
IF ARCHITECTURE IS A LANGUAGE,
THEN A BUILDING IS A STORY

Eliezer Armon

The background of the page is an abstract composition. It features a large, solid blue rectangular area on the right side, which is bordered by a thin grey line. To the left of this blue area, there are two horizontal grey bands. Two pieces of translucent, slightly textured tape are applied horizontally, one on each grey band, overlapping the blue area. The text is positioned in the lower-left corner, within the grey area.

This unique monograph delves into the intriguing and beguiling architectural works of Eliezer Armon. Armon's work constantly searches for the source and origin of creativity, and his view is that there is a perfect cognitive alignment between architecture and military leadership—in that they share elements of creative structural response. This book illuminates Armon's tremendous capacity for conceptual creativity and offers a rare glimpse into an original mind for interpreting landscape, faith, culture, art, and the martial arts, into an architectural body of work.

IF ARCHITECTURE IS A LANGUAGE, THEN A BUILDING IS A STORY



*Dedicated with great love to the memory of my dear parents, Moshe and Miriam Armon,
may they rest in peace, and to my wife Ruti, my life partner and friend,
my sons Itay and Asaf and to my brother Hillel. May they live long.*

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Abraham's Well International Visitors' Center — The airborne tent's wing

The architecture as creator of a place and as a storyteller

The engineer designs a construction. The builder builds it and makes it real. Both are mainly focused on the physical dimension. The physical existence of their work is, to them, what measures their success. The architect focuses on something different. He is required to create a place. What is it, which turns a spot in a space or a site into a *place*?

A building can successfully provide a physical function such as a shelter from rain and wind. However, success in this dimension, important as it is, could still be far from creating a place. What is required then, to turn a spot or location into a *place*?

It is said of Abraham, on his way to the offering: "Then on the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance" (Genesis 22:4). We do not know, nor we will ever know, what Abraham saw when he realized that it was not just another mountain but the "place God had told him about."

However, once a place is selected for a constitutive heroic occasion, then the place becomes meaningful to us, too.

It is noteworthy that Mount Sinai, where the Torah was given with an unprecedented revelation of God, was never mentioned as a Place, only as a Mountain. Indeed, a constitutive event happened in both locations. To my understanding, what makes the offering location unique as a place is the role Abraham and Isaac played to state this Mountain as *the place*. This is their work and conduct at a moment of noble devotion, which defined the location as *place*, in their eyes and in the eyes of the generations to come.

When Jacob arrived there, on his way from Beer-Sheva to Paddanaram toward Haran, he was not aware that he reached a certain spot that had already been turned into a Place by his Fathers, as it is written: "When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set" (Genesis 28:11), and in the morning, still under the impression of his night dream, he stated: "How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:17). Acknowledging the special connection of the "local stones and gate of heaven," Jacob stated that this was "the House of God."

This is what the architecture aims for when forming a place, creating a meeting point for supposedly opposite entities: between heaven and earth, material and spirit, material and form, light and shadow, empty space and full space, desert and civilization, sea

and land, light and darkness, between the sacred and the profane. "The highest heavens belong to God, but the earth he has given to man" (Psalms 115-116).

However, the architect aspires to create meeting points and connections. An expression and demonstration of this is found in Eli Armon's architecture creation.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Or Hachayim interprets it by comparing it to "the one who wished to build a palace and started by collecting stones, wood and earth for the building, and then he would build the house. And so is God, blessed be He, who created all needs of the world at once and prepared it, and all was all packed with jumble." Then He started to organize everything and you will find that when He wanted to create the heavens, He said "Let it be an expanse in the waters," which means that He fixed it then a place, though it had been created right at the beginning. We learn that the Place is formed by featuring the tensions the architect works within and in unique creation that aspires to the balance spot, the one that determines unique order to place the materials in their special and unique place for each project. This also demonstrates how series of events become poetic by the storyteller.

The difference between inspirational stories to the ones lacking inspiration often depends on the order the storyteller chooses to place his creation. In this sense, not only does this book represent a series of architect Eli Armon's architectural achievements, but also provides a statement on his work in retrospect by attempting a story narrative that looks at the tale of creation. Thus, a new creation is formed, designed by choosing the picture angle, by editing the order of the pictures, and by writing words that interlace into a melody of structure and creation.

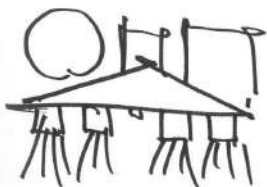
Armon's lyrical and philosophical points of view add another dimension to his architectural works that have created a texture of inspiration spots and have already turned into Places throughout our country.

Gershon Hacohen

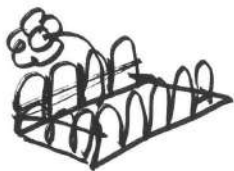
I never dreamt I would become an architect.
I thought to become a judge, a policeman or a soldier.
I was looking to instigate law, order, justice, honesty,
The right way and truth.
Today I am an architect.
It is almost the same thing,
Making order in the world of shapes,
The function, the contents, the idea.
Weigh, assemble all and express them
In three dimensions, balance
And do justice for all.



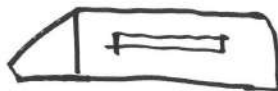
Law, order, justice, honesty, truth.
My father, Moshe Armon, may he rest in peace.



Ramot Sportive Community Center,
Beer-Sheva



El-Zahara School, Lod



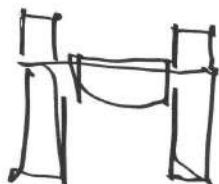
Holon-Wolfson Railway Station, Tel Aviv



Ministry of Agriculture & Rural
Development, Gilat Farm



Yod Alef Community Center,
Beer-Sheva



Omer Comprehensive School



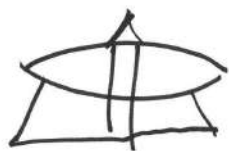
Lehavim-Rahat Railway Station



Abraham's Well Visitors' Center,
Beer-Sheva



Kindergarten and Center for
the Care of the Elderly, Meitar



The Gymnastics Hall,
Omer Comprehensive School



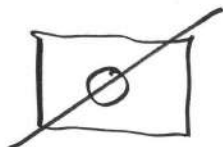
Central Railway Station, Beer-Sheva



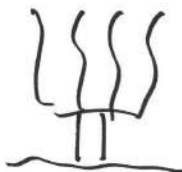
Yad Sara, Beer-Sheva



Culture Hall, Omer



Department of Public Works,
Beer-Sheva



Officers' School Synagogue,
Mitzpe Ramon



Instead of the Prologue

Each Letter is Bursting
Bearing a letter and a sign within,
Source for inspiration, a spring.
I have chosen to express my buildings
First, through letters, as stories,
And then, allowing the building to spring out of them,
Like a fountainhead.
Letters for poetry
Are like bricks for a building.
Both build stanzas and houses,
One for the book
The other for the town.
And thus I choose to plan my buildings
As stories.
They stand in the public library
While the streets serve as shelves.

Eliezer Armon



Ashkelon, City of Wine, 2020

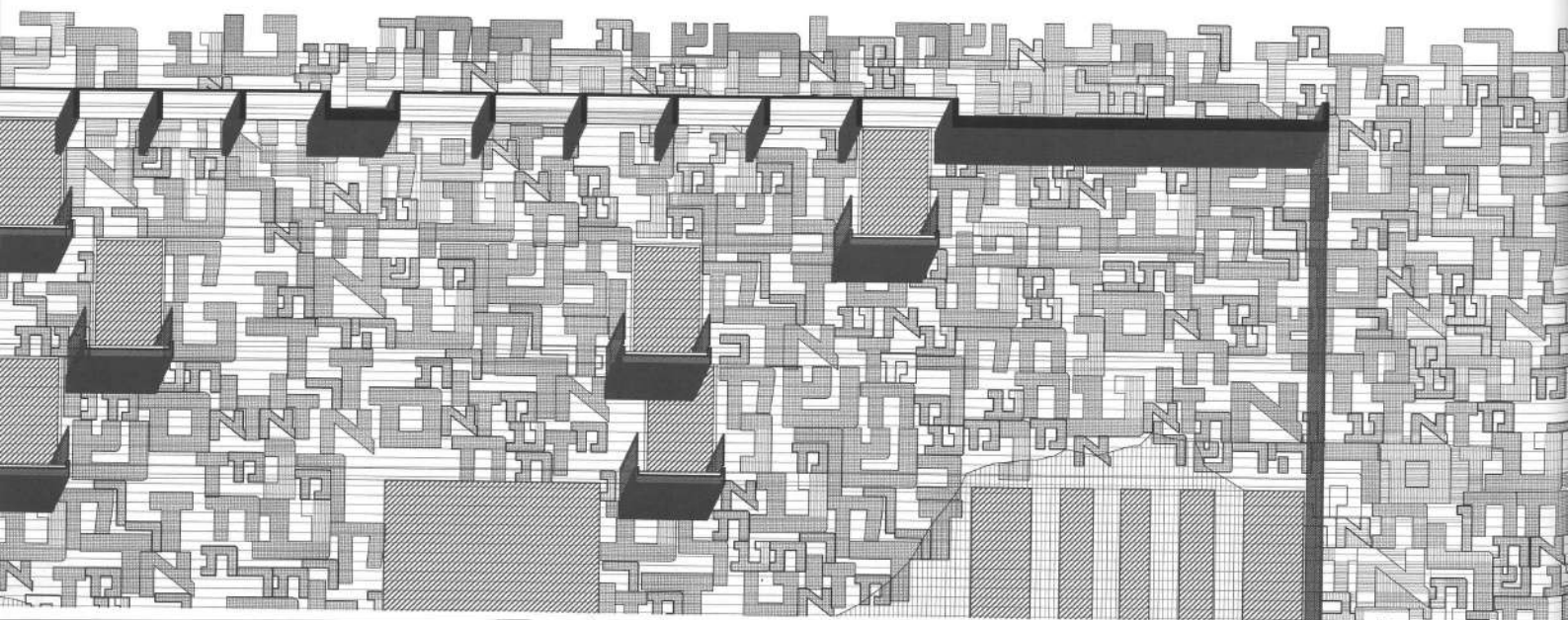
Between the Architect and the Warlord

Why do people say the victorious architect,
Not the victorious engineer?
I asked my friend, General Gershon Hacohen,
And could not guess where this question would lead to.
Because one small question
Opens an aperture to a long journey
Of much more than a thousand words.

Below: "Wall of Letters"

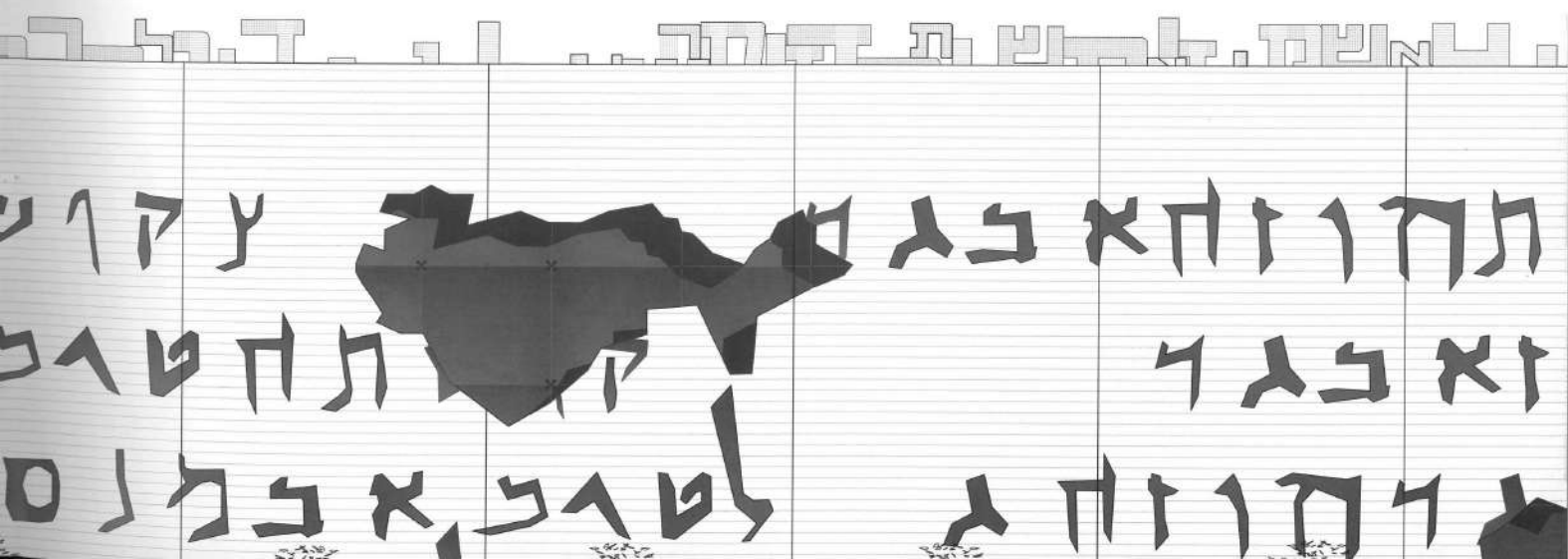
Right: A part of the façade of the wall facing the Shrine of the Book

From the competition of the National Library, Jerusalem



The Spring

Dinosaurs became extinct,
Kingdoms vanished,
Giant corporations toppled,
Celluloid disappeared.
Only the Letters and The Book
remain.



Between בריאה* and Creation

(*This term has no direct English translation, but the closest meaning is 'to originate')

God בָּרָא the universe.

He created man in His own image.

Something from nothing is בְּרִיאָה,

Something from something is creation.

The divine power.

In His image man was formed.

”בְּרִאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ”

“In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth”

בראשית א' 1:1



Above: Holon-Wolfson Railway Station
Right: The Dead Sea



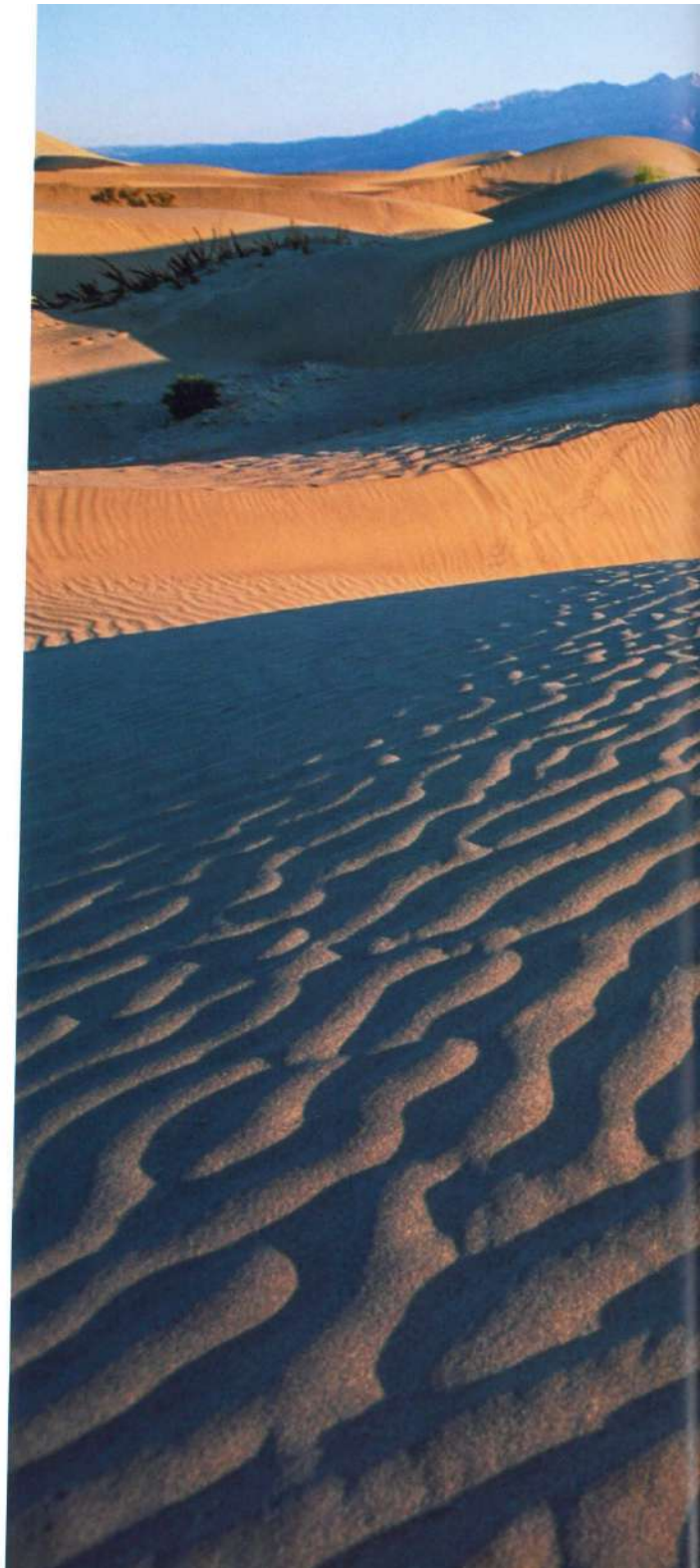


On the Sequence of Appearance

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and void. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

At the end of the fifth day, the order was complete,
A time to form.

And God formed man from dust out of the ground,
and breathed life into his dust,
As order was prior to creation.





Creation is God's Art

In His image man was formed

Creativity is a divine resource

And creation is His way of expression on earth.

It is the connection which again comes into existence between heaven and earth,

Between the divine light and our souls,

Its impact and the intensity of its revelation are the proof for the existence of God.

It is not in vain that Michelangelo is named — The Divine.



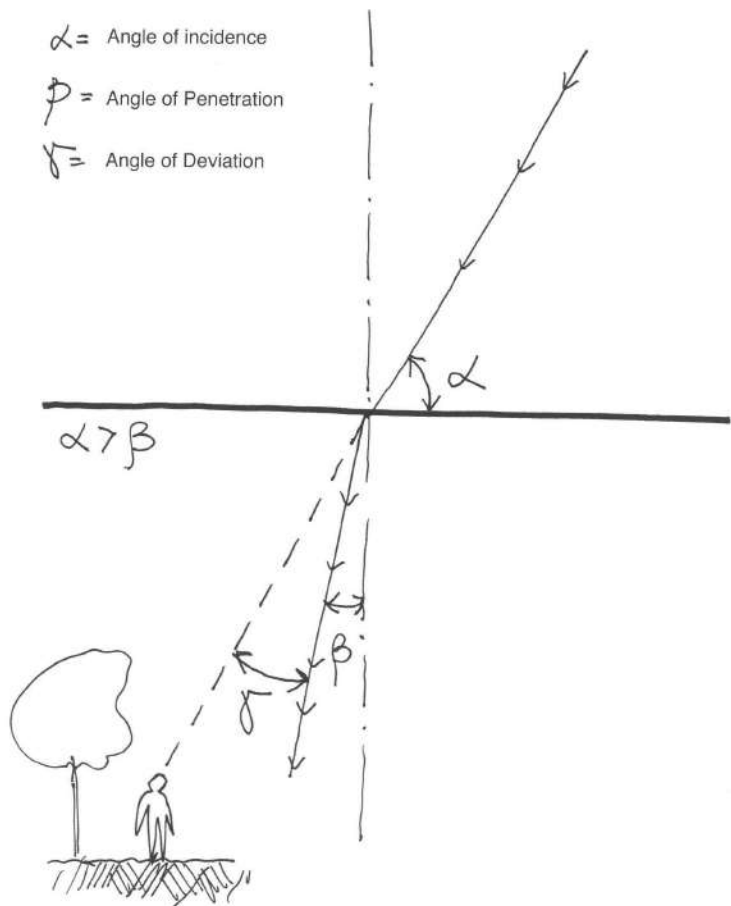
On the Order of its Arrival

When walls are cracked
Ray of light emerges.
Source of revelation — kernel of creation.
Artists will create and never know the secret.
Prophets will envision and never know the source.

The Fracture, Foyer, Yad Sara

On Emptiness

From whence cometh my help (Psalms 121:1)
The divine light will emerge
In the emptiness
Without disturbance
With complete purity
The space of possibilities,
The homeland of creation.



The sketch depicts a ray of light emerging from between materials of differing densities.

On the Material

It all happens when water and light are joined
Rainbow of colors — Material of creation,
Covenant between God and man,
And when we create,
We renew and reunite
With Reshimo.

Note: Reshimo is a Kabbalist term describing the state after present reality disappears.

