

Destructive Separations: Of Leaving Eden, in Cloths

Rachel Sharansky Danziger * October 12th 2021 * Bereshit: The Birthplace of Human Relationships #2

1: Close, yet other

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Family Redeemed*:

The uniqueness of man-*persona* expresses itself in the *mysterium magnum* which no one except God can penetrate. In order to escape loneliness, man-*absconditus* had to meet woman-mystery. They have a lot in common... However, they are also different... The I-awareness in Adam is totally incomprehensible to Eve, and vice-versa. Each of them has a secret which neither will ever betray. Man-*persona* and Woman-*persona* resemble each other and at the same time do not understand each other. She is *ezer ke-negdo*, his helper and his opponent at the same time. For man and woman differ not only psychologically as male and female, of whom the first account of creation tells us, but also spiritually and personality-wise... Because the woman is not the shadow of man but an independent persona, because the woman projects a totally different existential image, her companionship helps man to liberate himself from his loneliness. In the interpersonalistic existential tension both man and woman find redemption. (21-22)

2: The first cracks

Genesis 3:1-6

(1) Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?” (2) The woman replied to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. (3) It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: ‘You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.’” (4) And the serpent said to the woman, “You are not going to die, (5) but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know^a good and bad.”

(6) When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

בראשית ג':א-ו'

(א) וְהַנָּחַשׁ הָיָה עָרוֹם מִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-הָאִשָּׁה
אָף כִּי-אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ
הַגָּן: (ב) וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל-הַנָּחַשׁ מִפְּרִי
עֵץ-הַגָּן נֹאכְלִים: (ג) וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ-
הַגָּן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא
תִגְעוּ בוֹ פֶּן-תָּמוּתוּ: (ד) וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחַשׁ אֶל-
הָאִשָּׁה לֹא-מוֹת תָּמוּתוּ: (ה) כִּי יִדַע אֱלֹהִים
כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכַלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וּנְפַקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם
וְהִיִּיתֶם כְּאֱלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע:
(ו) וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמֹאכַל וְכִי
תְאוֹהֶה-הִוא לְעֵינַיִם וּנְחֻמָּד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׁכִּיל
וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִיָּו וַתֹּאכֵל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם-לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּה
וַיֹּאכֵל:

3. The rejected suitor

Rashi on Genesis 3:1

AND THE SERPENT WAS MORE SUBTLE — What connection is there between the following narrative and the statement just made? The latter should have been followed by: “and He [the Lord God] made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them” (3:21), but Scripture informs you with what plan the serpent assailed them: he saw them naked and unashamed and he coveted her (Eve) (Genesis Rabbah 18:6).

Genesis 2:18-20

(18) The LORD God said, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him.” (19) And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. (20) And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found.

Genesis 1:24-26

(24) God said, “Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind.” And it was so. (25) God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good. (26) And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.”

בראשית ב' י"ח-כ'

(יח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הֵיטִיב הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: (יט) וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאָדָמָה כָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הָאָדָם לְרִאיוֹת מֵהֵיאָרָא-לּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא-לּוֹ הָאָדָם נִפְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: (כ) וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְלָאָדָם לֹא-מָצָא עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:

בראשית א' כ"ד-כ"ו

(כד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נִפְשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינֶיהָ בְּהֵמָה וְרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינֶיהָ וַיְהִי-כֵן: (כה) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינֶיהָ וְאֵת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינֶיהָ וְאֵת כָּל-רֶמֶשׂ הָאָדָמָה לְמִינֶיהָ וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: (כו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְלַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

4: An expanding chasm

Genesis 3:7-13

(7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

(8) They heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. (9) The LORD God called out to the man 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) Then He asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?”

(12) The man said, “The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” (13) And the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done!” The woman replied, “The serpent duped me, and I ate.”

Genesis 2:4-7

(4) Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven— (5) when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, (6) but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth— (7) the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

בראשית ג': זי-י"ג

(ז) וַתִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֹמִים הֵם וַיִּתְּפוּרוּ עֲלֵיהֶם תְּאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת:

(ח) וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מְתַהַלֵּךְ בְּגֶן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגֵּן: (ט) וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵיכָּה: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת-קוֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֶן וְאִירָא כִּי-עֵרַם אָנֹכִי וְאֶחְבֵּא: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵרַם אָתָּה הַמִּזְהֵעַץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵבִלְתִּי אֶכְל־מִמֶּנּוּ אֶכְלָתִּי:

(יב) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִיא נָתַתְנָהּ לִי מִן-הָעֵץ וָאֶכְלָתִּי: (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאִשָּׁה מַה-זֹּאת עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הִנְחַשׁ הִשְׁיֵאֲנִי וָאֶכְלָתִּי:

בראשית ב': די-ז

(ד) אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עָשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם: (ה) וְכָל וְשֵׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֶם יִהְיֶה בְּאֶרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֶם יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אִין לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאָדָמָה: (ו) וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת-כָּל-פְּנֵי-הָאָדָמָה: (ז) וַיִּצֹר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֶפְרָה מִן-הָאָדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

5: Where responsibility dies

Rabbi Lord Jonathans Sacks, "Taking Responsibility":

Many of the great religions and civilisations are based on acceptance...Judaism was and remains the world's great religion of protest. The heroes of faith did not accept; they protested... That is how God wants us to respond. *Judaism is God's call to human responsibility.* The highest achievement is to become God's partner in the work of creation.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God called out "Where are you?" As Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, pointed out, this call was not directed only to the first humans.[2] It echoes in every generation. God gave us freedom, but with freedom comes responsibility. God teaches us what we ought to do but He does not do it for us. With rare exceptions, God does not intervene in history. He acts *through* us, not *to* us. His is the voice that tells us, as He told Cain, that we can resist the evil within us as well as the evil that surrounds us.

The responsible life is a life that responds. The Hebrew for responsibility, *achrayut*, comes from the word *acher*, meaning "other." Our great Other is God Himself, calling us to use the freedom He gave us, to make the world that is more like the world that ought to be. The great question, the question that the life we lead answers, is: which voice will we listen to? Will we heed the voice of desire, as in the case of Adam and Eve? Will we listen to the voice of anger, as in the case of Cain? Or will we follow the voice of God calling on us to make this a more just and gracious world?

6: A hidden structure

1. The soil's distress and man's creation. Man placed in the garden by the tree of life.
2. Seeking an 'ezer kenegdo' for man, naming the animals as well as the "Ish" and "Isha", who are naked.
3. The snake's seduction, Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit.
4. Adam and Eve hide and make excuses to God.
 - 3a. God punishes the snake, Adam and Eve.
 - 2a. Adam renames Eve, God clothes Adam and Eve.
 - 1a. Adam and Eve are exiled from the garden and barred from the tree of life, sent to toil the soil:

Genesis 3:22-24

(22) And the LORD God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" (23) So the LORD God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. (24) He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

בראשית ג': כ"ב-כ"ד

(כב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הֲלוֹ הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאֵתְד מִמֶּנּוּ לְדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה פֶּן־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מִעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וַתִּי לְעֵלָם׃
 (כג) וַיִּשְׁלַחֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים מִגֶּן־עֵדֶן לְעַבְדֹת אֶת־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִשָּׁם׃ (כד) וַיִּגְרַשׂ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁפֹּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגִן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֶת־לַהֲט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לְשָׁמֹר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים׃ {ס}

7: Cementing the distance

Genesis 3:16-19

(16) And to the woman He said, “I will make most severe Your pangs in childbearing; In pain shall you bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” (17) To Adam He said, “Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ Cursed be the ground because of you; By toil shall you eat of it All the days of your life: (18) Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you. But your food shall be the grasses of the field; (19) By the sweat of your brow Shall you get bread to eat, Until you return to the ground— For from it you were taken. For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”

בראשית ג': ט"ז-י"ט

(טז) אֱלֹהֵי־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר הַרְבֵּה אֲרִבָּהּ
עֲצוּבוֹנָהּ וְהִרְוִיחַ בְּעֲצָב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים
וְאֶל־אִישׁוֹ תִּשְׁוָקֶתָּהּ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ׃
(ס) (יז) וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל
אִשְׁתְּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ
לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה
הָאֲדָמָה בְּעֲבוּרְךָ בְּעֲצָבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה
כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃ (יח) וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר
תִּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה׃
(יט) בְּזַעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם עַד
שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָקַחְתָּ
כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב׃

Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep*, 3:

The official history of desire begins here: “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”. With these words, God declares Eve’s destiny: a melancholy sketch of the relation of power and desire. Desire is associated with vulnerability. To desire is to lose autonomy; the desired other acquires a sovereignty to which one surrenders in spite of the pain that inevitably ensues.

Genesis 3:20-21

(20) The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. (21) And the LORD God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

בראשית ג': כ'-כ"א

(כ) וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי הִוא
הִיְתָה אִם כָּל־חַי׃ (כא) וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כַּתְנָוֹת עוֹר וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם׃ (פ)

8: Where relationships take place

Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 7-9:

ANY THEORY of love must begin with a theory of man, of human existence. While we find love, or rather, the equivalent of love, in animals, their attachments are mainly part of their instinctual equipment; only remnants of this instinctual equipment can be seen operating in man. What is essential in the existence of man is the fact that he has emerged from the animal kingdom, from instinctive adaptation, that he has transcended nature — although he never leaves it; he is a part of it — and yet once torn away from nature, he cannot return to it; **once thrown out of paradise — a state of original oneness with nature — cherubim with flaming swords block his way, if he should try to return. Man can only go forward by developing his reason, by finding a new harmony, a human one, instead of the prehuman harmony which is irretrievably lost...**

Krystyna S. Aune and R. Kelly Aune, “Entertaining, Becoming, and Loving” (in: *The New Psychology of Love*), 25:

...relating is a verb, not a noun. Likewise, “personing” is a verb, not a noun. We, too, are not static, unchanging individuals over the course of our lives... an important characteristic of the most successful pair-bond relationships is not simply accepting our partners... Successful relationships develop because we do change over time. We change in large part because interacting with our partners changes us, and our relationships thrive because we embrace, value, and even celebrate the changed in ourselves.

Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep*:

Problems, crisis, conflict, instability – these are the very substance of narrative... narrative is often radically at odds with the utopian state of closure... Miller argues that “closure” and “narratability” are essentially in conflict... Such a fiction, then, is a “perverse” project, since it longs to eliminate the narratable... Since “only insufficiencies, defaults, deferrals, can be ‘told’,” the very idea of a narrative of happiness is put in question. For to bring the narrative to a state of fulfillment is, virtually, to end it. (354-256)

...this world is the world of narrative, while the hereafter represents closure... Narrative and closure are incongruous worlds; but they yearn for each other. In the world of narrative, ultimate meanings are veiled; desires and fears, multiple possibilities, suspense, insufficiency keep the story going. But when the end comes, nothing further can develop; all is arrested in the condition to which its turbulent history has brought it. (357)