

## PARSHAT SHOFTIM: THE LINE BETWEEN MURDER AND APATHY

This guide corresponds to the video: [The Line Between Murder And Apathy](#)

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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#### POINTS TO PAUSE



#### DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1:39  Where have you heard these words or ideas before? Is there narrative in the Torah in which someone killed (somewhat inadvertently), was forced to flee, and feared for his life from the hands of those who might avenge the victim's blood?
- 2:20  Why might Cain be considered an inadvertent killer? Consider the various parts of the narrative, including historical context, Cain's motivation, Cain's reaction to God following the murder, God's response, and Cain's punishment.  

*Sources can be found in the Student Guide.*
- 5:37  What do you think these similarities – this connection between the narratives – are meant to teach? Why do the connections exist? What are we supposed to learn from them? In other words, who cares?



#### FROM PRINCIPLE TO PRACTICE

Rabbi Fohrman suggested that the primary “crime” of both the inadvertent killer and of Cain was their failure to protect the eventual victim. While unintentional, that failure to protect and care for the other revealed, to some degree, the killer's apathy. Eventually, the punishment of both the inadvertent killer and of Cain was that they would forever have to face the recognition that they live only because they are provided the protection that they failed to provide the victim.

What can we learn practically from these narratives? How can we make sure to provide protection and intimately care for those around us, just as the inadvertent killer and Cain should have done? What can we do to increase our sensitivity towards others such that we protect their well-being and lives just as we would our own?

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### STUDENT GUIDE

*Instructions: In the graphic organizer, answer the prompt by providing 2 pieces of evidence that indicate that Cain may well have been an inadvertent killer. Then, fill in the chart regarding the similarities between the narrative of Cain and the laws of the inadvertent killer.*

Provide 2 pieces of "evidence" that indicate that Cain was really an inadvertent killer:

1

2

	The Inadvertent Killer	Cain
What is the killer's intention?		
What must the killer do following the killing?		
From where does the killer's protection come?		
What is the killer's ultimate "punishment"?		

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DEUTERONOMY 19

- ב** שלוש ערים, תבדיל לך: בתוך ארצך--אשר יהיה אלהיך, נתן לך לרשתה.
- ג** תכין לך, הדרך, ושלשת את-גבול ארצך, אשר ינחילך יהיה אלהיך; והיה, לנוס שמה כל-רצח.
- ד** וזה דבר הרצח, אשר-נוס שמה וחי: אשר יכה את-רעהו בבלי-דעת, והוא לא-שנא לו מתמל שלשם.
- ה** ואשר יבא את-רעהו ביער, לחטוב עצים, ונדחה ידו בגרזן לכתר העץ, ונשל הפרזל מן-העץ ומצא את-רעהו ומת: הוא, נוס אל-אחת הערים האלה--וחי.
- ו** פן-ירדף גאל הדם אחרי הרצח, כי-נחם לבבו, והשיגו כי-ירבה הדרך, והכהו נפש; ולו, אין משפט-מות, כי לא שנא הוא לו, מתמול שלשום.
- ז** על-כן אנכי מצוך, לאמר: שלש ערים, תבדיל לך.
- 2** thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee to possess it.
- 3** Thou shalt prepare thee the way, and divide the borders of thy land, which the LORD thy God causeth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every manslayer may flee thither.
- 4** And this is the case of the manslayer, that shall flee thither and live: whoso killeth his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in time past;
- 5** as when a man goeth into the forest with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor that he die; he shall flee unto one of these cities and live;
- 6** lest the avenger of blood pursue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and smite him mortally; whereas he was not deserving of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.
- 7** Wherefore I command thee, saying: 'Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.'

GENESIS 4:

- ח** ויאמר קין, אל-הבל אחיו; ויהי בהיותם בשדה, וינקם קין אל-הבל אחיו ויהרגהו.
- ט** ויאמר יהוה אל-קין, אי הבל אחיך; ויאמר לא ידעתי, השמר אחי אנכי.
- י** ויאמר, מה עשית; קול דמי אחיך, צעקים אלי מן-האדמה.
- יא** ועתה, ארור אתה, מן-האדמה אשר פצתה את-פיה, לקחת את-דמי אחיך מידך.
- יב** כי תעבד את-האדמה, לא-תסוף תת-כחה לך; נע ונד, תהיה בארץ.
- יג** ויאמר קין, אל-יהוה: גדול עונני, מנשא.
- יד** הן גרשתי אתי היום, מעל פני האדמה, ומפניך, אסתיר; והייתי נע ונד, בארץ, והיה כל-מצאי, יהרגני.
- טו** ויאמר לו יהוה, לכן כל-הרג קין, שבעתים, יקום; וישם יהוה לקין אות, לבלתי הכות-אתו כל-מצאו.
- 8** And Cain spoke unto Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.
- 9** And the LORD said unto Cain: 'Where is Abel thy brother?' And he said: 'I know not; am I my brother's keeper?'
- 10** And He said: 'What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.'
- 11** And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.
- 12** When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth.'
- 13** And Cain said unto the LORD: 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.'
- 14** Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the land; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me.'
- 15** And the LORD said unto him: 'Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD set a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite