



When Sayyiduna Aadam and Hawwa ('alaihimas salaam) came to live in the world and started having children, it so happened that they had twins from every pregnancy, one of the two being a boy, while the other, a girl.

When the issue of marriage came, since there was no one other than brothers and sisters - and a brother cannot be married to his sister - Allah Ta'ala instructed that the boy born from one set of twins should marry the girl born from the other set of twins and vice-versa. But, the girl born with the first boy, Qaabil, was beautiful while the girl born with the second boy, Haabil, was unattractive. When the time of marriage came, the unattractive girl born with Haabil fell to the lot of Qaabil according to the law. This enraged Qaabil. He turned hostile to Haabil and started insisting that the girl born with him should be given to him in marriage.

Sayyiduna Aadam ('alaih his salaam) did not accept the demand. However, to remove the division between Haabil and Qaabil, he proposed that they should both offer their respective sacrifice for Allah Ta'ala. Whoever has his sacrifice accepted will be the one to have that girl. He was certain that the sacrifice to be accepted will be the sacrifice of the one who has the right to marry her, that is, the sacrifice of Haabil.

In that era, an open sign of a sacrifice being accepted was that a fire would come from the sky and consume the sacrifice; and the sacrifice which was not consumed by the fire was the sign of its non-acceptance.

Haabil owned a flock of sheep and goats. He happily offered the sacrifice of the best and healthiest sheep he possessed. Qaabil was a grain farmer. He offered a few poor quality grains as his sacrifice. As was customary with them, a fire came from the sky and ate up the sacrifice offered by Haabil while the sacrifice offered by Qaabil remained lying where it was, untouched. Qaabil was further enraged and said to his brother: "I will kill you." Haabil responded in a peaceful manner: "Allah Ta'ala only accepts from those who possess taqwa (Allah consciousness)." That is, if you had been conscious of Allah Ta'ala, practising taqwa and piety,

your sacrifice too would have been accepted. Since you did not do so, the sacrifice was not accepted. Hence, why blame me for it? (Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 2, pg. 43 and Ma'aariful Quraan vol. 3, pg. 112)

Lessons:

1. If we desire that our qurbaani (sacrifice) be accepted in the Divine court, it is essential for us to adopt taqwa in every aspect of our lives, since the meat and blood does not reach Allah Ta'ala, rather it is the taqwa which is seen by Him.

2. When we see that Allah Ta'ala has given someone a particular blessing, we should regard our deprivation as a result of our own shortcomings and sins. Thus we should repent from our wrong ways instead of wishing and worrying about ways through which the other person could be made to lose the blessing that he is enjoying.