EMUNA: Can you design 7,275,650,514 different faces?

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Last week we explained what the Hebrew word Tsur (□□□) means when used referring to HaShem. We said that Tsur means “rock”, and it is sometimes used to refer to God as our Protector, like the rock that protects the soldier from the arrows of his enemies. But in its original metaphorical sense, Maimonides said, Tsur alludes to the rocky mountain, or the Mother-Rock from which all stones originate. Thus, when we refer to HaShem as Tsur, we mean to say that He is our Origin, our Creator. For example, in the Amida, we used this beautiful expression: TSURENU, TSUR HAYENU to say that “HaShem is our Creator, the Source/Creator/Origin of our lives. ”

Let us see now a third explanation of the word Tsur. This explanation is based on the fact that the word TSUR is grammatically associated with the word TSURA, form o design, and TSAYAR, designer, artist.

The Gemara in Berakhot analyzes the verse in Shemuel (I 2: 2) in which Hanna praises HaShem saying □□□□□□□ □□□ □□□ “There is no Tsur like our God.” Here, again, one could understand Tsur as Source or Origin. Hanna used this word in gratitude to God Who gave her a son, Shemuel. However our Rabbis made a derasha, a non-literal (or a literary) interpretation of the word Tsur. They said: Here we should understand Tsur (=creator) as Tsayar (=Artist or Designer). “There is no craftsman like our God.” The Gemara elaborates and says that while a human being can design nice figures or sculptures, only HaShem can design something as perfect as a human being, who breathes and thinks (like baby Shemuel, that HaShem just

gave to Hanna!). The Sages particularly praised the wisdom (or art) of our Creator referring to the phenomenon of pregnancy: HaShem can create a human being who breathes (Shemuel), inside another human being (Hanna).

In Masekhet Sanhedrin (38a) the Hakhamim formulated a similar idea, inspired by the same pasuq. They said: “when a person wedges coins, using the same mold, all are identical, but when HaShem designs people with the same mold, they all look different. ” HaShem uses the same exact mold: a nose, two eyes and a mouth, and with these few elements he designs over 7 billion different faces!

אין צור כאלקינו – אין צייר כאלקינו

When we say Tsur referring to HaShem, we need to remember that He is the Supreme Creator, the incomparable Designer of the world and its unique creatures.