

Death, Love, and Life in the Thought of Franz Rosenzweig

Answering the Call of Love

Shmuel 1, Chapter 18

- 1) When [David] finished speaking with Saul, **Jonathan's soul became bound up with the soul of David; Jonathan loved David as himself.**
- 2) Saul took him [into his service] that day and would not let him return to his father's house.—
- 3) **Jonathan and David made a covenant, because [Jonathan] loved him as himself.**
- 4) Jonathan took off the cloak and tunic he was wearing and gave them to David, together with his sword, bow, and belt.

Devarim 7

- 7) It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that God grew attached to you and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples;
- 8) but it was because God favored you and kept the oath made to your fathers that God freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Yechezkel 16

- 1) The word of GOD came to me:
- 2) O mortal, proclaim Jerusalem's abominations to her,
- 3) and say: Thus said the Sovereign GOD to Jerusalem: By origin and birth you are from the land of the Canaanites—your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.
- 4) As for your birth, when you were born your navel cord was not cut, and you were not bathed in water to smooth you; you were not rubbed with salt, nor were you swaddled.
- 5) No one pitied you enough to do any one of these things for you out of compassion for you; on the day you were born, you were left lying, rejected, in the open field.
- 6) When I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you: “Live despite your blood.” Yea, I said to you: “Live despite your blood.”
- 7) I let you grow like the plants of the field; and you continued to grow up until you attained to womanhood, until your breasts became firm and your hair sprouted.
You were still naked and bare
- 8) when I passed by you [again] and saw that your time for love had arrived. So I spread My robe over you and covered your nakedness, and I entered into a covenant with you by oath—declares the Sovereign GOD; thus you became Mine.

בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק ג

- (ח) וישמעו את קול יְקוֹק אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּגֶן עֵדֶן הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְקוֹק אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן:
- (ט) וַיִּקְרָא יְקוֹק אֱלֹהִים אֶל הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה:
- (י) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת קִלְעִי שָׂמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן וַאֲיָרָא כִּי עֵירָם אָנֹכִי וְאֶחְבֵּא:
- (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵירָם אָתָּה הַמֵּן הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לִבְלֹתִי אֶכֶל מִמֶּנּוּ אָכַלְתָּ:
- (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה הָאֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הוּא נָתַנָּה לִּי מִן הָעֵץ וְאָכַל:
- (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקוֹק אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה זֹאת עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הִנְחִישׁ הַשֵּׂיטָאֲנִי וְאָכַל:

Bereshit, Chapter 3

- 8) They heard the sound of God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the Human and his wife hid from God among the trees of the garden.
- 9) God called out to the Human and said to him, “Where are you?”
- 10) He replied, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”
- 11) “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?”
- 12) The Human said, “The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”
- 13) And God said to the woman, “What is this you have done!” The woman replied, “The serpent duped me, and I ate.”

בראשית פרשת וירא פרק כב

- (א) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי:
- (יא) וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְּאֵף יְקוֹק מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי:

- 1) Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test, saying to him, “Abraham.” He answered, “Here I am.”
- 11) Then a messenger of called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he answered, “Here I am.”

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“Where are you?” This is nothing else but the question about the You... The I discovers itself at the moment where it affirms the existence of the You, through the question about where it is. It discovers itself—and not the You. The question of the You remains a mere question.

The man hides, he does not answer, he remains mute, he remains the Self as we know it. The answers that God finally gets to his questions are not answers; the answers to the divine question of the You are not an I, not an “It is I,” nor an “it is I who did it”; rather, instead of the I, it is a HeShe-It that comes out of the answering mouth; the man objectifies himself in order to become “the male human”; the woman, for her part, totally objectified as woman who is “given” to the man, is the one who did it, and she then throws the guilt on the last It: it was the serpent.

Hasidism and Modern Man. 161-162

Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the rav of Northern White Russia (died 1813), was put in jail in Petersburg, because the mitnagdim had denounced his principles and his way of living to the government. He was awaiting trial when the chief of the gendarmes entered his cell. The majestic and quiet face of the rav, who was so deep in meditation that he did not at first notice his visitor, suggested to the chief, a thoughtful person, what manner of man he had before him. He began to converse with his prisoner and brought up a number of questions which had occurred to him in reading the Scriptures. Finally he asked: "How are we to understand that God, the all-knowing, said to Adam: 'Where art thou?'" "Do you believe," answered the rav, "that the Scriptures are eternal and that every era, every generation and every man is included in them?" "I believe this," said the other. "Well then," said the zaddik, "in every era, God calls to every man: 'Where are you in your world? So many years and days of those allotted to you have passed, and how far have you gotten in your world?' God says something like this: 'You have live forty-six years. How far along are you?'" When the chief of the gendarmes heard his age mentioned, he pulled himself together, laid his hand on the rav's shoulder, and cried: "Bravo!" But his heart trembled.

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The Self needs to be charmed by a more powerful spell than the mere question about the You for it to open its mouth saying I. In the place of the indefinite You, in the place of mere allusion to which man only answers by mere allusions—the woman, the serpent—the vocative now appears, the call... the proper name. The proper name, which is not exactly a proper-name, not a name which was given arbitrarily to the man, but the name that God himself took for him and which for this reason only—to be a creation of the Creation—properly belongs to him. To God's question: "Where are you?" the man still remained a You, as a defiant, obstinate Self; when called by name twice, with the strongest fixity of purpose to which one cannot remain deaf, the man, totally open, totally unfolded, totally ready, totally—soul, now answers: "I am here." Here is the I. The individual, human I.

תולדות יעקב יוסף דברים פרשת כי תצא

כי הנשמה הוא בחינת השם, כמו ששמעתי ממורי, ונתן מופת - בקריאת שמו והוא ישן נתעורר מהשינה וחוזרת הנשמה לגופו וכו'. וזהו שרימז הרמב"ם עוררו ישינים, והכוונה כאמור.

Star of Redemption. p. 201

With the call of the proper name, the world of Revelation enters into real dialogue; in the proper name, a breach is opened in the fixed wall of thingliness. That which has its own name can no longer be a thing or everyone's thing; it is incapable of being entirely dissolved into the genus, for there is no genus to which it could belong; it is its own genus unto itself. It no longer has its place in the world, or its moment in the becoming; rather, it carries with it its here and its now; the place where it is a center, and the moment where it opens its mouth is a beginning.

Understanding the Sick and the Healthy. 80-82

When, then, is a name required, and what happens to man when his name is spoken? Here, again, the answer is simple. It can be seen most clearly in the case of the somnambulist [one who is sleep-walking] or a person only half alive. He is forced into the presence of mind, to the internal, to himself. And where was he before? He dwelt in the past, in the "external," completely dominated by it. He was a particle in the world, ruled by its laws- laws which are always laws of the past and which always act from without. His name liberated him from these laws. It recalls him from the world in which he was imprisoned, and returns him to his Self which, once his name is uttered, is free of the past, devoid of the external. Suddenly, hearing his name spoken, man knows that he is himself. He recognizes that he has the ability to begin again...

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...The invitation to listen, the call by the proper name and the seal of the divine speaking mouth—all this is only introduction, the preliminary to every commandment, fully articulated beforehand only so that it can precede the one commandment, which is not the highest of the commandments, but is really the only one, the sense and essence of all the commandments that ever may have come out of God's mouth. What then is this commandment of all commandments?

The answer to this question is known to everyone; millions of lips testify to it evening and morning: "You shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might." You shall love—what a paradox in these words! Can love be commanded? Isn't love destiny and being deeply touched, and if it is free, isn't it a free offering? And now it is being commanded? Surely, love cannot be commanded; no third party can command it or obtain it by force. No third party can do this, but the One can. The commandment of love can only come from the mouth of the lover. Only the one who loves, but really he can say and does say: Love me. From his mouth, the commandment of love is not an strange commandment, it is nothing other than the voice of love itself.

תחת התפוח עוררתיך דרש פלטיון איש רומי ואמר: נתלש הר סיני ונצב בשמי מרום, והיו ישראל נתונים תחתיו שנאמר: (דברים ד') ותקריבון ותעמדון תחת ההר.

Shir HaShirim Rabbah 8:5:1

Under the apple tree I awakened you. Palatyon of Rome expounded and said: Mount Sinai was detached and stood in the heavens, and the Jews were placed underneath it, as it says (Deuteronomy 4), "And they approached and stood under the mountain."

תורה אור, ד"ה חייב אינש

שהרי ביציאת מצרים היו עדיין בבחי' קטנות (כמש"ל בד"ה זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק כו') ואיך יבאו לבחי' בטול גדול כזה הנה לזה היה ענין שכפה עליהם הר כגיגית שהוא בחי' וימינו תחבקני דהיינו התגלות אהבה העליונה מלמעלה על ישראל כמ"ש אהבתי אתכם אמר ה' (ע' בד"ה ועשית בגדי קדש מש"ש בפ' אהבתי אתכם כו') שאהבה זו תחבקני לכנס"י ומקפת אותו מכל צד אפי' לבחי' אהוריים עד שאינו מניחו לפנות ממנו ומוכרח להיו' עומד עמו פב"פ. דהיינו שע"י אהבה עליונה זו נתעורר ג"כ האהבה בנשמות ישראל עד שבאו למעלה ומדרגה שהקדימו נעשה כו' וכמ"ש כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם אל האדם פי' לב האדם העליון הוא מ"ש ועל דמות הכסא דמות כמראה אדם שהוא בחי' רמ"ח מצות עשה דאינון רמ"ח אברים דמלכא. ושס"ה לא תעשה הם שס"ה גידים. אל האדם היינו בחי' אדם שבבי"ע כמ"ש ודמות פניהם פני אדם. הנה הוא כמים הפנים לפנים דהיינו שע"י התגלות אור האהבה מלמעלה בחינת אהבתי אתכם על ידי זה מתעורר גם כן האהבה מלמטה למעלה והוא העלאת כנסת ישראל בכלות הנפש אליו ית' (וכמ"ש משכני אחרוך נרוצה כו'). ולכן נק' כנסת ישראל כלה ע"ש כלות הנפש וכמ"ש אחותי כלה מה טבו דדיך מין כו'. וזהו ענין על כל דבור פרחת נשמתן. שע"י הדבור והגילוי מלמעלה פרחת נשמתן בבחינת בטול לאור א"ס ב"ה. (ועיין מ"ש כיוצא בזה בפרשת לך לך בפ' מארז"ל בשעה שהדבור יוצא מפי הקב"ה חשות. חשות היינו בחי' שתיקה ובטול כו'). וזהו ענין שכפה עליהם הר הוא בחינת אהבה עליונה שנק' הר (כמ"ש במ"א בענין אברהם שקראו הר. ובענין אהרן א' ה"ר נ'). כגיגית שהוא בחי' דבר המקיף סחור כל עלמין שע"י נתעורר בהם האהבה (ובזה יתורץ מה שאומרים מקדש עמו ישראל על ידי חופה וקדושין. והקשו למה שינו הסדר להקדים חופה לקדושין. אלא כי החופה הוא בחינת מקיף והוא ענין שכפה עליהם הר כגיגית שזה בחינת התגלות המקיף כנ"ל. ולכן הוצרך להקדים החופה לקדושין שכדי שיבואו לקבלת התורה שהוא בחינת הקדושין הוא על ידי המשכת המקיף תחלה שעל ידי זה באו לבחינת הבטול להקדים נעשה כו

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Marriage is not love. Marriage is infinitely more than love; marriage is the fulfillment on the outside, in it love comes out from its blissful inner completeness and stretches out its hand, in a helpless and unquenchable longing- Oh, would that you were my brother...