1.

Adam fails when he holds Eve responsible: ‘The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate”’ (Genesis 3.12), and Eve fails when she blames the serpent: ‘The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate”’ (13). The essence of the sin is evading responsibility and pointing a guilty finger at others. The primordial sin combines the sin of succumbing to desire, the sin of pride, and the unwillingness to take responsibility for our failures.

2.

Protestantism and especially Calvinism and Lutheranism.

3.

The religious system that presented the idea of the primordial decree (predestination) as extreme determinism assigned the quest for signs of being chosen to the believer, and these signs were materialistic and earthly.

4.

The doctrine of the primordial decree also guided the Puritans in all aspects of their lives. The Puritans were the Calvinists’ direct successors, and built ‘New England’ (Massachusetts), which became the cradle of American culture (Rotenberg 1994, 33-38). This prompts an interesting question – did belief in the primordial decree shape the lives of all Massachusetts colonialists ; indeed, the decree denotes determinism, which entails no probability for success in the Puritans’ endeavours, notwithstanding their renowned industriousness. How can this dichotomy between primordial decree and values of Puritan heritage – beliefs that still rank high on the ladder of American values, such as ‘everyone is the master of his own destiny’ and ‘America as land of infinite opportunities’ – be resolved? How can free will and determinism operate simultaneously? A possible answer, reminiscent of Weber’s arguments, will focus on the centrality of work. Because work had become the arena in which one could identify God’s omen, it became the purpose and means to serve God. Obsessive labour is the response to irrational, religious, and existential anxiety (Illouz 2002, 44). Rotenberg explains this differently by employing “unconscious motivation” (Rotenberg 1994, 38) – a term that became enrooted in modern psychiatry. That is, I am motivated, which indicates free will, but this is unconscious will because it is affected by something deterministic.

5.

In Protestant movements such as Calvinism, Lutheranism and Puritanism.

6.

Human failure, as we have seen, appears already in the Book of Genesis and constitutes a fundamental religious concept in Western culture. A man who lives with a sense of failure and guilt will search with all his might for comfort and signs of being chosen. Man must succeed – this is a deep, fundamental postulation in Western culture, which became more significant in the capitalist consumerist culture, a culture that markets, guarantees and is driven by success. The current privileged status of success has an extreme impact on individuals’ self-esteem in Western culture. In contemporary culture, in which success is a supreme value, failure is unbearable.

7.

Illouz, E. (2002) *The Culture of Capitalism* (Hebrew). Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense.

Dear Catherina and Regina,

Thank you for all the professional and thorough work you have invested in my article, for the second time. I am attaching my final version after addressing your comments.

Much thanks for everything

Bina