



## Learning and Discussion Sheet The Interdependence of the World

### 1. משנה מסכת אבות פרק ה משנה א

בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם ומה תלמוד לומר והלא במאמר אחד יכול להבראות אלא להפרע מן הרשעים שמאבדין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות וליתן שכר טוב לצדיקים שמקיימין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות:

Mishna Avot 5:1: By ten acts of speech was the world made. And what does Scripture mean [by having G-d say *say* ten times]? And is it not so that with a single act of speech [the world] could have been brought into being? But it is to exact punishment from the wicked, who destroy a world which was created through ten acts of speech, and to secure a reward for the righteous, who sustain a world which was created through was created through ten acts of speech.

### 2. The Nineteen Letters- Letter Three Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

It was not with just one word, one summons of creation, that the Almighty brought this world into being, the whole of it and every detail; for if it had been created in this manner, everything would be directly dependent upon G-d's Word for its existence, life, and functioning. Instead, He called forth His world into existence in ten stages; He created an abundance of forces, intermingled and functioning closely together, according to His Word - and then He separated them, so that each had to sustain the other: none was henceforth able to exist and function by itself, but had to be sustained by its fellow creatures and, in turn, had to help them exist and function. In this way everything contributes according to its strength, however much or little, to the existence of the whole; and if it destroys a fellow creature, it robs itself of what it needs for its own existence.

### 3. תומר דבורה – פרק ג

... שכמו שהחכמה העליונה אינה מבזה שום נמצא והכל נעשה משם, דכתיב (תהילים ק"ד, כ"ד) "כלם בחכמה עשית", כן יהיה רחמי האדם על כל מעשיו יתברך... ועל דרך זה לא יבזה שום נמצא מן הנמצאים, שכולם בחכמה, ולא יעקור הצומי אלא לצורך, ולא ימית הבעל חי אלא לצורך...

Tomer Devorah (Rav Moshe Cordovero) ch.3: Just as the Higher Wisdom does not disdain any creature, and causes everything, as it is written in Tehillim, "You made them all with wisdom" (Psalms 104:24), so should people's mercy be upon all G-d's works... Along these lines, a person should not treat anything disrespectfully, for all were made with wisdom. He should not uproot a plant except where necessary, and he should not cause the death of a living creature except where necessary.

### 4. בראשית רבה (וילנא) פרשה ה סימן י

... שנברא הברזל התחילו האילנות מרתתים, אמר להן מה לכם מרתתין, עץ מכם אל יכנס בי, ואין אחד מכם ניזוק.

Bereshit (Genesis) Rabbah ch. 5, sub. 10: When iron was created, the trees began to shake (with fear), he (the iron) said to them: "why do you shake? If your wood does not enter me (as an axe handle), not one of you will be harmed!"

### 5. רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ב הלכה ב

והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו, בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאוה תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול כמו שאמר דוד צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי, וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן מיד הוא נרתע לאחוריו ויפחד ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה שפלה אפלה עומדת בדעת קלה מעוטה לפני תמים דעות, כמו שאמר דוד כי אראה שמידך מעשה אצבעותיך מה אנוש כי תזכרנו, ולפי הדברים האלו אני מבאר כללים גדולים ממעשה רבון העולמים כדי שיהיו פתח למבין לאהוב את השם, כמו שאמרו חכמים בענין אהבה שמתוך כך אתה מכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם.

Rambam (Maimonides) Fundamentals of the Torah, 2:2: Now, what the way that leads to the love of him and the reverence for him? When a person contemplates his great and wonderous acts and creations, obtaining from them a glimpse of his wisdom, which is beyond compare and infinite, he will promptly love and glorify him, longing exceedingly to know the greatName of G-d. As David said "My whole being thirsts for G-d, the living G-d" (tehillim 42:3). When he ponders over these very subjects, he will forthwith recoil startled, conceiving that he is a lowly, obscure creature... as David said: "As I look up to the heavens thy fingers made... what is man that thou shouldst think of him?" (tehillim 8:4-5)...

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why was the world created with interdependence as such a fundamental part of its nature?
2. What can this interdependence teach us about our relationships with other people, and our relationships with the animals, plants and inanimate objects of creation?
3. What can we learn about G-d from the vast and complex nature of creation?

### **Compiled by Rabbi Daniel Brown**

English translations for source C1 taken from *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. Jacob Neusner. 1988, Yale University Press. New Haven and London.

Source C2 taken from *The Nineteen Letters*. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Translated Karin Paritzky, with commentary by Rabbi Joseph Elias. 1995, Feldheim. Jerusalem.

English translations for source C3 taken from the "Koren Tanakh" *The Holy Scriptures*. Revised and edited by Harold Fisch. 1997, Koren Publishers Ltd. Jerusalem.

English translation for source C5 taken from *Mishneh Torah Maimonides' Code of Law and Ethics*. Abridged and translated by Philip Birnbaum. 1944, Hebrew Publishing Co. New York.

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