Kayin as the Archetype for Moral Injury and its effects

I have chosen the story of Kayin because it highlights how the roots of violence can be found in the relationship between the breakdown of one's moral universal and the resulting emergence of anger, feelings of shame and rage. Kayin's relationship to God is the archetype for our relationships to parental and authority figures who represent the foundation and arbiter of the moral universe. One judges oneself through their eyes as being acceptable and worthy. In this story I see how shame and rage are the result of feeling one has been treated unjustly when one's gift and thus one's being is invalidated. In addition I see God, the foundation of the moral universe, failing Kayin both by not accepting his gift and then in not showing empathy and offering comfort to Kayin's feelings of anger and shame. Through going deeply into the text I hope to gain some understanding and empathy for Kayin in order to understand how a person is moved to become violent. (All translations in this section are my own).

א וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת-חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ וַתְּהַרְוֶה וַתֵּלֶד אֶת-קַיִן וַתֹּאמֶר אַרְבָּא קָנִיתִי אִישׁ-תְּהֵנָה

And the man knew Chava his wife and she became pregnant and then she gave birth to Kayin and said "I have created a man with God. (Gen. 4:1)

The name given to Kayin is associated with the verb that Chava uses to describe her giving birth. She says קניתי translated as 'I have created' based on the verb קנה usage in Gen. 14:19.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ אֱבֹרָה לְאֵל עֲלֵיוֹן קִנְה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

And he said, Blessed be the God of Avram of most high God, *creator* of heaven and earth. (Gen. 14:19)

From this text it is clear that God is the קנה, the creator of the heavens and earth. Kayin's name places him in a direct relationship with God and seems to play down the role of Adam in the birth and perhaps in the life of Kayin. Kayin's name puts him among other parts of creation that have been created directly by God but in this case a person is seen as created in partnership with a woman and God. This highlights the role of God in Kayin's life.

: ב ותסף ללדת את־אֶתֶּוֹ אֶת־הַבֵּל וַיְהִי־הֶבֶל רֹעֵה צֹאן וְקַיִן הָיָה עֹבֵד אֲדָמָה:

And she continued to give birth to his brother, Hevel and Hevel was a shepherd of flocks and Kayin was a worker of the ground. (Gen. 4:2)

The name Hevel means vain, vaporous, or fruitless and reminds us of Kohelet's continued use of this word to describe the purposelessness of life. While Kayin has the connotation of being created by God, Hevel in contrast is vapor, almost lifeless and perhaps we are being told that Hevel's life (which we know will end soon) in the text is only meaningful in the context of the story of Kayin, with whom God is a partner in creating.

Their entire childhood and adolescence is skipped as the Torah moves immediately into their vocational lives, leaving us to wonder if Adam and Chava had a role in shaping the personalities of Kayin and Hevel, or if God played the major role. As we follow the storyline, Adam and Chava have been kicked out of the Garden of Eden and charged to work the soil. Kayin takes on the role of the son who follows in his father's footsteps, provides food for the family, and follows God's command to work the soil. Kayin's actions can be taken to understand him trying to do what is the right and good thing to do. Linguistically, as a worker of the earth/ *adamah* Kayin is connected to his father, Adam, and to God's commandment to care for the

earth. Adam was charged by God **את-האדמה** /to work the earth, and Kayin becomes a **עבד** /a worker of the earth.

Hevel becomes a shepherd and it is worth noting that in this period of time humanity was commanded to only eat plants, and thus Hevel did not provide food for the family. Kayin's gift to God as a simple and direct expression of wanting to thank God for the harvest. Hevel's gift to God of an animal offering was not relating to providing for his family, leading us to ask why God preferred the gift of Hevel.

ג וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה מִנְתָּה לַיהוָה

And it was after a while, and then Kayin brought a gift from the fruit of the ground to God. (Gen. 4:3)

ד וַהֲקִיב הַבְּיָא גַם־הוּא מִבְּכֹרֹת צֹאֲנוֹ וּמִחֲלֵבֵהֶן וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל־הַבֶּל וְאֶל־מִנְתָּחוֹ

And Hevel also brought from the first borns of his flock and from their fat and God gazed/gave favor to Hevel and his gift. (Gen. 4:4)

Following his brother, Hevel also brings a gift to God and this gift is described in two words, **בכרות**/first born and **חלב**/fat part, as perhaps indicating better or more special than Kayin's. The word **שעע**/to gaze on, used to state that God accepted Hevel's gift, connotes the idea of being noticed or validated, as opposed to being met with displeasure and invalidated. Hevel is immediately shown God's favor while Kayin is left in a state of limbo after bringing his gift. Kayin brings his gift and does not find out immediately if God favors him and his gift. We can only guess what Kayin might be experiencing in these moments while he waits and then sees Hevel's gift accepted.

After Hevel's gift is then accepted:

ה וְאֶל־קַיִן וְאֶל־מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה וַיִּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפֹּל פָּנָיו:

But to Kayin and to his gift He (God) did not gaze and he (Kayin) burned with much anger and his (Kayin's) face fell. (Gen. 4:5)

The time between Kayin offering his gift and then seeing his brother's gift offered and noticed was one of anticipation and building up of anxiety and jealousy only to culminate in bitter pain. This moment of great emotion is captured in the word the Torah uses to describe Kayin's anger : חרה. The word is etymologically related to heat and kindling and thus connotes an anger that has been building up over time. Just as one slowly kindles a fire and builds it up so it will last, the events in Kayin's life perhaps have built up to this moment. Kayin is simply devoted to following the command by God (to Adam) and becoming a worker of the earth, and then dutifully bringing a gift from his hard work, only to be rejected. Kayin might also be trying to show God that by successfully planting the garden his parents were exiled from, he could symbolically bring them back to the garden they longed for, but God is not happy with this. In either reading Kayin's waiting adds to the power of his disappointment, shame and anger.

The words "his face fell" connote shame, disappointment, sadness and depression. They tell a story of anticipation building up to this moment and of bringing this gift and then rejection. The Torah might be hinting at with the words ויהי מקץ ימים/and it was after a while. This is an anticipatory time, a time of waiting for opportunity. The Torah uses the same words for the period of time when Joseph waited in prison until Pharaoh had his dreams and Joseph was called on to assist Pharaoh. The Torah states in Gen. 41:1 ויהי מקץ שנתים/and it was at the end of two

years. In this time of anticipating, Kayin worked the soil and perhaps waited for a gift to be ready for offering, only increasing the pain and disappointment he would eventually feel.

The text is very clear in stating that God's not gazing on/ not favoring was on both the gift of Kayin and on Kayin himself. This emphasizes the rejection Kayin felt at this moment. One might imagine Kayin anxious and then seething. In not gazing at or not favoring Kayin, God is not passively ignoring him but rather asserting his displeasure by spurning him and his gift, and we see this in God's paying attention enough to notice Kayin's emotions even without Kayin verbalizing them.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־קַיִן לָמָּה תִרְבֶּה לָךְ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פְנֵיךְ:

And then God said to Kayin, “why are you angry and why has your face fallen”?

(Gen. 4:6)

Commentators equate this question with God's sermon to Kayin on free will and moral choice. God seems to be reacting to the power of Kayin's anger, disappointment and raw emotion. God attempts to simultaneously exhort and warn Kayin, perhaps understanding that the strength of Kayin's feelings, and fearing they can lead to rage. However, based on Kayin's destructive behavior God's words did not have the desired effect. Kayin required a different response to his emotions.

The essential trauma for Kayin is that God is not living up to being a moral exemplar. Kayin's anger and shame is a response to his expectation that God, as the foundation of justice and morality in the universe would accept his gift. Kayin's offering was invested with his work and his relationship to the earth and all it might have represented to him and his family. In rejecting his gift God is invalidating Kayin's purpose and his ontological sense of self, a point

that the text strongly brings out: “But of Kayin and his gift He (God) did not gaze.”- (Gen. 4:5) It is of great significance that God’s failure to recognize Kayin’s gift, and God’s failure to empathize with Kayin’s emotional response causes trauma and ‘moral injury’ to Kayin. In understanding that Kayin’s violence towards his brother is a result of the trauma of his moral universe breaking down and the lack of empathy for his response, we see a scary and horrifying analogy to the destructive behavior of soldiers and veterans today.

Kayin’s reaction might best be understood through the work done by therapists working to understand the roots of violence, particularly through their collaborations with chaplains treating soldiers who have suffered the grief and trauma of war. The theme that ties these soldiers to Kayin is the loss of a moral universe and the grief from continual neglect of their pain, shame and anger. When those in power - parents, politicians, commanding officers or God - individuals with whom one has counted on to provide one with a moral compass fail to be just, moral and compassionate, a person is left filled with disappointment, resentment and fury and the effects are devastating.

There is a Midrash that portrays Kayin as arguing that the moral universe he counted on has failed him:

Kayin thought that he had been wronged and a dispute followed between him and Hevel. “I believed,” he said, “that the world was created through goodness, but I see that good deeds bear no fruit. God is a tyrant (God rules the world with arbitrary power), else why had God regard for your offering and not for mine, too?”

Targum Yerushalmi Gen. 4:8

This Midrash portrays Kayin as questioning the morality of God and thus the moral basis for his world. It suggests that one who loses their moral universe feels no restraint to their

actions. Kayin is left only with his shame and anger and resorts to the violence that kills his brother and leaves him cursed and further distanced from God.

“...therefore you shall be further cursed than the ground”

(Gen. 4:12)

“...my iniquity is too great to bear...and from Your presence I will be hidden.”

(Gen 4: 13)

Thus far, I have examined the impact and effects of shame on Kayin, and the subsequent breakdown of his moral universe. His anger and shame are his reactions to God's not validating him or his offering, yet validating his brother Hevel. Kayin takes his anger out by murdering his brother Hevel, he is cursed by God, who tells Kayin he will be “more cursed than the ground” and punishes him by telling him he will “become a ceaseless wanderer on earth” (Genesis 4:14). In response, he tells God, “My iniquity is too much for me to bear.” Kayin's realization of the extent of his crime and his subsequent disconnection from the earth can be understood as his fear of being killed as punishment. This statement can also be Kayin's expression of shame and disconnection from God and the moral universe. Kayin was initially shamed by God not validating his gift and when Kayin expresses his emotional truth he is not heard or supported. Kayin's anger and shame are still brewing inside of him and eventually he expresses them in an act of violent rage against his brother. He then feels shame when he reflects on the violence he has committed. Kayin acts out his emotions and this acting out must be seen as occurring in the context of a relationship where Kayin's emotional expression was not heard empathically.

We will detour to look at rabbinic commentaries in order to understand how our tradition has viewed Kayin. These commentaries demonstrate the difficulties the rabbis had with

empathizing with the victim of God's failure to act morally and empathically. They highlight the difficulty we all have with understanding the pain of a victim, whether it is a rape victim, a soldier who is taught to kill, or a child being neglected or abused. Instead they start with the premise that God is correct and that there must be something inherently wrong with Kayin's gift and/or Kayin's himself.

Part Two: Rabbinic Commentators on Kayin

The traditional rabbinic commentaries blame Kayin for God's not accepting his gift. The rabbis find fault with Kayin and/or with his gift. These commentaries fail us because they make the mistake of putting all of the blame on Kayin, while ignoring the story of him being shamed, neglected and abused by an authority figure. We see this same phenomenon of blaming the victim in our time when soldiers are blamed for acts committed while at war, without consideration of how our government and military have created an environment in which the training of soldiers strips them of their inclination to act based on moral judgment and conscience. The rabbis defend God without exploring how God's choosing to invalidate Kayin causes his shame and rage. Kayin then expresses his anger and his shame and the rabbis join with God in not showing any empathy towards Kayin's pain and sadness. Kayin's story - the cycle of shame, rejection and anger, is analogous to how soldiers become morally injured. Soldiers are confused when their perceived gift of military service is twisted by the authorities. They feel continually shamed, which leads to rage and results in destructive behaviors. The rabbis treatment of Kayin and their defense of the authority figure (God), who creates this unjust situation, and does not respect Kayin's emotional response, puts the entire blame for Kayin's violent act on Kayin himself.

Rabbinic commentaries attempt to look at the incident from God's perspective to understand what Kayin did to deserve God's refusal of His gift in favor of Hevel's. One conclusion is that Kayin brought an inferior sacrifice based on the fact that, unlike Hevel's

offering, Kayin's gift is not, 'the first of the fruit:

“... Kayin brought of the fruit of the ground”: [He brought] from the inferior crops, he being like a bad tenant who eats the first ripe figs but honors the king with the late figs.”

(*Bereshit Rabbah* XXII)

Louis Ginzberg, in *The Legends of the Jews*, brings a Midrash that also portrays Kayin in this way:

Hevel selected the best of his flocks for his sacrifice, but Kayin ate his meal first, and after he had satisfied his appetite, he offered unto God what was left over, a few grains of flax seed.¹

Rashi comments that Kayin brought “from the worst or linseed or from whatever was close or convenient, neither good and not the choicest.”²

Many commentators find the answer to the question of why God did not accept Kayin's offering based on the words the Torah uses to describe the offering of Hevel:

...and Hevel brought, he also, from the firstborn of the flock, from their fat-parts (Genesis 4:3).

The commentators see a hint from the fact that Hevel brought from the firstborn and the fat-parts (sometimes translated as 'the best ones') to emphasize a distinction between the offerings of the two brothers.

¹ Ginzberg, Louis. *Legends of the Bible*, Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication society of America, 1909, page 56.

² *Rashi to Genesis 4:3*

Kimchi states:

It is reasonable to assume that Kayin's gift, by comparison, was stingy, and in fact represented an insult to God rather than a grateful acknowledgment of God's part in making the earth produce a crop for him. ³

Ibn Ezra claims that the Torah's description of Hevel bringing the "firstborn" and not mentioning this in regard to Kayin allows us to "deduce that he brought inferior produce" ⁴

The Ohr Hachayim concludes that the sequence of the verses emphasizes the fallen spiritual state of Kayin:

Since Kayin was the first one to bring an offering, Scripture should have first stated that the Lord did not turn to Kayin and to his offering, and then He turned to Hevel and to his offering. The sequence is reversed to emphasize the vast difference between the offerings of Kayin and Hevel; there was a spirit of satisfaction before God through Hevel's offering, but He still did not turn to Kayin's offering despite the fact that it had been offered first and Kayin was the firstborn. This was because Kayin had fallen in a spiritual sense. ⁵

Seforno notes that the Torah states God "turned to Hevel and his offering" and "to Kayin and his offering." In mentioning both the name of the person and 'his offering' the Torah is teaching us through implication:

...that God examined the character and motivation of the person bringing the sacrifice, not only the animal or produce brought. Hevel measured up well on both

³ *Kimchi to Genesis 4:3*

⁴ *Ibn Ezra to Genesis 4:3-4*

⁵ *Ohr Hachayim to Genesis 4:3-4*

counts, while Kayin failed to do so on both. ⁶

Malbim finds significance in the additional words used to describe Hevel bringing an offering: “גם הוא”, “he, too,” which Malbim says can be understood to mean “himself too”.

Hevel understood that the externality of an offering is only a way of stimulating a person's internal willingness to ‘offer himself’ in submission to God and His will...he brought himself as an offering; the physical offering serving only as a symbol of this act. Kayin did not achieve this level of understanding; he brought the physical offering for its own sake. ⁷

The idea that God is concerned with the intention of the offering is echoed in the thought of Samson Raphael Hirsch who infers that "Kayin's attitude was unpleasing and therefore his offering was unpleasing too." ⁸

The assumption that Kayin's intention in bringing a gift was ‘unpleasing’ to God would be experienced by Kayin as deeply shameful, as God is the source of what is just and right in the world. If Kayin knows that his intention in bringing this gift is pure then God's response would be seen by Kayin as a failure of the moral universe to act justly. Kayin then would be angry for being treated unjustly. Like a soldier who brings the gift of his service and enters into the amoral environment of being trained to kill civilians, Kayin enters the environment of God who acting unjustly and without compassion, and as a result Kayin's moral universe is shattered, he is full of

⁶ *Sforno to Genesis 4:4*

⁷ *Malbim to Genesis 4:3-4*

⁸ Hirsch, Rabbi Samson Raphael. *The Pentateuch: Translated and Explained*. New York: Judaica Press, 1963, page 99.

shame and rage - he is morally injured.

These views of Kayin as having inherent bad intentions or evil within, is also found in other Midrashim. One explanation is based on the circumstances of Kayin's birth as described in the Torah:

The man knew Chava his wife, she became pregnant and bore Kayin. She said: I have created a man/*ish* with Adonai. (Gen. 4:1)

The commentators wonder why Eve would refer to her new baby as a "man," as in Hebrew, *ish* means not a baby but a full-grown male. Another question is why Chava says that Adonai had this child with her and not Adam. There are Midrashim that explain the words "Adam knew Chava" as not meaning he had sexual relations with her but that he knew something about her. Pirquei de R. Eliezer states:

The serpent came into her and she became pregnant with Kayin, as it says, "And the man knew his wife Chava." What did he know? That she was already pregnant [with someone else].⁹

The implication here is that if Kayin is the son of the serpent he already has evil bred into him. In the Targum Yerushalmi this detail is made explicit.

And Adam knew his wife Chava had conceived with Samuel the (wicked) angel of the Lord, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Kayin. He resembled the upper ones (angels) and not the lower ones, and she said, I have acquired a man, indeed an angel of the Lord.¹⁰

⁹ Pirquei deR. Eliezer to Gen. 4:1

¹⁰ Targum Yerushalmi to Gen. 4:1

The act of making Kayin “other” by ascribing to him evil intentions or saying that he is ontologically evil implies that the creator of the moral universe is treating him unjustly by creating an immoral universe where he is born with evil and then is blamed for his circumstances. These commentators portrayal of Kayin is analogous to children who are led to believe they are evil and thus blamed when they are neglected or abused as their punishment is seen as fair. In this situation one grows up feeling shamed, hurt and enraged and then blamed for many of one’s responses to this treatment. When soldiers return from war and are seen as monsters for committing or witnessing the horrible acts that they are trained to commit by the “moral authority” of the military and the government, they are further shamed, filled with rage and morally injured.

These commentaries fail us by not seeing Kayin empathically. They do not hear his voice crying out in pain, full of shame and anger at being unjustly treated. Instead they blame Kayin without considering that his feelings have merit as they are an appropriate response to God's unjust treatment of him. The rabbis cannot conceive that God would act unjustly and thus blame the victim for feeling victimized. It is a tragic and dangerous pattern to not doubt authority figures but instead to doubt the one victimized and crying out in pain.

If we can “other” Kayin and place full responsibility on him, as the rabbis do, we then can “other” anyone who is treated unjustly by authority figures - parents, schools, government or the military. If we “other” Kayin and not attempt to be empathic with him, then how do we learn to listen to the cries of all those who suffer from mistreatment and abuse?

There are other rabbinic voices and texts that can assist us in recovering a God for our time who can empathize, support and comfort those who suffer from moral injury, abuse and neglect.

Part Three: Re-Thinking Theological Concepts

Modern theological thinkers take a more critical view of God as portrayed in the Torah and in the traditional rabbinic perspective. When we are able to see the God of the Torah as being imperfect and with conflicting personality traits it frees us to have a more nuanced view of Kayin and God, and to learn lessons that are valuable for us today. There is an alternative midrashic voice that understands that we are called to be in partnership with God in order to subdue God's personality trait of wrath and move God towards the attribute of compassion. In this view the moral universe is co-created through a partnership between God and humanity, and not dictated and determined by a God who is overcome sometimes by wrath and injustice. This concept helps us to have a deeper understanding of Kayin as being a victim of this unjust, wrathful side of God that was untempered by a human partner. The need for this point of view is even more necessary in order to enable those who feel victimized by unjust authority figures to become the re-creators of a moral universe that empowers them ontologically and practically.

It is unfortunate that none of the traditional interpretations and commentaries takes into consideration the perspective of Kayin or the possibility of God wronging Kayin, but two modern thinkers opened a path to begin seeing Kayin as deserving compassion.

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut does not believe the traditional interpretations and commentaries are warranted and comes closer to an empathic stance in regard to Kayin. He states that:

A better interpretation, however, is that God's rejection of Kayin's offering is inexplicable in human terms. God acts according to His own wisdom. "I will be gracious to who I will be gracious" (Exod. 33:19) His reasons are unknown to

man. The inexplicability of divine preferment marks Kayin as an essentially tragic character; he reacts with blind violence to a rejection he cannot comprehend. ¹¹

Plaut quotes also Cyrus Gordon:

We are accustomed to think of [Kayin] with revulsion: but the text of Genesis aims rather at evoking our sympathy for a man who atoned for his crime with homelessness and fear - a fate worse than death. ¹²

Plaut and Gordon lay the groundwork for beginning to see Kayin as “a tragic character,” who is “evoking our sympathy.” Commentators who understand that God must have had a good reason not to accept Kayin’s offering, but to prefer Hevel’s instead, hold an underlying premise that God is always right and perfect. According to them, we cannot question God’s judgment in regard to His treatment of Kayin and so must conclude that Kayin and/or his gift was flawed. Anson Laytner, in his book *Arguing with God*, suggests that this belief in a perfect, just and faithful God was necessary “...both to counter the tenets of Gnostic dualism theology and in response to the rabbi’s theological world view.” ¹³

However, the Bible itself makes its own argument for God’s imperfection. In Genesis 6 God sees there is corruption and violence throughout the world and decides to wipe out humanity and all animal life and start all over with Noah, his family and a representative pair from each species.

¹¹ Plaut, W. Gunther (Editor), *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981, page 47

¹² *Ibid.*, page 47

¹³ Laytner, Anson. *Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990. page 60

And God regretted that He made the human in the land and it saddened Him in His heart. (Genesis 6:6)

God's being regretful indicates a willingness for God to believe God made mistakes. When God starts all over again with Noah, God gives humanity new rules. In Genesis 9 God gives humanity permission to eat meat (in addition to plants), explicitly forbids murder and then makes a new covenant with humanity and all creatures promising not to destroy them again. In Genesis 11 God realizes the mistake of allowing humanity to only have one language and to live in one place, and so God changes these conditions so people can speak different languages and they are scattered around the world.

Despite this Biblical evidence of God's acknowledgment of being mistaken and willing to make changes, the Rabbis had a view of God being perfect. The Rabbis saw no option except to blame Kayin when God did not accept his gift, due to their fundamental belief in God's perfection and justice. They attribute Kayin's actions instead to the evil inclination, a force that is within humans but allows them to freely choose their own behavior. The rabbis find evidence for this in God's response to seeing Kayin angry and ashamed:

Is it not thus: If you intend good, bear-it-aloft, but if you do not intend good, at the entrance is sin, a crouching demon, toward you his lust - but you can rule over him. (Gen. 4:7).

The positing of an evil inclination is the rabbis' way of trying to understand humanity's continual penchant for destruction and evil. Understanding evil due to our evil inclination that we can master or not, hinders and suppresses the search for deeper psychological roots to

destructive behavior. More importantly, it misunderstands those who feel anger and rage due to abuse, neglect and/or trauma. It is more relevant to explore the roots of violence by considering what might have led a person to feel anger and rage. In the Kayin story when we look at what God's role might have been in the violent behavior of Kayin, we begin to understand the roots of violence.

Let's first look at the premise of God's perfection. David Blumenthal states in his book *Facing the Abusing God*:

In the inner reaches of Jewish religious reflection, the question is asked whether God can make a mistake, whether God can sin. The biblical evidence is that God can make a mistake; God changes God's mind in the case of Noah and in the desert regarding the rebellious people...in a personalist theology, then, God can sin. ¹⁴

Blumenthal explains that based on the Torah, God can be understood to have both the attributes of personality and holiness. He understands holiness as experiencing a sense of the sacred and the separateness and vastness of God. This is a God beyond anything we experience in our day-to-day world of aesthetics, morality, rationality and personality. The other attribute of God is personality. God as a personality in the Torah has emotions, engages in debate and discussion, and is in relationship to people. In these relationships God expresses various moods including jealousy, anger, love, compassion, mercy and revenge. God, understood as having personality, is an imperfect God who can be in a relationship to humans that includes being challenged and questioned by a human partner.

¹⁴ Blumenthal, David R. *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest*, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, page 263.

The concept of challenging God does not occur in the Torah until God initiates a covenant with Abraham. Until this point, God acts virtually independently in the world, but eventually decides that it is important to have a partner in creating a just world, and so begins with Abraham:

Shall I hide from Abraham what am I about to do...for I have singled him out that he might instruct...to do what is just and right. (Gen. 18:18-19)

Abraham responds to God's invitation to be a partner by challenging God to act justly and to empathize with others who do not share blame and thus would be unjustly killed by God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Far be it from You to do such a thing, to bring death upon the innocent as well as the guilty... Shall not the Judge of all the earth not deal justly? (Gen. 18:24)

Bereshit Rabbah understands Abraham's question as challenging God by pointing out that God's attribute of justice is too strict. The Midrash imagines Abraham coaxing God to be merciful by saying to God:

If You want the world to endure, there cannot be absolute strict judgment, while if You desire absolute strict judgment, the world cannot endure, yet You would not hold the cord by both ends, desiring both the world and absolute judgment. Unless You forego a little, the world cannot endure.

(Bereshit Rabbah XLIX)

The Midrash goes on to imagine God's reply. They imagine God praising Abraham for

instructing God that through mercy and compassion God should loosen God's desire for strict judgment if God wants the world to exist. In the same Midrash (using Psalm 45:8 as a proof-text)

God says to Abraham:

“You love righteousness” (Psalm 45:8).

Your love justifies My creatures;

“and hated wickedness” (Psalm 45:8)

You have refused to condemn them. Therefore God, your God has chosen to anoint you with the oil of gladness above all your peers.

God's estimation of Abraham is raised high above all other human beings based on Abraham's challenging of God's plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham, as the first patriarch, becomes the archetype of a person who challenges God to be just and ethical, to integrate the attributes of compassion and mercy into God's decisions and thus challenging all in authority to pursue moral reasoning that includes mercy and compassion on all creation.

The next incident where God is challenged to be merciful is when Moses pleads with God not to destroy the entire Jewish people after they have built the golden calf.

God further said to Moses, “I have seen that this is a stiff-necked people, now let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation.” (Exodus 32:10)

The words “let Me be” are superfluous unless we think God expects Moses to challenge God. God might be teaching Moses through this opening that this is a time God needs to be challenged so that God's wrath does not overwhelm God. The concept of God needing humans to

subdue God's anger is brought out in the Talmud through the use of a proof-text from the Psalms:

Come and see how unlike the characteristics of the Holy One, Blessed is He, from the characteristics of those of flesh and blood. Those of flesh and blood others conquer them and one is sad, but the Holy One, Blesses is He, others conquer Him and He rejoices as it is stated; "He would have destroyed them had not Moses His chosen one confronted Him in the breach to avert His destructive wrath." (Psalm 106:23)

(BT Pesachim 119a)

Abraham and Moses represent the archetypes of challenging God to not act out of anger; they indicate God's need for a human partner to bring out the forgiving and merciful (maternal/feminine) side of God. Previous to Abraham God did not have a human partner to subdue God's wrath and bring out a more compassionate side of God. I would argue that God made a mistake in God's treatment of Kayin's offering and in God's response to Kayin's grief. God did not yet have a partner to bring out this empathic and compassionate side. The Torah is teaching the importance of integrating the side of ourselves that is filled with power, anger and strict justice (the masculine/paternal side) with the side of empathy compassion and mercy (the feminine/maternal side).

The story of Kayin brings out the message that when treatment of each other and our words are not said with mercy, empathy and comfort it can lead to violence. The rabbis understand that causing someone emotional pain destroy the world. In an aggadah in the Talmud, R. Eliezer is told by R. Akiva that his colleagues banned him.

"It seems to me that your colleagues are keeping separate from you." His eyes also

streamed with tears, and he took off his shoes and removed [his seat] and sat on the ground. The world was smitten in one third of the wheat, one third of the olives, and one half of the barley...it (the destruction) was so great that every place where R. Eliezer cast his eyes immediately was burned.

(BT Bava Metzia 59b)

R. Eliezer's wife tried to keep him from saying tachanun sensing that the depth of pain in his prayer would have the power to cause the death of her brother Rabban Gamliel (who had ordered R. Eliezer's excommunication). One day, either due to a miscalculation or a distraction:

She found him falling on his face (saying tachanun). She said to him: "Get up! You are killing my brother!" Meanwhile an announcement went forth from the house of Rabban Gamliel that he had died. He (R' Eliezer) said to her (his wife): "How did you know (about Gamliel's death)? She said to him: "I have received such from the house of my grandfather. All the gates are locked, except for the gates of wounding with words."

(BT Bava Metzia 59b)

This story of the depth of pain felt by R. Eliezer and death of Rabban Gamliel highlights the power of words to bring destruction that we see in the story of Kayin.

If God believed that Kayin's offering was lacking, how might have God spoken to Kayin without causing pain and grief? The Torah states that it is an obligation to rebuke someone when you believe they have erred.

You are not to hate your brother in your heart; rebuke, yes, rebuke your fellow, that you

not bear sin because of him! (Lev. 19:17).

The rabbis balanced the obligation to rebuke with the obligation not to embarrass someone, acknowledging this is a difficult and delicate process. In the Talmud R' Elazar ben Azaryah says:

I wonder if there exists in this generation anyone who knows how to give rebuke?
(BT Arachin 16b)

Rambam taught the importance of reproving in a respectful manner without causing embarrassment:

He who rebukes another, whether for offenses against the rebuker himself or for sins against God, should administer the rebuke in private, speak to the offender gently and tenderly, and point out that he is only speaking for the wrongdoer's own good.
(Mishneh Torah, 6:7)

We might imagine a different conversation between God and Kayin based on Rambam's principle of speaking gently and tenderly, in which, upon seeing Kayin's "fallen face," God might invite him to speak the truth in his heart rather than turning away from him. Then, perhaps Kayin could confess how angry, hurt, and ashamed it feels to be ignored, while seeing his brother gain God's favor. God could respond by acknowledging that God allowed God's wrath to overwhelm God's compassion. God might offer the words of Isaiah to Kayin:

As a mother comforts her son so I will comfort you. (Isaiah 66:13)

The archetype of an authority figure who acts unjustly and without compassion towards someone under him or her is also found in the relationship of Yitzchok and Esav. Even though the Torah tells us "...Yitzchok loved Esav because he ate of his game." (Gen. 25:28) Esav is crushed when Yitzchok tells him he gave his blessing to Esav's brother Yaakov. Like Kayin, Esav was dutifully serving an authority figure who had the power to bless him and accept his gift. When he is told that only his brother was getting the blessing of their father, Esav cries out in words that echo Kayin's pain:

Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too Father! And Esav wept
aloud.(Genesis 27:38)

The text begs the compassionate reader to feel Esav's pain but most rabbinic commentators are as critical of Esav as they are of Kayin, and in a similar fashion, seek to demonize Esav. By doing so they fail to see the hurt and rage in a man who is also not being heard by an authority figure. Esav's reaction is to wish to murder his brother and, rather than being heard and understood, he is sent off on his own. This story highlights for us that human authority figures also have the power, just like God, to shatter another's moral universe.

For both Kayin and Esav, their moral universes are shattered when they expect their gifts will be accepted but the authority figure, whom they had expected to have a deeper relationship with, only accepts their brothers' gift. The power that God has as the foundation of the moral universe is thus transferred to all of us who are in a position of power and authority as parents, teachers, clergy, etc.

The Torah teaches us that the roots of violence stem from the breakdown of one's moral

universe and can be traced to hurtful words and actions, especially from our authority figures. In addition, an unsupportive and/or judgmental response from a trusted authority figure to a person who is angered shatters their moral universe and leaves them feeling shamed. The resulting behaviors can be destructive to themselves and/or to others. In my reading of Genesis 4, Kayin experiences God as unjust, causing him anger and shame. God's response to Kayin is neither empathic nor comforting and only further fuels his anger, which leads to Kayin's murder of Hevel. Similarly Esav's relationship to his father leads to Esav's wish to kill his brother Yaakov.

An alternative theology is to understand that the God of the Torah is imperfect, displays various personality attributes and needs humans to be part of creating the moral universe by becoming God's partner through challenging God. In the story of Kayin, humans did not display this empowering partnership, but starting with Abraham and Moses God is challenged to be just and compassionate. There are midrashic and medieval voices that understand that causing emotional pain and embarrassment is in itself destructive, leading to further destruction in the world.

The words of Isaiah assist us in re-imagining God as a comforting maternal presence. We can imagine God, in an act of contrition, admitting to Kayin that by not accepting Kayin's gift and by not empathically responding to Kayin's pain, God contributed to Kayin becoming violent. The significance of God admitting to a contributing role in someone's traumatized behavior is enormous. Soldiers take on the entire burden of their actions during wartime and are not empowered to recognize that their training and the commanding authorities create an environment of amorality. The acknowledgment that the government that declared war, the

military that trains soldiers to kill civilians without moral consideration, and the environment of the combat 'theater' are all significant contributors to the actions of a soldier in the field assist in recovery from moral injury. It is healing and strengthening to one's sense of self-worth to be empowered to be a partner in creating a moral universe that might be distinct from one they learned from authority figures. Additionally, for those suffering from trauma and moral injury it is healing, even life-saving to re-imagine God providing comfort, understanding and empathy.

As human authority figures we have tremendous power over those who look up to us. We have the power to hurt and shame, to effect rage and violence, or to empower, heal and effect growth and compassion. The Torah warns us strongly that the abuse of this power, whether human or divine, can cause violence and destruction.

Part Four: Modern Psychology and The Roots of Violence

I will now explore how current practices and research on grief, loss and violence affect our reading and understanding of these texts and commentaries. In particular I want to provide an understanding of the power of the experience of shame and in particular the role of shame in relation to trauma and moral injury in soldiers

As stated in Part One, after God ignores Kayin and his gift, Kayin is “afame with much anger,” and his ‘face falls’. He is angry, disappointed, sad and ashamed. He is the first human being to bring a gift to God, whether or not we agree that his gift is not as good as his brother’s, it is still a gift. God, as the great moral authority figure, does not look with favor and validate Kayin or his gift. It seems as if Kayin’s whole being feels invalidated and shamed. A worthwhile analogy is to compare God’s response to that of a parent neglecting a the gifts and emotions of a child.

Dr. Alice Miller was a Swiss psychoanalyst who spent her professional life studying the roots of violence in the mistreatment of children, child-rearing practices around the world, and the childhoods of many tortured artists as well as terrible dictators.

Dr. Miller states that a child's vital needs include the need to learn to love and to articulate their needs and feelings. In the case of Kayin his act of giving a gift to God can be seen as part of a process of wanting to be loved, and learning to love through the act of giving a gift. Hevel’s bringing a gift that was arguably a little better than Kayin’s can be understood as a younger sibling who, also wanting the love of the parent, might feel they have to work harder to impress the parent in order to receive that love.

Dr. Miller believes that a child (or any person) has a basic need to express their feelings and when this need is frustrated through neglect or deception of the child... “...the normal reaction to such injury should be anger and pain.”¹⁵ This is exactly Kayin’s reaction to feeling neglected by God, where God’s only response is to challenge his feelings. Miller continues:

However, that anger remains forbidden to the child in a hurtful environment, and the pain would be unbearable to experience in the child's loneliness. The child must then suppress his feelings.... (their) feelings of anger, helplessness, confusion, longing, distress, anxiety and pain force destructive actions against others (criminal behavior or mass murder) or against oneself (drug addiction, prostitution, psychic disorders, and suicide).¹⁶

God’s reaction to Kayin neither supports Kayin’s legitimate expression of anger, sadness and pain, nor gives him empathic comfort; God instead questions why Kayin should feel the way he does. In addition, God decides that Kayin needs a morality lesson about acting correctly and giving in to sin. Kayin’s reaction is to strike out in anger, killing his brother. As we understand Kayin’s destructive behavior in light of Miller’s clinical observations and research, we clearly see the relationship between God’s neglect of Kayin and Kayin’s behavior. We can learn from the sequence of actions in the Torah that Kayin’s destructive act towards his brother is rooted in God’s invalidation of Kayin, his gift, and God’s invalidation of one’s normal reaction to feeling invalidated - anger and shame.

As previously discussed, the reaction of the commentators is to demonize Kayin both literally and symbolically. Dr. Judith Herman, in her study of trauma, makes the observation that

¹⁵ Miller, Alice. *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in child rearing and the roots of violence*, Toronto, Canada: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1980, page 283.

¹⁶ Ibid

bystanders to horrible events find it tempting to side with the perpetrator rather than the victim. To side with the perpetrator means the bystander has to do nothing. However to side with the victim, “on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain.”¹⁷ It is much safer, less painful and less challenging psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, religiously and spiritually to side with God and see Kayin as morally deficient. The desire to see God as perfect is one reason that has been given for the lack of empathy with Kayin among commentators. I would suggest that to look deeper into the pain of the victim is more challenging religiously and more challenging emotionally because to empathize with Kayin might make manifest one’s own unpleasant emotions and arduous memories.

Judith Herman’s observation of how society has protected adults and blamed victims is analogous to the commentator’s treatment of God and Kayin. Dr. Miller adds further insight to the idea of the lack of empathy for the victim:

Society has protected the adult and blamed the victim. It has been abetted in its blindness by theories, still in keeping with the pedagogical principles of our great-grandparents, according to which children are viewed as crafty creatures, dominated by wicked drives.¹⁸

The commentators’ portrayal of Kayin mirrors this analysis. The danger of this view is to rob children and hence the adults they will become of a sense of permission to express their feelings, challenge authority and see the world as fair and moral. Once one’s moral universe is shattered, one then has no reason to act morally.

¹⁷ Herman, Judith, M.D. *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence-from domestic abuse to political terror*, New York: Basic Books, 1992, page 7.

¹⁸ Miller, page 284

Seforno and Nachmanides both understand Kayin's "fallen face" as an indication of his shame. In his book on shame, Dr. Gershen Kaufman discusses the research done by the psychotherapist Sylvania Tompkins on the relationship between facial features and emotions. Tompkins formulates nine innate affects and their respective facial features. The one correlated to shame is eyes and head down, and anger is correlated to a frown, clenched jaw and a red face. (cf. Gen 4:5 Kayin's fallen face and burning anger) ¹⁹

Dr. Kaufman suggests that there is a strong relationship between shame and rage, a process which begins with a child not getting their needs met by their parent. Because a child sees their parent as infallible (godlike), they believe that they must have caused this lack of parental support and love through some fault of their own.

We are not told why, but Kayin has a need or desire to give God a gift. Kaufman's insight that children have a "need to nurture" is significant for our understanding of Kayin:

After having been given to, the child will eventually want to give something back to a parent, whether it is affection, a hug or a gift. How that hug or gift is received by the significant other concerned is most crucial to whether the child comes to feel that his love is accepted as good...How the child is received determines whether the need to nurture is validated and accepted or becomes associated with and bound by shame." ²⁰

A child whose gifts are not received with favor are being implicitly told that their "need to nurture" is deficient; thus he or she connects their needs with negative feelings such as

¹⁹ Kaufman, Gershen, Ph.D. *Shame: The Power of Caring*, Rochester, VT: Schenkman Books Inc., 1980, page 44.

²⁰ *Ibid*, page 67

shamefulness about oneself. In the case of Kayin, his need to give God a gift caused him shame and humiliation. Kaufman explains that rage comes about when a parent's response to a child who has been shamed further exposes this shame:

...it is the parental failure to restore the bridge following expressions of anger towards the child which will critically intensify the rupture and leave the child feeling trapped in his or her shame. ²¹

Kayin's anger and shame are evident in his face and God's response seems only to have increased the rage, eventually resulting in an act of murder. If, however, God had responded to Kayin's anger and shame by acknowledging that perhaps God's own capriciousness played a part in Kayin's shame, perhaps it would have relieved some of the shame and the rage Kayin was feeling. As Kaufman suggests:

Through openly acknowledging that he also had something to do with it, the father can relieve the boy's terrible burden of feeling that it was all his fault. ²²

In failing to validate Kayin's response to God's rejection, God increased Kayin's feelings of shame and rage, rupturing their relationship, causing Kayin to believe that his innermost feelings and essentially his core self, could only lead to sin. God's rejection of Kayin and his offering caused a rupture in their relationship where Kayin feels shamed and morally injured:

"Failure to fully hear and understand the other's need and to communicate its

²¹ Ibid, p. 18

²² Ibid, p. 16

validity, whether or not we choose to gratify that need, breaks the interpersonal bridge and in so doing induces shame." ²³

Kayin's gift to God represents an attempt at relationship with God, the creator of his world. When we present someone with a gift, we trust that the recipient will be grateful and that this gratitude will continue to build the relationship. God teaches Kayin that Kayin was wrong to expect gratitude and acceptance from Him.

Shame is likely whenever our most basic expectations of a significant other are suddenly exposed as wrong. To have someone valued unexpectedly betray our trust opens the self inside of us and exposed it to view...The anger evidenced is but a mask covering the ruptured self." ²⁴

Kayin's trust in his relationship with God was exposed as wrong, and, additionally, he was made to feel shame for needing the relationship and expecting trust. Kayin's anger can be seen as a mask for his shame and for his torn sense of self. The language of the text informs us that God failed to validate not only Kayin's gift but also Kayin himself. Kaufman asserts the affective state of shame is devastating to a positive sense of self worth and a positive connection to the world:

It is the affect of indignity, of defeat, of transgression, of inferiority, and of alienation. No other affect is closer to the experienced self. None is more central for the sense of identity. Shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul...the source of many complex and disturbing inner states.

²³ Ibid, p. 15-16

²⁴ Ibid, p. 14

Kayin's fallen face, his shame, represents his awareness that his essential self is ontologically deficient, affecting his sense of self-worth.

Contained in the experience of shame is the piercing awareness of ourselves as fundamentally deficient in some vital way as a human being.²⁶

God responds to Kayin's initial facial expression of anger and shame by warning Kayin that he can choose to do good and raise himself up else he can succumb to sin "which dwells at the doorway." (Genesis 4:7) At this moment, Kayin's experience is that his feelings are dangerous and wrong and can lead to sin, leaving him trapped in feeling shameful. The scene of Kayin murdering Hevel takes place "when they were in the field" (Genesis 4:8). I imagine that when the brothers were in the field, Kayin's shame and rage became uncontrollable, afraid that the trauma of offering gifts to God would be repeated and that he would once again face being shamed. Perhaps Kayin takes his rage out on Hevel as Hevel reminded him of the validation he did not receive from God. According to Kaufman, Kayin's acting out with rage was a transitory protection against feeling shamed.

Rage serves a vital self-protective function by insulating the self against further exposure and by actively keeping others away to avoid occurrences of shame.²⁷

We can further understand Kayin by scrutinizing the text for hints about his choice of work,

²⁵ Ibid. p. 9

²⁶ Ibid, p. 9

²⁷ Ibid, p. 16

as this was the source of his offering. Kayin is a worker of the earth (*adamah*), linguistically connecting Kayin's to his father (*Adam*). Perhaps his need to identify with his father leads him to connect to his father by becoming a worker of the earth. But the activity of working the soil was assigned to Adam as a punishment, and the ground itself is called cursed by God.

ז וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה
בְּעִבּוּרְךָ בְּעִצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

And to the man He (God) said; “because you listened to your woman and ate from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from, *the ground is cursed* because of you; with hardship will you eat all the days of your life.”

(Gen. 3:17)

Kayin appears to identify with his father through working the ground, even though it is now cursed. According to Kaufman some children grow up in families where;

...a child may perhaps outwardly resist, yet inwardly learns to humiliate himself because he has no other model for becoming a person. ²⁸

Kaufman asserts that a child's need to love, feel loved, and derive a sense of belonging can be rooted in love, but also in fear or shame, depending on the pattern of parental care for the child. It is possible that Kayin knew on some level that his offering would bring him shame because the ground was cursed. Yet he was still compelled to offer his gift as this was the only sense of belonging he knew. In the same light we can see Kayin's offering from the cursed

²⁸ Ibid, p. 40

ground as a failed attempt to repair his family's ruptured relationship with God. We might see God as angered by Kayin's gift as it is a reminder to God of the sins of Adam and Chava.

The God that Kayin experiences does not yet have a human partner to temper God's anger and to remind God to embody the traits of compassion and mercy. Instead, the God presented in these verses does not give Kayin the empathetic response that might allow him to feel heard and understood. The development of God's empathic (feminine/maternal) side is imagined in a Midrash. Pesikta De-Rav Kahana discusses how God comforts the Jewish people during difficult times by quoting from Isaiah: "I, even I, am He that comforts you" (Isa. 51:12). Rav Kahana interprets this as God showing both paternal and maternal sides in offering words to console Israel's grief during a time of suffering.

Rav Samuel taught: It is the way of a father to have compassion: "Like as a father has compassion upon his children." (Psalms 103:12); and it is the way of a mother to comfort: "As a mother comforts her child so I will comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13). The Holy One said: "I will act like a father and I will act like a mother ... because God meant to be a father and mother to Israel; the Holy One used 'I' twice in the verse "I, even I, am He that comforts you." ²⁹

The God imagined here provides comfort to Israel rather than chiding Israel for its faults. The prophet Isaiah pictures God who is present for Israel even when Israel is neglecting God.

I responded to those who did not ask, I was at hand to those who did not seek Me.
I said; "Here I am, here I am: to a nation who did not invoke my name"
(Isa. 65:1).

²⁹ Pesikta De-Rab Kahana, Piska 19

The responsive and comforting God that Isaiah presents was absent to Kayin. Instead Kayin saw the face of God that is non-responsive and does not provide comfort when one is in pain.

The wisdom of the Torah is deepened through the knowledge gained from the psychological study of the relationship between shame and violence. Kayin's violent response to feeling shamed, angered and neglected, provides a deeper and more valuable insight into his character as opposed to labeling him as a bad person like the Rabbi's did. It is more challenging to view humans who act out with violence not as just evil, but as people who have been neglected, shamed and traumatized. We are challenged to empathize and create ways to heal those who are victimized rather than label them and condemn them. God, the foundation of Kayin's moral universe, condemns him to wander out of the presence of God. Modern psychology challenges us to create a moral universe than includes empathy and compassion and the process of healing those who have been traumatized and allowing them to feel worthy of being in the presence of the Divine.

Part Five: Military Service and Moral Injury

Like Kayin, soldiers face situations where their moral universe is put into question. They face shame both for acts committed and witnessed during the time they are serving and after their service. for acts they have committed and what they have witnessed. In response to their losses, traumatized veterans often engage in destructive behaviors towards themselves and others. Understanding the expectations and motivations that move people to offer their service to their country can assist us in understanding the devastating effects military training and war.

We see Kayin's story is about a person who cultivates great expectations and then experiences great disappointment when God does not look favorably upon him and his gift. Kayin's gift is analogous to how many soldiers view enlisting in the army. Just as Kayin's gift is part of his quest to honor and serve God, soldiers enter the military with the expectation and hope that their service will bring honor to themselves, their families and their country.

In his book *War and the Soul*, Edward Tick sees military service in the context of the archetypal initiation rites that have existed in societies throughout time in order to transform a person's identity from a boy to a man.

Modern cultures, like traditional ones, seek the initiation of their boys, the renewal and reaffirmation of society, and reconnection to divinity through war.³⁰

Many enlistees view their entering the armed services from the perspective that the army will make an adult of them. Entering the military is viewed as an honored, moral activity, one that

³⁰ Tick, Edward, Ph.D. *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic stress Disorder*, Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005, page 53.

serves one's country, serves God and protects the honor of one's family and country:

For many families, a military career is one way to embody core moral values like love of country and service to others. ³¹

Like Kayin and his gift to God, soldiers see giving their service to their country as a personal offering. For many, military service defines love of country and God; many even have a long family history of military service. Like Kayin, they want to follow their father's way of service. One veteran states there is "no higher honor to serve my country and defend the values that established it." ³²

Military service promises young people a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves, to be able to be of service to others, to do the right thing and to have hope for a better life. Many recruits are vulnerable because they have been attracted to military service by opportunities they have not had as civilians, especially if they have grown up in economically or culturally challenging circumstances. The military recruits in areas of high poverty and crime rates, and unstable or abusive families, and offers safety, three meals, and a bed, and the hope of a stable life and the promise of education. Tick asserts that recruits feel pressure to succeed in their initiation "and they can suffer great psychological pain if they perceive themselves as having failed." ³³ The pressure to succeed makes soldiers want to be accepted by their commanding officers, eventually creating trauma when there is a conflict between one's own

³¹ Brock, Rita Nakashima and Lettini, Gabriela. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012, page xvi

³² Ibid, page 4

³³ Tick, page 54

sense of morality and the amoral universe of the military.

Unfortunately the idea of serving in an ‘honorable’ moral universe breaks down as early as the recruitment process. Recruiters are known for being deceiving to potential enlistees. Many testify about aggressive recruiters lying to them about the years of service they are agreeing to and the government’s right to extend their service despite any written contract. They are also deceived about the military paying for their education. One soldier recalled reading the initial paperwork and asking many questions about issues that did not make sense and being told by the recruiter to “just sign the fucking thing!”³⁴

One’s moral universe continues being shattered in military training programs, only to be intensified when soldiers face real war situations.

As every veteran of combat knows, the ideal of war service, the glamour of its heroics and the training for killing fails to prepare warriors for its true horrors and moral atrocities.³⁵

Military training faces the challenge of turning civilians into warriors ready to kill whomever is deemed the enemy. Military boot camp is an “initiation that strips societal inhibitions against killing and transforms young men and women into killers.”³⁶ In World War II 75% percent of American soldiers did not fire at the enemy even when their lives were at risk. The military was very concerned about this and devised training programs in order for soldiers to overcome the moral reasoning that made them reluctant to kill another human being even if they

³⁴ Brock, page 4

³⁵ Brock, page xvii

³⁶ Ibid, p. 18

were the “enemy”. After World War II the military developed a training program called “reflexive fire training” that conditioned soldiers to shoot without thinking or considering moral factors. This program resulted in higher percentages of soldiers firing their guns: to 50-60% in the Korean War and 85-90% in the Vietnam War.

Major Pete Kilner stated in a documentary that as a result of this training soldiers are more lethal now than the military ever imagined. The result of their training program is that soldiers often bypass any individual moral decision making process. Veterans describe learning to chant “kill, kill, kill, without mercy Sergeant!” and “blood! blood! bright red blood, Sergeant!” as part of their transformation into killing machines.³⁷ Military chaplains often have the job of counseling weeping soldiers distraught by the training that has them screaming “Kill, Kill, Kill, Kill without mercy.” Vietnam veteran Karl Marlantes writes in his book that the military trains soldiers to kill by stripping away societal inhibitions against killing. However no attention was paid to the emotional and spiritual consequences of killing another human being, and no guidance given as to how to process thoughts of one’s conscience either right after one kills or after one comes home. The training that Marlantes received forced him to dissociate from killing. What began as rage over being placed in an immoral situation was channeled into violence; the killing of enemies became satisfying, even elating. Only years after he returned home did Marlantes begin to experience difficult and deep feelings about his service, which was shattering to him psychologically, emotionally and spiritually.

A soldier’s training is devoid of empathy and consideration for its long term consequences; The military has no empathy for the heart and soul of it’s soldiers. They are taught to repress any

³⁷ Ibid, p. 3

empathy and moral considerations during training and wartime, resulting in a destruction of their moral universe. God's treatment of Kayin also lacks empathy and concern for the consequences of God's behavior towards Kayin. God has no empathy for Kayin's desire to bring a gift offering and has no empathy for Kayin's feelings of anger and shame. The effect is that Kayin becomes devoid of empathy himself, his moral universe and channels his rage on his brother. Soldiers return from war feeling shamed, morally injured after committing and/or witnessing acts of destruction and effectively abandoned by society through a lack of care and empathy. Kayin is also shamed, morally injured and left to wander on his own. Neither Kayin nor soldiers see a way back into a moral universe. Their shame feels like an overwhelming burden and thus they find ways to numb the feeling through addictive and destructive behaviors.

In 2009 in an effort to mitigate the impact of war on soldiers the military developed the 'Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program' to assess physical, emotional, social, familial and spiritually fitness for war. However, the design of the spiritual fitness aspect of the program completely ignores the concept that being spiritually fit is related to having a moral conscience that may conflict with the moral problems posed by war. The military understands being "spiritually fit" as a soldier's ability to think positively and purposefully without being distracted from their mission. In this model of spiritual fitness, if a soldier's conscience says that killing is wrong, that war is unjust or that the civilians being tortured are innocent, then the soldier is unnecessarily distracted from his or her mission. In bypassing this aspect of spiritual fitness the military denies that spirituality and religion include moral codes and values that when transgressed have devastating effects on soldiers. One effect of this "moral injury" is not being able to live with the awareness of what one has done and witnessed, resulting in the need to find

ways to numb one's consciousness either through drug use, violence or suicide.

The sharp contrast between the reality of being in the military and at war and the myths about honorably serving and defending one's country, adds to the potential for trauma and moral injury. The goal of military training is to create the experience of the "mythic archetype" of the chivalrous warrior. One veteran chronicled in his war journals about the shattering of his moral universe that resulted from his military service and stated he before he enlisted was "ready to sacrifice his life for God, his country and his comrades."³⁸ After the reality of bootcamp training this chivalrous warrior writes how he experienced soldiers acting out their rage as "killing became orgasmic, and death performance art."³⁹

When soldiers see that their service is only filled with death and destruction, when they are ordered to commit atrocities, when they witness horror, and when they see that the war they are fighting is only for political or economic gain, their moral universe is shattered and as a result they feel shameful for their role and their actions. Jonathan Shay, in *Achilles in Vietnam*, describes how some soldiers go "berserk" after an incident that has severely disrupted their moral universe.

Vietnam narratives reveal that the events that drive soldiers berserk are betrayal, insult, or humiliation by a leader.⁴⁰

Shay draws a parallel to Homer's *Iliad*, where soldiers also "often display the

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Shay, Jonathan, M.D., Ph.D., *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and The Undoing of Character*, New York: Scribner, 1994, page 80.

transformation of grief into killing rage.”⁴¹ Shay notes that Vietnam veterans and Homer both equate this “berserk” state with the loss of one’s humanity. One veteran looks back:

December 22, 1967, is the day that the civilized me became an animal...War changes you...strips you of all your beliefs, your religion, takes your dignity away, you become an animal. I know that animals don’t...Y’know, its unbelievable what humans can do to each other.⁴²

Kayin was not in the midst of warfare, but the killing of his brother can be seen as his berserk and raged reaction to feeling insulted, humiliated and betrayed by God. Shay’s thesis is that one’s moral character can be brought to ruin by the extreme pressure of horrible events. He uses the story of the moral downfall of Achilles in Homer’s *Iliad* as an archetype of how traumatic events can destroy one’s trusted moral and social order.

The concept of ‘moral injury’ resulting from the breakdown of one’s moral universe is different from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD results from being exposed to a traumatic or overwhelmingly stressful event including war, rape, abuse, terrorism or natural disasters. PTSD... produces hormones that affect the brain’s amygdala and hippocampus, which control responses to fear, as well as regulate emotions and connect fear to memory...symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, hyper vigilance and dissociation.⁴³

The prevalent emotions that people with PTSD suffer from are fear, horror and helplessness. Those with PTSD experience intrusive recollections, need to avoid stimuli that are

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 81

⁴² Ibid, p. 82-3

⁴³ Brock, page xiii

reminders of their trauma and are hyper-vigilant and easily agitated. With moral injury the emotions that are predominant are usually guilt, shame and anger. Moral injury involves the breakdown of one's moral universe. Often those who suffer from moral injury also suffer from symptoms associated with PTSD.

Moral injury occurs when soldiers violate their core moral beliefs, and in evaluating their behavior negatively, they feel they no longer live in a reliable, meaningful world and can no longer be regarded as decent human being. ⁴⁴

Amit Goldenberg wrote his university honors thesis based on interviews with all the surviving members of his elite Special Forces Unit of the Israel Defense Force. He presents a sub-type of moral injury, not based on doing or witnessing any act, but merely on one's thought formations on the battlefield. He calls this type of moral injury as a "self-cannibalization"; it is the "scars from the inner struggle between the professional soldier and the human being."⁴⁵ Goldenberg describes Israeli counter-terrorism training as evoking "violence and aggression that they (the soldiers) have not previously experienced."⁴⁶ Soldiers were filled with feelings of rage and guilt as well. Their rage is confusing to soldiers as they begin to feel the violence that they are capable of, yet knowing it is in conflict with the moral aspects of themselves. Soldiers experience this conflict as a moral injury because they blame themselves for these violent thoughts and rage. There is no acknowledgement by Israeli authorities of the role that their

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Goldenberg, Amit. *A Soldier's Self - Cannibalization: Moral Injury*, Honor's thesis-Hebrew University. Published at: <http://internationalpsychoanalysis.net/2011/10/24/a-soldier's-self-cannibalization-moral-injury>"-introduction-by-nathan-szajnberg-md-managing-editor/

⁴⁶ Ibid

training methods play in bringing about these reactions, and no effort is made to help integrate a soldier's violent and thoughts of rage and feelings with his or her sense of morality and empathy.

Chaplain Herman Keizer Jr. worked on the front lines in Vietnam. He witnessed the crisis in conscience that many soldiers faced knowing they had no way out of fighting in an unjust war (without going to prison). In recounting soldiers who had taken life or witnessed innocent civilians be maimed or killed, he writes:

I was amazed at their personal shame - not guilt - but profound searing shame. Many felt that they had committed a personal affront against God. ⁴⁷

Soldiers usually blame themselves for violating their core moral and religious beliefs even in situations that their actions would be seen by most as "warranted and unavoidable." ⁴⁸ Moral injury can also occur with the realization that a war is based on politicians' hypocrisy or that is unjust and immoral. When senior officers in Vietnam kept themselves out of harm's way and sent junior officers to the front lines, these young soldiers felt betrayed by the lack of morality among commanding officers.

Soldiers deployed in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 report being told by their senior officers that the war was unjust and that they were only fighting for money and control of oil. One soldier felt that he was lied to by his recruiter when he later learned that because of a "stop-loss order" the military could force him to serve until the year 2031. He was deployed to Iraq and feeling betrayed by the military and knowing that the war in Iraq was immoral, based on lies, and a violation of international law. He stated:

⁴⁷ Brock, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. xii.

Nothing prepares you for going to Iraq and seeing the destruction of an entire nation. Nothing ever prepares you for...the unmeasured killing of civilians, ...for what that does to you as a human being...to kill an innocent person. ⁴⁹

Colonel Theodore Westhusing was a devout Roman Catholic who taught at West Point and volunteered to serve in Iraq. He was praised by General Petraeus for his exceptional work with Iraqi leaders and U.S. contractors. He eventually discovered tremendous corruption, illegalities and abuses of Iraqi civilians but was pressured not to report his findings and, under this pressure subsequently, died of self-inflicted wounds to the head. He left a farewell note in capital letters to General Petraeus that included the following:

I CANNOT SUPPORT A MSN (Mission) THAT LEADS TO CORRUPTION,
HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND LIARS...I CAME TO SERVE HONORABLY
AND FEEL DISHONORED...LIFE NEEDS TRUST. TRUST IS NO MORE FOR
ME IN IRAQ. ⁵⁰

People enter the military for many reasons: economic and social stability, serving one's God and country, and bringing honor to one's family. Entering into the military is an initiation into adulthood for those who believe this is a significant transition in their lives from childhood to a responsible, honorable way of becoming an adult. Unfortunately, their training and service results in the break down of their moral universe because of the ways they are lied to, how they are treated, and from the acts they must commit in war. Like Kayin, they often cannot face what

⁴⁹ Brock, page 33.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 41-42.

they have done and who they have become, thus severing their relationship to God and society. When they return from service, they face the new challenge of transforming back from warriors to civilians.

Many cultures have a ritual purification process before soldiers return back to civilian life. The Navajo people created a ceremony to cure the “sickness” that comes from wartime contact with non-Navajo corpses and graves. Early Christian churches required anyone who shed human blood to be baptized again in order to re-purify their soul, which was believed to have become impure through killing and participating in war. The Torah states that soldiers need to go through a purification process, acknowledging that killing and contact with the dead affect one’s being.

You shall then stay outside the camp seven days; every one among you or among your captives who has slain a person or touched a corpse shall purify himself on the third and seventh days. (Numbers 31:19)

American society has failed our soldiers by not developing (until recently) and not providing adequate resources to the implementing of a healing process for those who return from war. As a result many veterans have never been able to reconcile themselves with the actions they committed and/or witnessed. Veteran are only 7% of the population, yet they account for 20% of US suicides.⁵¹ In addition, rates of drug and alcohol addiction and homelessness are very high among veteran populations.

Moral injury can lead veterans to feelings of worthlessness, remorse and despair; they may feel as if they had lost their souls in combat and are no longer

⁵¹ Ibid, p. xii.

who they were. Connecting emotionally to others becomes impossible for those trapped inside the walls of such feelings. When the consequences become overwhelming, the only relief may seem to be to leave this life behind".⁵²

According to a Midrash,⁵³ Kayin's moral universe broke down when he felt that God acted unjustly in disregarding his offering while accepting Havel's. If the foundation of one's moral universe does not act morally, then it is logical for one to ask if a moral universe exists to guide one's actions. Instead of listening and responding empathetically, God asks Kayin in the midst of Kayin's anger and shame to consider the moral question of goodness and sin. We can imagine Kayin, full of rage going berserk and killing his brother. Now, like a traumatized soldier, Kayin has to live with the consequences of his action, and like the morally injured soldier, he experiences alienation from God and society.

Kayin said to God, "My iniquity is too great to bear! Since You have banished me this day from the earth, and I must hide from Your presence and become a restless wanderer on earth — anyone who meets me may kill me!" (Gen. 4:13-14)

Kayin's moral universe is broken and now he must hide from the presence of God because of his shame. This will ring true for those who suffer from moral injury. Soldiers who believe they have been betrayed by their government, feel enraged while still feeling shame for acts they have committed and/or witnessed. Their moral universe was shattered first by their government, and then by their deep personal shame for killing or witnessing killing. When soldiers reflect on their

⁵² Ibid, page xvi.

⁵³ Targum Yerushalmi Gen. 4:8)

actions and feel shame they often “hide” from God, no longer feeling worthy of a relationship with God.

Tick asserts that we should see war trauma as an identity disorder rather than an anxiety or stress disorder because a person’s identity is forever changed through the experience of war and their new identity traumatizes them. Their persistent recollection of the events of war haunts and shames them, and the relentless pain of being aware of their actions, the horrors they have witnessed, and the losses they have endured becomes too much for them to bear. Many veterans they turn to alcohol, drugs, and/or violence as a way of numbing themselves from the pain. A person is forever changed when their moral universe is shattered. At the end of their “service” both soldiers and Kayin are spiritually and emotionally lost. Kayin is expelled by God from working the land and fearful of retribution for his violence, he is banished from civil society.

Kayin left the presence of God and settled in Nod (place of wandering and homelessness), east of Eden. (Gen. 4 16)

Soldiers facing the trauma and moral injury from their wartime service follow an analogous trajectory as Kayin. Soldiers, after having devoted themselves to service, experience confusion, shame and anger which are not acceptable by their authority figures. Kayin’s rage leads to destructive, violent acts that further shame him and result in more trauma, shame and the complete loss of the moral universe. Likewise, soldiers who are traumatized are often left without a sense of feeling worthy to be a participant in the moral universe of a civic society. This poem, written by Camillo Bica, about his service in Iraq could have been written by Kayin:

I feel I am no longer alien to this horror.
I am, I am, I am the horror.
I have lost my humanity
and have embraced the insanity of war.
The monster and I are one...
The blood of the innocents forever stains my soul!
The transformation is complete,
and I can never return. ⁵⁴

What does society owe those who whose military service has resulted in moral injury, condemning them to “never return”, acting out their rage with violent and self destructive behavior? Our society’s moral universe must be expanded to provide healing for those who have been shamed by wartime acts of violence they have committed and witnessed. We need to all bear shame when we allow our government to fight wars in which we expect soldiers to violate the collective moral conscience of our society and what we intuit that God wants from us.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 20

Part Six - Treatment and Recovery From Moral Injury

The process of treatment and recovery from morally injury is one of transformation from a place of shame, guilt and humiliation to one of dignity, survival and strength. This process can be seen as an effort to “reframe the person’s mourning and grief as an act of courage and strength instead of weakness, vulnerability or humiliation.”⁵⁵ Our greatest challenge is to assist a person in entering back into a relationship with God, and to accept and love themselves. They need help in order to feel they are worthy of being part of a moral universe. A person with moral injury often feels they cannot face God. Kayin states: "from Your presence I shall be hidden." (Gen. 4:14), and the Torah continues: "and then Kayin went out from the presence of God." (Gen. 4:16) In order for a person to feel they are worthy of being in God's presence, the listener, a therapist or chaplain, must embody God’s acceptance and love for the person amidst their struggles, and become a model for divine empathy and comfort.

Soldiers who have been traumatized and morally injured are in desperate need of emotional, psychological and spiritual healing. They feel ashamed of the acts they have committed and/or witnessed that oppose their moral values, and they feel rage towards those who recruited them and trained them to act in such a way. Their religious and spiritual lives have been shattered. They question whether there is a moral universe at all. They often feel alienated from civil society and do not accept themselves, and that they do not have the right to be in relationship with the divine, Some might experience other symptoms of war trauma including intrusive thoughts, hyper-arousal, self-isolation and avoidance through alcohol or drug use and

⁵⁵ Hughes, Rev. Brian, BCC and Rev. George Handzo, BCC. *The Handbook on Best Practices for the Provision of Spiritual Care to Persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury*, United States Government Department of the Navy, Department of Defense, 2012, page 27.

violent behavior. Moral injury intensifies the symptoms of war trauma: the self-condemnation and retreat from positive feelings causes a sense of hopelessness and unworthiness that can inhibit the healing process.

The healing process for those who are morally injured needs to include a reconnection with the divine and/or a moral universe. In order for this to occur, the listener must become a stand-in for God, as a comforting and empathic presence who can hear the pain and suffering of the morally injured soldier. The healing process needs to integrate a concept of God that embodies both God's traditional masculine and feminine attributes. This is important in light of the traditional understanding of God as masculine that often leads to one to experience of God as shaming and punishing. To counteract this image it is necessary to integrate God's characteristics of empathy and comfort, traditionally seen as the feminine and maternal characteristics of God. Soldiers experiencing moral injury feel like Kayin, like they are living outside the presence of God. To soldiers in training and combat, the attribute of empathy is seen as not manly, but only a God who can both strengthen and support, and empathize and comfort can assist in the task of restoring a relationship with one who is morally injured.

The restoration of empathy is important because it is exactly what was missing from the authority figures in the military. Empathy must therefore be prominent in the "authority figure" of a chaplain or therapist, as well as in the moral universe that needs to be returned to those suffering from moral injury. Those who see their service in the military as a service to God and country are deeply condemned by their moral injury. Not only is their relationship to their country and their loved ones shattered, but also their relationship to God and to their own sense of self-worth. Therefore the God that they need as part of their recovery process is a God that

includes the ‘maternal’ aspect of empathy and compassion. The concept that God as well as humans possesses both masculine and physical characteristics was noted by Carl Jung in his study of symbols of the feminine in many world cultures.

Not only the gods, but the goddesses, too, are libido-symbols, when regarded from the point of view of their dynamism. The libido expresses itself in images of sun, light, fire, sex, fertility and growth. In this way the goddesses, as we have seen, come to possess phallic symbols, even though the latter are essentially masculine. One of the main reasons for this is that, *just as the females lies hidden in the male, so the male lies hidden in the female.* (my italics). ⁵⁶

Thus God and each of us needs to integrate masculine and feminine attributes into our being. The characteristic of empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another is what has been totally lost to the person suffering with moral injury. The military has overridden the moral and spiritual universe of recruits through its training program designed to turn civilians into killers who kill without moral considerations (and thus empathy for the person you are killing). The characteristic of empathy is understood as feminine as it occurs in the realm of the emotional self. The empathic listener needs to be present to their own intuitive sense of the person speaking. Erich Neumann, the great scholar of Jungian psychology and the development of consciousness, states:

The matriarchal consciousness, not merely a precursor of our patriarchal consciousness but a form of consciousness closer to the unconscious is emotion-toned; it is ‘light quality’ springing from strong emotion, from

⁵⁶ Jung, Carl. *Symbols of Transformation*, New York: Bollingeren/Princeton University Press, 1970, page 221.

essentially feeling-toned constellations of the unconscious...the matriarchal consciousness is a relatedness consciousness of nearness.⁵⁷

To be a whole person means to incorporate both what archetypally seen as ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ characteristics. A careful close reading of the first creation story in Genesis makes it clear that the Torah hints to us that God embodies both masculine and feminine:

And God said, “Let us make man **in our image, after our likeness...** And God created human in His image, in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them” (Genesis 1:26-27).

If male and female are created in God’s image then God must encompass masculine and feminine characteristics. According to the Zohar, Adam’s sin was to split off the Shekhinah, the feminine aspect of God from Tif’eret, the masculine aspect of God. Daniel Matt, in his commentary to his translation of the Zohar states:

On the psychological plane, the sin corresponds to the splitting off of consciousness from the unconscious.”⁵⁸

Traditional Siddurim preface the blessing prior to doing many commandments with the words:

For the sake of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Shekhinah, in reverence and mercy, to unify the name Yud-He with Vav-He in complete unity in the name of all

⁵⁷ Neumann, Erich, *The Child*, New York: Putnam and Sons for the Jung Foundation. 1973, page 53.

⁵⁸ Matt, Daniel C., Translator and Commentator. *The Zohar*, Volume I. Stamford, CA: Stamford University Press. 2004, page 298.

This deep understanding of God and humans is that are goal is to integrate the masculine and feminine that is within each of us. The Torah is a history of the hidden feminine, the characteristic of God that human partners need to bring to God's consciousness.

This aspect of God that is also within us that includes empathy and compassion is the foundation of the relationship created in the individual therapeutic/pastoral process. This begins with developing a safe environment where a person will not feel judged for any act, thoughts or feelings. Secondly, the listener must encourage a person to remember, tell, and re-tell the narratives of their service, so that the listener can hear clues of spiritual distress, existential crisis and moral crisis. The listener's responses should include an effort to normalize the person's responses and reactions, helping them to assign and articulate appropriate words and responses to people, feelings and events as well as carrying some of the burden of the trauma emotionally and spiritually. The empathic listener must be careful not to make assumptions about the facts and meaning of event, but instead be curious and inquisitive and ask detailed questions. The listener needs to communicate to the speaker the sacred nature of his or her testimony. The sacred nature needs to be understood as personal and private testimony and confessional and spiritual. Communicating that a person's story is sacred is the beginning of restoring a moral universe and a sense of self-worth to one who is morally injured. This private personal testimony becomes a way of creating a new moral order and identity in the world. This is done through reflecting on and confronting the horrible immoral situation that was inflicted on someone, and see the abuse

⁵⁹ Sachs, Rabbi Sir Jonathan, Translator and Commentator, *The Koren Siddur*. Jerusalem, Israel: Koren Publishers, 2009, page 14.

and neglect one was subjected to.

A foundation of the healing process for persons with many types of trauma has been developed by Judith Herman and detailed in her book Trauma and Recovery.⁶⁰ She explains that the healing process from trauma unfolds in three stages.

- 1) Establishing of a safe environment and where one can internalize feelings of safety
- 2) Remembering, telling and mourning the trauma
- 3) Establishing a new self-identity and re-connecting to family and community.

(1) Establishing safety means developing an environment where one will not feel judged for any act, thought or feeling: it means assisting with and monitoring the self-regulation of the clients physical needs, intrusive thoughts and recollections and control of self-destructive and unhealthy behaviors. When a person feels completely safe and strong in their sense of self (ego), he or she is ready to begin the process of catharsis. The process of remembering and telling helps a person to uncover feelings that have been repressed since the trauma; in this way one can let go of the power the feelings are holding over them and they start the healing process and feel good and necessary again.

(2) A therapist must encourage their client to remember, tell and retell the narratives of their service in order to listen for clues of spiritual distress, existential crisis or moral crisis. The listener's responses can help to normalize the person's feelings about their story by helping to articulate appropriate words and responses to the in their narrative. In this way the listener helps to carry some of the emotional and spiritual burden of the trauma. An empathic listener must be

⁶⁰ Herman, Judith, M.D. *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence-from domestic abuse to political terror*, New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Careful not to make assumptions about the facts and meaning of events. He or she should be curious, inquisitive and ask detailed questions. In this way the listener embodies God's interest in the veterans sacred story and provides acceptance and love for the veteran amidst their struggles, thus becoming a model for divine empathy and comfort.

The entire military experience beginning with one's personal motivation for enlisting, recruiting and training, combat experiences until discharge needs to be told as part of the veteran's story. This includes recovered memories of hopes and values, unspoken motivations and expectations, theologies and family dynamics, as well as all that occurred in the military. Through the support and confirmation of their feelings of grief, loss and shame they can learn to understand their own moral injury, identify how it occurred, and understand that others share responsibility for their feelings of shame, grief and alienation. The telling and re-telling one's story is a cathartic process of purging oneself of anguish and shame. Once the veteran feels safe enough to express and talk about their emotions, there is a slowing down of the adrenaline rush felt in combat. The listener can help a person confront those they imagine are "cursing" whether it is those they fought, those who died at their sides, those at home and or God. Telling one's story may involve seeking a meaning in one's experience, and wondering how to be forgiven for any acts they feel shameful for.

(3) A powerfully healing way of telling one's story is doing so within a support group - other veterans, family members or others in the community. Veterans need to tell their story and know that they are heard and validated by the larger community. Tick states that having family or community validate one's story is a "crucial step in the transformation of identity into warrior-

hood and mature adult status”⁶¹

Kayin is an archetype of one who has no human community: he cannot tell his story or be heard with empathy and compassion, and cannot reconnect to people or God. Sharing stories in community where one can say what is true for them without being judged allows one to feel that they are deserving of love and compassion. Edward Tick offers “reconciliation retreats” which create supportive and empathic communities where veterans and non-veterans can come together to share and learn about each other’s struggles with previously unspoken feelings. It is a place to understand the moral injury done to each participant even if one only saw war from afar and felt he or she had not done enough to stop it.

Developing of a new self -identity involves understanding the effect of trauma and moral injury on one’s life, and understanding why one is not fully responsible for all their actions. The healing process is a transformation from a passive victim of moral injury to finding a personal meaning from their experience. This includes recreating a moral universe by embracing one’s original motivation to serve, deciding for oneself what constitutes honorable and moral service. A person who naively enlists to serve their country becomes a pawn of others in power and can not maturely choose their own moral path. Tick states :

A veteran does not become a warrior merely for having gone to war. A veteran becomes a warrior when he learns to carry his war skills and his vision in mature ways.⁶²

⁶¹ Tick, Edward, Ph.D. *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation’s Veterans from Post-traumatic stress Disorder*, Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005, page 221.

⁶² Tick, p. 251.

Judith Herman's three stages for recovery from trauma provide a framework that moves one from safety, to telling one's sacred story to reconstructing one's moral universe, all contributing to the development of a "new self".

When Kayin's gift was rejected by God and he expressed feelings of shame and rage he did not have the opportunity to tell his story and be heard by God or others. After he was cursed and banished, Kayin spoke of his pain and distance from God. This is when God hears Kayin and responds to his fear of human punishment and retribution. Kayin was physically safe but still spiritually alienated from God; thus his healing process was not complete

Kayin said to God: "My iniquity is too great to bear! Since 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!" God said to him: "I promise, if anyone kills Kayin, sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on him." And God put a mark on Kayin, lest anyone who met him should kill him. Kayin left the presence of God and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Kayin knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he then founded a city, and named the city after his son Enoch.

(Gen.4:13-17)

"Nod" literally means "wandering". Kayin, while physically settled, is spiritually unsettled, wandering and lost without the presence of God: It is an apt metaphor for the spiritual healing that is essential for a morally injured soldier. The God who protects Kayin physically does not provide a way for Kayin to heal spiritually. A soldier might receive physical rehabilitation, but if they are not offered emotional and spiritual healing, then restoration of God's presence in their life is not possible for them. To a soldier, "the mark of Kayin" means being morally injured for life with no hope of redemption. Without a path back to God, and/or a moral universe, a soldier

is left with their shame and rage, which often results in destructive and self-destructive behavior, including suicide.

Another healing modality is to express feelings non-verbally through the arts such as visual art, movement or music. These medias are often a good way to express feelings that are difficult to verbalize.

Service and advocacy are also ways to meaningfully channel feelings, restore meaning and a feel empowered to once again direct one's life. Service can be through actively assisting others who are going through the same difficulties. Advocacy can involve working to effect systematic change to prevent trauma and moral injury and to provide more and better services to those suffering. Advocacy work aids the healing process by helping a soldier understand that he or she is not 100% responsible or culpable for what they have done or witnessed. Tick states that part of healing is to understand that "the moral responsibility for war should not be on the common soldiers who fought it but upon the nation and its leaders who created it".⁶³ Advocacy also helps the healing process by developing one's own moral character through asserting anger and rage in a responsible manner. This can include working to persuade our nation's leadership's to accept responsibility for the moral injury they have caused. When loved one's and the larger community support and join these efforts, they too acknowledge that a soldier does not bear full responsibility for their actions. Tick asserts that if our government gave a strong message such as the following to returning veterans it would go a long way to aid the healing process:

You did this in our name and because you were subject to our orders. We lift the burden of your actions from you and take it onto our shoulders. We are responsible

⁶³ Ibid, p. 236.

for you, for what you did, for the consequences. ⁶⁴

Tick believes that this message can lift the burden of moral responsibility because even if the war was immoral, the individual soldier attempted to serve their country honorably. Tick states that the journey to healing includes embracing a moral universe of a true warrior who is guided by empathy and strength.

We need a class of noble citizen-warriors who know the cost of war and who speak about it before the nation and world. We need people who are awake to human suffering and are willing to guide us in alleviating it. We need those who can serve fearlessly, confronting threats without resorting to needless violence in order to return matters to life-affirming order again. ⁶⁵

Since those suffering from moral injury feel they have lost their connection to God and their connection to their own spirituality, the healing process should include finding those connections once again. This can be done through a variety of methods that help to slow thoughts and relax the mind and body. A veteran can be encouraged to talk about their understanding of their relationship to God in light of what they have done and witnessed. An effective method for this is “scriptural paralleling”, where one is helped to work on associating their struggles with the struggles of Biblical characters in order to highlight God’s deep understanding of humanity and God’s acceptance of all those who want to return to God. Important in this is a concept of God that includes positive masculine attributes such as strength, endurance and discipline and positive feminine attributes such as comfort, empathy and

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 237.

⁶⁵ Tick, p. 252-3.

compassion. Spiritual healing includes understanding that one can experience and integrate God's positive attributes of God as opposed to feeling only shamed in the presence of God.

There are many Jewish sources that support a God who provides empathy, comfort and enduring partnership through times of struggle and distress. The prophet Isaiah comforts the Jewish nation exiled from their land. Several Psalms are prayers that ask for and receive God's comfort during times of great affliction. A model for those seeking God's forgiveness is the Yom Kippur service, which includes atonement for sins through teshuva, tzedakah and tefilla. Atonement is offered to one who pledges a return to God, commits to performing acts of kindness, service and social justice, and prays to God sincerely. The powerful Yom Kippur prayers have helped many believe that he or she is deserving of compassion, comfort, forgiveness and mercy.

Jewish tradition understands that healing cannot happen without bringing both the masculine and feminine aspects of God into our world. In order to assist in the healing of those who suffer from moral injury it is important that they experience God as empathic, caring, forgiving and understanding. In Appendix A are some examples of these characteristics of God from the Tanakh. The use of scriptural paralleling can assist a person in returning and feeling accepted by God through a Biblical narrative than connects to their personal story. These verses have the power to restore a sense of one's self-worth and moral universe. They can serve to provide a person with hope and with the assurance of God's love, understanding, comfort and support. God hears the prayers and cries of veterans today just as God heard those of past generations of sufferers.

Conclusion

The story of Kayin the Torah presents us with is an archetype for the roots of violence. Kayin feels shamed, invalidated and angry when God does not accept his gift yet accepts the gift of his brother. Kayin feels that the God, the foundation of his moral universe, has not acted justly. God does take notice of Kayin's anger and shame, does not respond with empathy, comfort or support but instead warns Kayin that his emotions might lead to sin. Kayin's reaction is to become further enraged and kill his brother who is perhaps a reminder and provocateur of his moral injury.

Modern psychology has explored the relationship between violence and emotional neglect, abuse and shaming, beginning when a child feels ashamed and invalidated when a gift he or she brings to a parental figure is not accepted. A parent, commanding officer or God represents one's moral universe and is thus the basis for how one judges him or herself. Thus a loss of trust in one's moral universe results in feelings of indignity and rage and shame.

Kayin's story is analogous to those who bring the gift of themselves to military service as an act of entering into the initiation into manhood. Like Kayin, they find their moral universe shattered when authority figures do not validate them. They trick them in the recruiting process, shame them in the training process and teach them to kill without conscience and provide no healing process to transition them to civilian life. Many soldiers are placed into situations in training and war where they are expected to enter into an amoral space that leaves no room for conscience and moral decision-making. Soldiers kill, see their friends killed, and witness the killing and mistreatment of civilians. They often act out their rage at what they have done and seen and then feel ashamed for acting against their values and conscience, and then are further

filled with anger and rage. They are traumatized from what they have done and/or witnessed and there is no acknowledgment of their honor and their service, no attention paid to their re-entry into civilian world and the necessary healing and purification process. Veterans are often lost in their trauma and moral injury and resort to destructive and self-destructive behavior. Kayin, who also becomes enraged at the loss of his moral universe, commits an act of violence (although not ordered to do so), and is then cursed and left to wander.

The words and behavior of clergy and trusted listeners such as chaplains matter greatly because they represent the moral universe to those they serve. The story of Kayin can be used not as a Rabbanic a morality tale, but as an archetype for the effects of the breakdown of one's moral universe. The Torah can serve to teach authority figures the awesome responsibility they have to to be an empathic and compassion listener and assist in the healing process of the morally injured. An authority figure is a representative of God, who listens to people's pain, is empathic and embodies compassion.

Clergy must pay attention to the consequences of teaching texts such as the story of Kayin. If it is presented as a morality tale of a man who is evil under the authority of a perfect God then what is learned is that human nature is without psychological depth and subtleties. This can generate further guilt or shame in the morally injured and alienate congregants who will see the text as irrelevant to their lives. On the other hand teaching the text with God as an imperfect authority figure makes the text relevant and brings it alive, not just to morally injured veterans, but to all of us who have experienced disconnection from the divine.

Through pastoral work, one is also in a position to reach people who have been alienated from Judaism. I have experienced the gift of this power in my chaplaincy work and have heard

the same from others. When we treat the stories of our disaffected brethren as sacred text they suddenly feel worthy of being heard and understood. Through empathic and compassionate listening we help them to feel worthy of God's love and mercy, and to accept and love themselves.

Any pastoral counselor, whether a Rabbi, chaplain or other supportive presence, has the power to affect healing for the morally injured through understanding how the nuances of our sacred text can restore the God of empathy, support and compassion.

Appendix Scriptural Parelleling

(1)

He (Moses) said, “Oh, let me behold Your Presence!” And He (God) answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim in the name of Adonai before you and I will grant the grace that I grant and show the compassion/mercy I will show.” (Ex. 33:18-19)

Moses seeks reassurance that God will be present for him at a time of need. God responds by telling Moses that God’s essential self is full of support, grace and mercy. This response is powerful in that Moses will be facing many difficult challenges and is being given the message of God’s understanding.

(2)

I, I myself, am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for you are My servant; I have formed you; you are My servant; O Israel, you shall not be forgotten by Me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins; return to Me; for I have redeemed you. Sing, O heavens; for the Lord has done it; shout, you lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel. Thus says the Lord, your redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb, I am the Lord Who makes all things; Who stretches the heavens alone; Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself. (Isaiah 44: 21-25)

The prophet Isaiah offers comfort to the Israelites even at a time when he is also chastising them

for their sins. Isaiah assures the people that God can and will remember and forgive them even during times when they have forgotten God and acted immorally.

(3)

Who is a God like You, Who pardons iniquity, and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion upon us; He will suppress our iniquities; and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. You will show truth to Jacob, and loving mercy to Abraham, as You have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

(Micah 7:18-20)

The prophet Micah offers words of forgiveness and compassion for the people when they acted immorally.

(4)

Many Psalms contain pleas for healing, forgiveness or mercy as well as God's positive response to these pleas:

Answer me when I call, my God, my Righteous One, from my distress I am freed, be gracious to me and hear my prayer” (Psalm 4:2)

God do not punish me in anger, do not chastise me in fury. Have mercy on me, God, for I languish; heal me, God, for my bones shake with terror. My whole being is stricken with terror, while You, God — O, how long! (Psalm 6:2-4)

For He does not ignore the cry of the afflicted; He who requites bloodshed is mindful of them. Have mercy on me, God; see my affliction at the hands of my foes, You who lift me from the gates of death, so that in the gates of Fair Zion I might tell all Your praise, I might exult in Your deliverance. (Psalm 9:13-15)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my loud complaint? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night, and I have no rest. But You are holy, O You who are enthroned on the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You saved them. They cried to You, and were saved; they trusted in You, and were not disappointed. But I am a worm, and not a man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. All those who see me mock me; they move the lip, they shake their head, saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would save him; let Him save him, seeing He delights in him. But You are He who took me out of the womb; You made me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from the womb; you are my God from my mother's belly. Do not be far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me. They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You lay me down in the dust of death. For dogs surround me; the assembly of the wicked encircle me; they seize my hands and my feet like a lion. If I can count all my bones; they look and stare at me. They divide my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing. But You, O Lord, be not far from me; O my strength, hasten to my help. Save my soul from the sword; my only one from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth; for You have answered me from the horns of the wild oxen. I will declare Your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation will I praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise Him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all you the seed of Israel. For God has not despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted; nor has God hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him, He heard.

(Psalm 22: 2-25)

A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Psalm 23)

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house; of David. I will extol you, O Lord; for you have lifted me up, and have not made my enemies rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried to You, and You have healed me. O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing to the Lord, O you His pious ones, and give thanks to His holy name. For His anger lasts but a moment; in His favor is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by Your favor You have made stand as a strong mountain; You hid your face, and I was frightened. I cried to you, O Lord; and to the Lord I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise you? Shall it declare your truth? Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; Lord, be my helper. You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; To the end that my glory may sing praise to You, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever. (Psalm 30)

Psalm 55 is a particularly powerful Psalm as it has many references to themes in the life of a soldier who has witnessed terror and felt fear and anxiety, anger towards moral injustice, spiritual betrayal and prays to be heard and supported by God.

To the chief Musician for stringed instruments, A Maskil of David. Give ear to my prayer, O God; and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and answer me; I sob in my complaint, and moan, because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. My heart inside me is in anguish; and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then I would fly away, and be at rest. Behold, then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten to find a refuge from the windy storm and the tempest. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon its walls; and mischief and trouble are in its midst. Wickedness is in its midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets. For it was not an enemy who taunted me; then I could have borne it; nor was it one who hated me who magnified himself against me; then I could hide from him, but it was you, a man my equal, my companion, my close friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company. Let death spread its oblivion upon them, and let them go down alive into Sheol; for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, I pray, and cry aloud; and he hears my voice. He has saved my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; for there were many who strove against me. God, who is enthroned from old, shall hear, and afflict them. Selah. Because they do not change, and do not fear God. He has put forth his hands against those who are at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you; he shall never let the righteous be moved. But you, O God, shall bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in you. (Psalm 55)

I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, that He may hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; my hand is stretched out in the night, and does not rest; my soul refuses to be comforted. I remember God, and I moan; I meditate and my spirit faints. Selah. You hold my eyelids from closing; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old, the years of ancient times. I remember my melody in the night; I talk with my heart; and my spirit searches. Will the Lord cast off forever? And will He be favorable no more? Has his loving kindness ceased forever? Does his promise fail for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. And I said, It is my sickness that the right hand of the Most High has changed. I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. And I will meditate on all Your work, and muse on your deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God that does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the people. With Your arm You have redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You; they were afraid; the depths also trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; your arrows flashed on every side. The voice of your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea, and your path through the great waters; and your footsteps were not known. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

(Psalm 77)

A Song of Maalot. I will lift up my eyes to the mountains. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He who watches you will not slumber. Behold, He who watches Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve

your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and for evermore. (Psalm 121)

He (God) heals their broken hearts, and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

List of Texts Cited

BIBLICAL

Tanakh-The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the traditional Hebrew text,
1998.

RABBINIC

Babylonia Talmud

Bereshit Rabbah

Pirqei de R. Eliezer

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

Targum Yerushalmi

Pesikta De-Rab Kahana

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

Ibn Ezra

Kimchi

Malbim

Ohr Hachayim

Rashi

Rambam: Mishnah Torah

Ramban

Sforno

Bibliography

Blumenthal, David R. *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest*, Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Brock, Rita Nakashima and Gabriela Lettini. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012.

Ginzberg, Louis. *Legends of the Bible*, Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication society of America, 1909.

Goldenberg, Amit. *A Soldier's Self- Cannibalization: Moral Injury*, Honor's thesis-Hebrew University. Published at: <http://internationalpsychoanalysis.net/2011/10/24/a-soldier's-self-cannibalization-moral-injury?introduction-by-nathan-szajnberg-md-managing-editor/>

Gottlieb, Rabbi Lynn. *Trail Guide to the Torah of Nonviolence*. Paris, France, Earth of Hope Publishing, 2013.

Herman, Judith, M.D. *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence-from domestic abuse to political terror*, New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Hirsch, Rabbi Samson Raphael. *The Pentateuch: Translated and Explained*. New York: Judaica Press, 1963.

Hughes, Rev. Brian, BCC and Rev. George Handzo, BCC. *The Handbook on Best Practices for the Provision of Spiritual Care to Persons with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury*, United States Government Department of the Navy, Department of Defense, 2012.

Kaufman, Gershen, Ph.D. *Shame: The Power of Caring*, Rochester, VT: Schenkman Books Inc., 1980.

Kugel, James L.. *The Bible As It Was*, Cambridge, MA. The Belknap Press, 1997.

Laytner, Anson. *Arguing with God: A Jewish Tradition*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990.

Matt, Daniel C., Translator and Commentator. *The Zohar*, Volume I.

Miller, Alice. *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in child rearing and the roots of violence*, Toronto, Canada: McGraw Hill Ryerson Ltd, 1980.

_____. The Roots of Violence. http://www.alice-miller.com/flyers_en.php?page=3

Moore, Robert and Douglas Giletter: *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Modern Masculine*. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.

Neumann, Erich, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1955.

_____. *The Child*, New York: Putnam and Sons for the Jung Foundation. 1973.

Plaut, W. Gunther (Editor), *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981.

Sachs, Rabbi Sir Jonathan, Translator and Commentator, *The Koren Siddur*. Jerusalem, Israel: Koren Publishers, 2009.

Scurfield, Raymond Monsour and Katherine Theresa Platoni, Editors. *Healing War Trauma: A Handbook of Creative Approaches*. New York. Routledge, 2013.

Shay, Jonathan, M.D., Ph.D., *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and The Undoing of Character*; New York: Scribner, 1994.

_____. *Odysseus in America*, New York: Scribner, 2002.

Tick, Edward, Ph.D. *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic stress Disorder*; Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005.