חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

SOCHATCHOV · SHEM MISHMUEL, CHAYEI SARA

Why Sarah insisted on keeping her two sons apart

Shem MiShmuel

Sarah's insistence on separating Yishmael from Yitzchak ("Drive out this maidservant and her son") reflected a spiritual discernment that their conflict replayed the struggle between Kayin and Hevel, with Yitzchak's eventual Akeidah (Binding of Isaac) rectifying Hevel's death. Just as shaatnez (the mixture of wool and linen) echoes the differing offerings of Kayin (flax) and Hevel (flock), Sarah understood that Yishmael and Yitzchak, like Kayin and Hevel, could not remain joined together, and so she acted to keep them apart. AI SUMMARY

In Tanchuma: Avraham eulogized Sarah with the entire passage of "Eshet Chayil" (a woman of valor), and on the verse he expounded "wool and linen" with regard to Yitzchak and Yishmael, as it is said, "Drive out this maidservant and her son." The explanation of the matter is as follows: In the writings of the Arizal, it is stated that Yitzchak, through the Akeidah (Binding of Isaac), rectified the sin of Hevel, and therefore he was thirty-seven years old, corresponding to the numerical value (gematria) of the name "Hevel," which is thirty-seven.

Now, Rashi writes that Yishmael used to quarrel with Yitzchak over the inheritance, saying, "I am the firstborn and I will take a double portion." They would go out into the field, and he would take his bow and shoot arrows at him, as in the verse, "Like a madman who shoots firebrands," etc.

From this it appears that there was present in Yishmael the aspect of Kayin, who killed Hevel. According to this, Yishmael and Yitzchak correspond to Kayin and Hevel. This is the meaning of "wool and linen": for Kayin brought his offering from the seed of flax, while Hevel brought from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat.

Sarah sensed this and separated between them, in keeping with the prohibition of shaatnez (mixing wool and linen), "wool and linen together" — understand this.

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