The Creator and the Architect

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CREATION AND ARCHITECTURE

There is a beautiful Midrash that compares God, in the moment prior to Creation, with an architect who plans what he is about to do. The architect draws a plan of the complex building he wishes to build, visualizes it and calculates whether the foundations will be strong enough to support it. But then he realizes that no. That the foundations are not good enough, and sooner or later the building is going to fall … He keeps drawing, tries one thing and then another, until he finally finds the formula and determines what foundations the building needs to avoid collapse.

The Midrash uses this metaphor to explain that when HASHEM was about to create this world, thinking about the ultimate goal of creation, the complex human species, God realized that for HUMANITY to be a sustainable project, something supernatural had to be created. And what is that? TESHUBA, repentance. The revolutionary idea that you can go back and correct yourself. That human beings can ask for forgiveness from each other. And that we are able to forgive.

Without this DIVINE and supernatural attribute the human species would be destined to collapse. Like a building with a weak foundation.

A SUPERNATURAL IDEA:

But why do we say that repentance is a supernatural idea? What does it mean that Teshuba is so to speak “above” nature?

Simply because nature is cruel. That is, there are no regrets

in nature. There is no “reflection” before acting. There is no going back. Actions that living beings perform are not reversible.

The most important law in the natural world is the law of cause and effect.

In the physical world when a poison enters the body it does not stop out of compassion. Nature runs its course

In the natural world there is no regret or pardon for a crime. Why? Because in nature, there are no crimes. Animals cannot choose what they do. They are dominated by their instincts. The natural world is perfectly fine without “regret.”

AND HUMANITY?

With human beings it is different. God created human beings endowed with free will. That is, with the “supernatural” ability to choose our course. Human beings can do good works, and help and not only when it is convenient for us or when it is advantageous for our survival. Men have the ability to practice altruism, that is, to do good. In such a supernatural or unnatural way that sometimes we are willing to sacrifice our own existence, our survival, to do good.

But the flip side of freedom of choice is that we can also choose to do the wrong thing: lying, cheating, or harming another person. Now let’s think about this: what would happen to the human race if when an individual makes a mistake cannot go back. When someone makes the wrong decision, no matter how minor, and there is no possibility of amending it. For how long can a normal community survive without the possibility of Teshuba?

ARCHITECT

Comparing the Creator to an architect, the Midrash says that God understood that the civilization He was designing,

humanity, could not be sustained without the possibility of repentance. Imagine, for example, a society in which every mistake made is irreversible.

Can you imagine if forgiveness between husband and wife would not exist? Or between parents and children? Or between friends and colleagues? If there were no possibility of repentance, if every wrong action we commit automatically brought its consequences, without the possibility of going back, like poison entering your body, life would be unsustainable. Family would be unsustainable. Men would turn against each other and human civilization would disappear.

This is why HASHEM conceived TESHUBA, forgiveness. Which represents the founding idea without which human civilization would be destined to collapse.

In order for our society to sustain itself, we must learn to repent, we must learn to ask for forgiveness, and we must learn to forgive.