

Favoritism of God? נָפַח in Genesis 4:1-16 and its implications for Cain's status and offerings

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the meaning of the word נָפַח based on Genesis 4:1-16 and explain its implications for the status of Cain and his offering. The research method used by the author in writing this is a qualitative research method based on hermeneutic principles. The results of this study indicate that the word נָפַח has the meaning of respect. God honoured Abel and his sacrifice. At the same time, God does not respect Cain and his gift. God knows what Cain's plot was before he killed Abel. The implication of Cain's status and sacrifice is that Cain's evil personality hindered him and his sacrifice before God. His person stands in the way of his gift to reach God.

Keywords: Genesis 4:1-16, Sacrifice, Respect, Status of Cain

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis makna kata נָפַח berdasarkan Kejadian 4:1-16 serta menguraikan implikasinya terhadap status Kain serta persembahannya. Adapun metode penelitian yang digunakan penulis dalam penulisan ini yaitu, metode penelitian kualitatif berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip hermeneutik. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kata mengindahkan atau נָפַח memiliki arti menghormati. Tuhan tidak menunjukkan sikap pilih kasih. Allah menghormati Habel dan kurban persembahannya sedangkan Kain dan kurban persembahannya tidak dihormati. Allah mengetahui bagaimana rencana Kain yang jahat itu sebelum ia membunuh Habel. Adapun implikasinya bagi status Kain serta kurban persembahannya yaitu, pribadi Kain yang jahat itu menjadi penghalang bagi dirinya dan kurban persembahannya di hadapan Allah.



Pribadinya menutup jalan bagi kurban persembahannya untuk sampai di hadapan Allah.

Kata-kata Kunci: Kejadian 4:1-16, Kurban Persembahan, Menghormati, Mengindahkan, Status Kain.

Introduction

There is various publication on the story of Cain and Abel. Moberly and The Mark of Cain.¹ Mari Jørstad and the ground that opened its mouth.² Lohr did not want to be tempted to find the reason why God choose Abel and his sacrifice than Cain and his sacrifice. He argued that that unanswered question is showing the beautiful theme in Genesis 4; the unchosen is not outside of God purview.³ Vermeulen believes – as Meir Sternberg’s biblical vision on ambiguity – that the gaps is a realization of literary universal.⁴ Bokovoy reassessed word קנה in Genesis 4:1.⁵

Lohr tried to focus on the theme of Genesis 4, but in this article, author reassess the meaning of נָפֶשׁ in Genesis 4 and address the problem in Indonesian translation. The description of Cain and his sacrifice is unclear in Genesis 4:1-16. In verse 5, God had no regard (נָפֶשׁ) on Cain’s sacrifice (ESV). It is not explained why God had no regard on Cain and his sacrifice. It is just that Cain’s anger towards God shows something surprising when God did not favor Cain and his offerings.⁶ Is this showing a favoritism in God’s favor?

Matthew Henry’s interpretation says that Cain and Abel had significant differences regarding the offerings that were given; Abel gave

¹ R. W. L. Moberly, “The Mark of Cain: Revealed at Last?,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 100, no. 1 (2007): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001781600700140X>

² Mari Jørstad, “The Ground That Opened Its Mouth: The Ground’s Response to Human Violence in Genesis 4,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135, no. 4 (2016): 705, <https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1354.2016.3010>

³ Joel N. Lohr, “Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain: Genesis 4:1-16 in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the New Testament,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (2009): 495–96, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43709808>.

⁴ Karolien Vermeulen, “Mind the Gap: Ambiguity in the Story of Cain and Abel,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 29, <https://doi.org/10.15699/jbibllite.133.1.29>

⁵ David E. Bokovoy, “Did Eve Acquire, Create, or Procreate with Yahweh? A Grammatical and Contextual Reassessment Of קנה in Genesis 4:1,” *Vetus Testamentum* 63, no. 1 (2013): 19, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685330-12341096>.

⁶ John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*, Themes in Biblical Narrative Jewish and Christian Traditions, v. 14 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 39.

his offerings with a heart directed to God's will or according to God's commandments, while Cain made his offerings only to accompany Abel.⁷ Park's interpretation says that God did not favor Cain's offering because his offering was not following God's decrees or did not according to God's orders (God's provision is an abolition offering in the form of 'lamb or fat' based on Leviticus 3:6-12).⁸ On the other hand, Barth says there is an understandable sign that Cain's offering was not accepted because his sacrifice's smoke did not rise, while Abel's offering was the opposite. Because his offering was displeasing to God, Cain felt jealous, so he had the heart to kill his brother. For his crime, Cain was punished by God by expelling him as a wanderer and fugitive on earth (Gen. 4:14).⁹

The problem raises in Indonesian Translation. Indonesian Translation used 'heed'. In Indonesian Dictionary, the word 'heed' comes from 'beautiful', which means 'pleasant to look at, beautiful, beautiful, to pay attention to'.¹⁰ The translation did not show the real meaning of the Hebrew word *שָׁפַע*. What is the meaning of the word *שָׁפַע* written by the author of Genesis? What is God's reason for Cain and his offerings to be ignored? This word will answer the status of Cain and his sacrifice and some problems that occurred then.

Method

The author uses a type of qualitative research. In this research, the researcher is the key instrument. Qualitative research usually uses data collection, analysis, and then interpretation.¹¹ The author uses data collection with library research techniques on the Bible. The library research technique uses a hermeneutic method related to the theme of this writing by using the Bible in various prints, dictionaries, commentaries and books, as well as various online literature and papers related to the book of Genesis.¹²

In this paper, the author will use several methods of interpretation in general, as described by Hasan Sutanto in his book. The order in which

⁷ Matthew Henry, *Kitab Kejadian* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2014), 118-124.

⁸ Yune Sune Park, *Tafsiran Kitab Kejadian* (Jakarta: Departemen Literatur YPPIL, 2002), 38-39.

⁹ C. Barth, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 1* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1988), 79.

¹⁰ *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, s.v. "Mengindahkan" or 'heed' in English.

¹¹ Albi Anggito and Johan Setiawan, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Sukabumi: Jejak, 2018), 8-10.

¹² Hasan Sutanto, *Prinsip dan Metode Penafsiran Alkitab* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2007), 1-3.

the author interprets the text of Genesis 4:1-16 is Introduction Analysis, Background Analysis, Literary Analysis, Context Analysis (near and far), Word Meaning Analysis, and then lastly, Integration of the text of Genesis 4:1-16.

Result and Discussion of Genesis 4:1-16

Background Analysis

In this passage, there are several characters that the author focuses on, namely Cain and Abel. However, there are several other figures, such as Adam, who is called human and his wife Eve (verse 1). As written in verse 1, Eve is the mother of Cain and Abel, and Adam (the man) is their father. Cain was a farmer, and Abel was a shepherd of the flock (verse 2). These two figures are also believed to have blood relations or are commonly called brothers (paragraph 2). There is no denying that the two are brothers.

The interpretation of the Jubilees says that Cain and Abel were twins. Cain was born in the third week of Jubilee, while Abel was born in the fourth.¹³ The name Cain comes from the meaning of the Sumerian and Akkadian words, namely 'smith', which in Indonesian means blacksmith.¹⁴ Cain stands for 'man', which means individual creature and this term is usually applied to adults.¹⁵ According to the existing text, Cain's profession was a farmer. "Cain became a farmer," (Gen. 4:2). Fruchtenbaum said Cain followed his father's profession, which was also a farmer. His father's profession was valid before the fall (Gen. 2:15) and after his fall (Gen. 3:24).¹⁶ Longman said Cain's name also reveals his faith in God.¹⁷ Besides Cain, Abel's name is also mentioned in this text (Gen. 4:2). The name Abel comes from the Hebrew word 'hebel', which means

¹³ John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*, Themes in Biblical Narrative Jewish and Christian Traditions, v. 14 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 21.

¹⁴ Robert Alter, *Genesis Translation and Commentary* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 16.

¹⁵ E. A. Speiser, *The Anchor Bible: Genesis* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1964), 30.

¹⁶ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis* (San Antonio: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 117.

¹⁷ Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis-Leviticus* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2005), 95.

vanity.¹⁸ The name Abel means ‘breath’. This name emphasizes the brevity of human life (also used in Job 7:16 and Ps. 144:4).¹⁹ Abel is a shepherd, as mentioned above. The Book of Genesis says that Abel is a suffering saint. Not only that but Abel was also used as a model to show Cain’s unrighteousness.²⁰ But from the explanation above and based on the existing text, the writer concludes that Abel is Cain’s younger brother. Abel was a descendant of Adam and Eve and also a shepherd of the flock (Gen. 4:2). When viewed in the original language, the name Abel actually describes a relatively short human life.

Literary Analysis

Genesis 4:1-16 is written as a narrative because it tells a historical event or event that happened in the past. The book Narrative in The Hebrew Bible says that narrative communicates meaning through life, expressed in words and actions.²¹ According to Chia, stories (historical facts) and utterances (artistic representation of words) are two parts of the narrative.²² From some of the explanations above, Genesis 4:1-16 is a narrative in the form of stories or historical facts.

Context Analysis

The text of Genesis 4:1-16 is closely related to Genesis 3:1-19. Genesis 3:1-19 is the history of the first human fall into sin. Where Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s commandments, they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that God had forbidden. Because of their sin, they were punished by God. Interestingly, even though God punishes humans, they get mercy from God, so they are given grace. God made clothes out of animal skins for them and even clothed them (Gen. 3:21). Then, in Genesis 4:1-16, it is a human crime and its punishment. When Cain killed Abel, God punished him; God cast him out as a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. But there is an important thing to know. God gave a sign to Cain so

¹⁸ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), 104.

¹⁹ Fruchtenbaum, 116.

²⁰ David L. Petersen, Joel N. Lohr, and Craig A. Evans, ed., *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, vol. 152 (Leiden, Bosten: Brill, 2012), 333.

²¹ D. M. Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, Oxford Bible Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1-2.

²² Philip Suciadi Chia, *Memahami Kitab-Kitab Perjanjian Lama di dalam Perjanjian Baru* (Yogyakarta: Stiletto Book, 2020), 34.

that those who would find him would not kill him. God punishes, but God also loves. God is both love and justice. So, according to the author, these two texts are related to each other where the text after Genesis 3:1-21, namely Genesis 4:1-16, is a text built based on the previous text, namely Genesis 3:1-21.

In addition, 1 John 3:12 says that Cain came from the evil one who killed his brother. According to Farrar in Heaster's interpretation, the word 'demon' in this text exists within humans.²³ There is a connection between the devil and the flesh. Not that demons are flesh.²⁴ This text certainly alludes to Cain as the murderer of his brother Abel, and it is also possible that John did not see Cain from the fall in the Garden of Eden.²⁵ Cain hated Abel, and that's why he killed Abel. It is possible that the devil used Cain to desire not to be outdone by Abel, to show himself to be better than Abel. Satan uses several platforms to make people fall into sin.²⁶ 1 John 3:12 mentions why Cain killed Abel, namely because he came from the evil one and his evil deeds. This text also explains who Cain was, how Cain killed Abel and the differences between Cain and Abel. Therefore, these two texts are closely related to one another.

Apart from the text above, the author also looks at Hebrews 11:4 as a context. The reason is that Hebrew 11:4 alludes to the incident of Abel offering a sacrifice to God, which is also mentioned in Genesis 4:1-16. The writer of Hebrews says that because of his faith in God, Abel offered a sacrifice to God, and his sacrifice was better than the sacrifice Cain gave to God (Heb. 11:4a). Cain is often seen as a godless type, and Abel is seen as a spiritual type or a believer.²⁷ Cain was the type of person who held back from God in terms of offerings and in his heart. Whereas Abel did not hold back at all, he gave his offering to God consistently and with inner conviction.²⁸

God was pleased with his offering, and because of his faith, he still spoke after death (Heb. 11:4b). Hebrews 11:4 says that God was pleased

²³ Thomas J. Farrar, "The Devil in the General Epistles, Part 3: 1 John," *Dianoigo* 1, no. 2 (7 July 2014), 10-11, <https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/2843>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶ Grant Osborne, Philip W. Comfort, and Wendell C Hawley, *Cornerstone: Biblical Commentary*, vol. 13 (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House, 2007), 354.

²⁷ Longman III and Garland, 95.

²⁸ Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews* (Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), 184.

with Abel's offering rather than Cain's. Abel's sacrifice was better than Cain's. The writer of Hebrews mentions that Abel was a righteous and faithful man. However, does this text support the explanation given in Genesis 4:1-16? In the following description, the author will explain it.

Word Meaning Analysis of 'שָׁחָה' (Gen. 4:4b-5)

According to Barnhouse, God did not honour Abel because of what was in Abel, but because Abel believed in God's word about blood sacrifice.²⁹ In fact, according to the author, Barnhouse's views are not recorded in this text at all. Barnhouse may be quoting from several existing interpretations. No text says that God cared about Abel and his sacrifice because Abel believed in God's word. So, according to the author, this statement is not under what is recorded in the text.

The word 'heed', used by the Indonesian New Translation, comes from the Hebrew word שָׁחָה (sa'ah). The third person, singular, masculine imperfect form of the qal verb, with the connecting prefix ו (wa) which means *and*.³⁰ In its root word, the word שָׁחָה (sa'ah) means to look; respect; look away.³¹ Then literally, it can be translated; so God looked at or respected Abel and his sacrifice. God honoured Abel and his sacrifice. It should be noted that God's reasons for honouring Abel are not explained in this text either.

Then in the next verse, the sentence appears: "but for Cain and his offering he had no regard" (verse 5a ESV). Some have argued that Cain refused to offer vegetables because the offerings came from the ground that God had cursed in Genesis 3:17-19.³² God cursed the land where Adam and Eve lived when they sinned. And there, too, God cursed them. According to the author, this statement is reasonable. But once again, such a statement is not explained in this text.

The word relating to Cain comes from the Hebrew word לֹא שָׁחָה (lo sa'ah). The word לֹא (lo) means *no*.³³ So literally, it can be said that God does not look at or respect Cain and his offerings or God turned away from

²⁹ Donal Grey Barnhouse, *Genesis*, vol. 1 (Michigan: Zondervan, 1973), 32.

³⁰ WTM Morphology, *Word Analysis, In Bible Works Version 10*, s.v. "שָׁחָה".

³¹ Used in Job 14:6. Reinhard Achenbach, *Kamus Ibrani-Indonesia Perjanjian Lama* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2011), 351.

³² Willem A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, vol. 2 (Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 980.

³³ WTM Morphology, *Word Analysis, In Bible Works Version 10*, s.v. "לֹא שָׁחָה".

Cain and his sacrifices. Mention of Cain's name first and then his sacrifice is an important thing to note. According to the author, this means that God did not honour Cain and his sacrifice. This means that the word 'regard' (ESV) used for Cain and Abel in this text means honour or respect. God honoured Abel, then his sacrifice, and so did Cain. God did not respect Cain, then his sacrifice. This means that the personalities of the two figures become the benchmark or way for their sacrifices.

As a result, Cain's heart became very hot, and his face was gloomy (Gen. 4:5b). The word very hot here is taken from the Hebrew נִיָּהַר נִיָּהַר (Gen. 4:5 WTT) (wayyahar). The verb form qal waw, imperfect, third person singular, masculine, with the connecting prefix ו (wa). The word wayyahar comes from the root word חָרָה (harah), which means burning, burning (face, anger).³⁴ The meaning of 'hrh' in the *Dictionary of Old Testament* is hot (anger), burning rage.³⁵ So literally, it can be translated: Cain's heart was boiling and his face³⁶ was gloomy, or Cain's anger burned when God did not heed him and his offerings. In the end, he killed his younger brother, Abel (Gen. 4:8).

Integration

The book's author explains that Cain delivered or offered sacrifices to God from his agricultural products (verse 3). Based on the analysis, the offering provided by Cain was in the form of vegetables or fruits because it was by what the soil or earth produced—followed by his younger brother, Abel, who offered an offering of the firstborn lamb, namely the fat (verse 4a). There is a difference between land produce offerings (vegetables or fruits) and the firstborn of the sheep.

Then, in the following sentence, God heeded Abel and his sacrifice, but God did not heed Cain and his offering (verses 4b-5a). It should be underlined that the book's author says Abel is mentioned first and then his sacrifice afterwards. Likewise, with Cain and his sacrifice, Cain's name is mentioned first, then his offering. According to the author, this shows that the most important thing is the person and then the sacrifice. It's not that the sacrifice is unnecessary or not taken into account. God considers

³⁴ Ibid., s.v. "נִיָּהַר".

³⁵ VanGemeren, 266.

³⁶ The word 'face' in Hebrew is פָּנֶה (pene). WTM *Morphology, Word Analysis, In Bible Works Version 10*.

the person because the person's personality becomes the way for the sacrifice. Based on the analysis, God respects Abel more than Cain because this word heed has several meanings based on the Hebrew itself, namely, *sa'ah*, which means to look at or to heed (respect). In the LAI translation, use the word heed. So, the author uses the same word based on the analysis that has been done, namely, the word heed with a sense such as respect or respect.

There is another reason that God cared about Abel and his sacrifice while Cain didn't. From some of the literature and analysis conducted, according to the author, God respected Abel not because of his belief in God's word mentioned by Barnhouse, but God admired or respected Abel and his offerings because of Abel himself. Abel's person became the way for his sacrifice. Many Christian and even Jewish works of literature record Abel as the archetype of a righteous or righteous person in his life.³⁷ In Hebrews 11:4, Abel is included as a witness of the faith. Even Abel's name is written first in the text. The writer of the book of Hebrews says Abel offered sacrifices to God because he had faith. Elsewhere in different books, Abel is shown as the prototype of the righteous/faithful figure.³⁸ So it is the conclusions in the other parts of the book that support modern interpreters to focus on the differences in the characters of Cain and Abel amid the existing narrative information gap.³⁹ That faith made way for Abel and his sacrifice. The writer of Hebrews also said Abel was a righteous man. Once again, according to the author of this text (Heb. 11:4), mentioning Abel's personality (in this case, his faith) made God honour him and his sacrifice. It differs from Cain, who is a picture of human reproach.⁴⁰ The Palestinian Targums of this text (called Targum Neofiti, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Fragmentary Targum) describe Cain as the 'Renier'.⁴¹ A dissertation on Philo's (Alexandrian) popular interpretation of Cain notes that Philo focused on the person of Cain who associated

³⁷ John Byron, "Living in The Shadow of Cain Echoes of A Developing Tradition in James 5:1-6," *Novum Testamentum* 48, no. 3 (January 2006): 263-264. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685360677836372>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 264.

³⁹ John Byron, "Cain's Rejected Offering: Interpretive Approaches to a Theological Problem," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 18, no. 1 (2008): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0951820708096648>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁴¹ E. Grypeou and H. Spurling, ed., *The Exegetical Encounter Between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 101-102

with the meaning of his name, which refers to the word “ownership”.⁴² In this case, the name Cain describes the main ‘flaw’ in Cain, who considers everything his own and does not see it as belonging to God. For Philo, Cain describes people who ‘love themselves’ for all wealth, honour and authority.⁴³ Philo describes the view of the nature of Cain, who was indeed arrogant to see the sacrifice so that what was seen was that sacrifice was below the standard it should be.⁴⁴ While Philo’s point of view is unique, it is worth considering. According to Philo, this allegory certainly has a strong influence if it is associated with the narrative genre from the book of Genesis.⁴⁵ The big dilemma in interpreting this text is to look at why God rejected Cain and his offering. It must be admitted, as a book with a narrative genre, there is no definite record of why God did not respect (heed) Cain and his offering,⁴⁶ so it provides a large gap to be understood, especially for modern readers.⁴⁷ But in this case, God’s justice cannot be questioned because it would undermine the theology of His justice. That’s why traditional interpreters have focused on Cain.

If the offering was the reason God respected Abel and his sacrifice, the question is, “Was there a previous text that explained the standard for the offering?” The next question is if Abel is called a believer, is there a text in Genesis before the events of Cain and Abel which mentions Abel as a believer and Cain as an unrighteous person? The statement that Abel was a man of faith only appears in the New Testament in the text just mentioned (Heb. 11:4). Regarding Cain, who came from the evil one, it appears in 1 John 3:12, and according to the author of several views on the text of 1 John 3:12, Cain is called a person who comes from the evil one because Cain had killed his younger brother, Abel. It is difficult to answer

⁴² John Michael Shaw, “Philo of Alexandria and the Cain and Abel Narrative: Structure and Typology in Philo’s Exegesis of Genesis 4:1-8” (Dis., University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2017), 31-32.

⁴³ John Byron, “Living In The Shadow of Cain Echoes of A Developing Tradition in James 5:1-6,” *Novum Testamentum* 48, no. 3 (January 2006): 265-266. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853606777836372>.

⁴⁴ Grypeou and Spurling, ed., 120.

⁴⁵ John Michael Shaw, “Philo of Alexandria and the Cain and Abel Narrative: Structure and Typology in Philo’s Exegesis of Genesis 4:1-8” (Dis., University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2017), 33.

⁴⁶ Grypeou and Spurling, ed., 101.

⁴⁷ John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*, Themes in Biblical Narrative Jewish and Christian Traditions, v. 14 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 39.

the character or attitude of Cain and Abel in the context at that time because there are no similar or previous statements in this text. But from the author's thoughts from this narrative or this text, even though it is not mentioned in the text, God certainly knows how Cain and Abel thought at that time. Even before Cain killed his brother, God Abel must have known what Cain would do.

Then regarding the sacrifice, it only appears in Genesis 4. Indeed, if you pay attention to when God clothed Adam and Eve at that time, it is said that God used animal skins. That means there was blood that was sacrificed at that time, and according to the author, the sacrifice was an animal (Gen. 3:21). But it is difficult to understand whether this can be said to be a sacrifice or not or, whether this is the first standard of offering mentioned by God at that time, the author does not know. Once again, God's reason for not heeding (respecting) Cain and his sacrifice is specifically not explained in this text. Likewise, with Abel and his sacrifice. The author only thinks that the reason lies in the personalities of the two people who are "the way" for their offerings.

Conclusion

Regarding all the analysis results, the authors draw the following conclusions. First, the meaning of the word נָפַח is part of the incident of Cain, who was someone God already knew that he was the wrong person. God did not respect Cain and his sacrifice because his personality became the fence or barrier to his offering before God. Second, the meaning of the word נָפַח refers to God disrespecting Cain and his offering. God only respects or pays attention to Abel and his offerings. Third, the purpose of the word נָפַח is a benchmark in one's heart to offer sacrifices to God. The heart is quite essential in a person giving offerings to God. Fourth, Cain's status and offers imply that Cain should have loved his brother instead of killing him. Supposedly, Cain had to repair or correct himself before he came to God and offered his offerings to God. Cain should have thought that his person was a way to offer sacrifices to God.

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