Prayer as the Act of Relationship

1) Genesis – Chapter 2, verses 4-7

Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven—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, but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth—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.

Rashi (ad loc) – verse 5

(ה) was yet on the earth: Every word in Scripture has the meaning of “not yet,” and it cannot be made into a verb form, as one says חטא האם he is the one who has sinned. This verse proves this, as well as another verse (Exod. 9:30): “You will not yet fear.” This verse too should be explained to mean that [no tree] was yet on the earth (Targum Onkelos) when the creation of the world was completed on the sixth day, before man was created.

neither did any herb of the field yet grow: [i.e.,] not yet grown. And on the third [day], where it is written: “Let the earth bring forth,” they [the plants] had not yet emerged, but they stood at the entrance of the ground until the sixth day. And why?

Because... not caused it to rain: Because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain, but when man came and understood that they were essential to the world, he prayed for them, and they fell, and the trees and the herbs sprouted. — [from Chul. 60b]
The constant prayer of the neshama strives continually to move from hidden to revealed, to spread over all the forces of life of the spirit and of the vital soul, and all the powers of embodied life. She yearns as well to reveal her essence and the power of her actions over all her surroundings, over all the world and life, and toward this end we require the accounting of the world which comes through Torah and wisdom. And so we find that the whole work of the Torah and all its wisdom is the constant revelation of the hidden prayer of the neshama.

“Let the breath of all life (nishmat kol chay) bless Your name, oh Lord our Gd…”

The neshama is the highest spiritual aspect, the outpouring of the life of thought and will which rises up in Divine elevation (see Olat Reiyah I p.15)

The ruach is the will (ibid p.250), the dwelling place of the intellect (ibid p.119)

The nefesh is the essential foundation of natural life (ibid p.17), and the dwelling place of the will (ibid).

And R’ Yaakov said in the name of R’ Chisda ‘anyone who requests mercy for their fellow does not need to mention their name.’ [Berachot 34a] The impact of everyone’s prayer on themselves is determined by the extent of the moral readiness which it affects, through which they become better prepared to receive their request. And the need which arouses one to pray is always calibrated by the highest wisdom to actualize precisely that particular feeling which one needs in order to prepare their true completion. But prayer for one’s fellow is...
measured according to the extent of the relationship of the one praying to the one prayed for, and even more - according to the extent of the lofty and actual nearness of the seed of Israel one for the other. Therefore, it is not relevant to mention the name of the one who needs mercy, because the effect of prayer is not due to the stature of the one who requires mercy but rather to that of the one who prays, whom the one who needs mercy finds relating to them. It is due as well to the moral value found in praying for another, which combines with the benefit of prayer itself, that it be complete in its conditions which perfect the consciousness of the true Gd and His service.

**Divine**

4) Ibid - 4:13

The impact of prayer comes through her aspect of joining to Gd. This joining makes the form similar to its Maker (Bereshit Rabah 24:1), absorbed into its transcendent power. And the special quality of joining to the Divine is that the very image with which this joining is conceived, effects its action in a more tangible manner. Expressed prayer is the manifestation of the idea and the desire that something be done, and this expression comes facing God. The reality of this joining is according to the measure of the developed knowledge of Godly matters, and the refinement of actions and traits which precede it. Then the all-embracing oneness is revealed, the spiritual mastery which increases right and proper lovingkindness shines forth in the abundance of its colors, “You shall decree a thing, and it shall be established for you; and the light shall shine upon your ways.” (Iyov 22:28)

5) Ibid - Orot Hakodesh 1:38

In regard to the highest knowledge there is no place to ask – how do you know? When we find within our soul a transcendent spirit, a storehouse of well-ordered knowledge, fit one to another, this is the highest of clarifications. Any knowledge which comes through investigation is only a means to arrive at this highest knowledge, which bubbles up from within the deepest depths of the soul. And the means most fit for achieving this transcendent quality is cleaving to Gd, with every power, and the sense founded in the secrets of the Torah.

6) Martin Buber – Selections from “I and Thou”

Whoever says You does not have something for his object. For wherever there is something there is also another something; every It borders on other Its; It is only by virtue of bordering on others. But where You is said there is no something. You has no borders.

Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation........
The world as experience belongs to the basic word I-it. The basic word I-You establishes the world of relation........

The basic word I-You can be spoken only with one’s who being. The concentration and fusion into a whole being can never be accomplished by me, can never be accomplished without me. I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You. All actual life is encounter......

Extended, the lines of relationship intersect in the eternal You........

Men have addressed their eternal You by many names. When they sang of what they had thus named, they still meant You: the first myths were hymns of praise. Then the names entered into the It-language; men felt impelled more and more to think of and talk about their eternal You as an It. But all names of Gd remain hallowed – because they have been used not only to speak of Gd but also to speak to him.