חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

KARLIN · CHAYEI SARA, BEIT AHARON

What really made Avraham great in his old age

Beit Aharon

Avraham's greatness as "elder of his house" came not from age but from his service, through which he drew the Tiferet (Divine Splendor) of the Holy One, blessed be He, into every physical thing, and this hadar (splendor) passed on to Yitzchak and Rivkah, who embodied it just as the techelet (sky-blue thread) in the tzitzit (fringes) elevates all colors into Divine Beauty. Ultimately, the entire purpose of creation was bound up with Avraham, since the generations of heaven and earth are read as being "through Avraham," making his and his descendants' hadar central to the world's existence. AI SUMMARY

Avraham was old, advanced in years, etc. And before this it is written, "Avraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." The explanation is that "Sarah" is "sar Hashem" (minister of God). This is the machshavah (thought) that is called Sarah, for it is minister over the dibbur (speech). "And they were advanced in years" — meaning, they began to be revealed in days.

"It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women" (Genesis 18:11) — behold, "nashim" (women) is a term of forgetting (sheichechah), as is known. That is to say, the thought does not wish for forgetting. "And Avraham was old, advanced in days" (Genesis 24:1) — meaning, he was already old/elder with respect to the middot (character traits) that are called "days." "And he said to his servant, the elder of his house" (Genesis 24:2) — his service alone is what made him "elder of his house." And in what way was he "elder of his house"? In that he ruled over "kol asher" (all that he had) — for he drew the Tiferet (Splendor) of the Holy One, blessed be He, over every physical thing.

It is stated in the midrash: "Let your work be seen by your servants" (Psalms 90:16) — this refers to Avraham and Sarah. "And your glory upon their children" — this refers to Yitzchak and Rivkah, as she said, "Who is this man..." (Genesis 24:65), etc. Another interpretation: "And your glory upon their children" — this refers to the techelet (sky-blue thread) that is in the tzitzit (fringes) that Yisrael wear, and they are called "children" to the Makom (the Omnipresent). So far [the words of the midrash].

We may say the following: It is stated that the Holy One, blessed be He, wished for Avraham and Sarah to be created first, but He said: when they sin, who will repair them? Therefore He said: I will first create Adam and Chavah, and when they sin, Avraham and Sarah will repair them. Although this is not fully understood, and we know nothing at all, in any case the essential purpose of creation was for the sake of Avraham, as it is written, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created (behibar'am)," which may be read "through Avraham (be-Avraham)." Thus Avraham is called "the generations of the heavens and the earth." This is the essential work of the Holy One, blessed be He.

And "the way is upon their children" — for children are called hadar (splendor/adornment). For Yitzchak was made with hidur (splendor), and Rivkah, when she merited to marry him, was

certainly also possessed of hidur. Rashi explains on "and she saw Yitzchak" — she saw him as hadur (resplendent).

And it is stated in the midrash that before Rivkah there was no woman who had been "nivelah lishmonah" (married by eight, i.e., preceded by eight generations of such unions). Although we do not know, and no one among us knows, exactly what this means, nevertheless it is known to all that what is called "nivelah lishmonah" is precisely what is called hadar — as in "the fruit of a splendid (hadar) tree," which refers to the etrog. For this reason the eighth king is called "Hadar," and the name of his wife was Mehetabel, daughter of Matred, daughter of Mei Zahav. And Rivkah, who saw him as hadar, is likewise called hadar. This is the meaning of "vehadarach al banehem" — "and your splendor (hadar) is upon their children," referring to Yitzchak and Rivkah.

Another interpretation: this refers to the techelet (sky-blue thread) of the tzitzit. For there are several colors, and when the Israelites wear them, all the colors are elevated to the Holy One, blessed be He, and are brought into the Tiferet (Divine Beauty). Therefore the techelet is called hadar. And the Israelites wear them, for they are called "children" to the Omnipresent.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)