חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

KOZHNITZ · TOLDOT, AVODAT YISRAEL

Why did Yaakov credit G-d for his blessing so quickly?

Avodat Yisrael

Drawing on the Midrash and the Gemara's teaching that a person's table takes the place of the altar, the author reads Yaakov's reply to Yitzchak, that it happened "because Hashem your G-d" caused it, as a humble attribution of the blessing to his father's merit, since Yitzchak ate in holiness and performed yichudim (unifications) through his meals. The author also finds in the numerical hints of Yitzchak's words, spoken through ruach hakodesh (the holy spirit), an indication that the blessing flowed from chesed (lovingkindness) and that the gevurot (severities) agreed to it. AI SUMMARY

"And he said: 'How is it that you were so quick to find, my son?'" It is stated in Midrash Rabbah: "You hurried to find the blessing, my son. Your father was blessed at the age of seventy-five, and you are sixty-three years old."

"And he said: 'Because Hashem your G-d caused it to happen before me.'" Rabbi Yochanan and Resh Lakish [disagree]. One of them said: If it was for your offering, the Holy One, blessed be He (HaKadosh Baruch Hu), provided it for you, as it is said, "And Avraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram" (Bereshit 22:13), [provided] for your food, how much more so [for the blessing]. And the other said: If it was for your match (zivug), He provided it for you, as it is written, "caused it to happen," etc.

Now, although Yitzchak did not clearly know that this was Yaakov his son, nevertheless the words came out of his mouth through the ruach hakodesh, as though he knew, in line with the words of the Midrash cited above: "How is it that you hurried to find the blessings?" In their words they hinted: "Your father was blessed at the age of seventy-five." Seventy-five is, in gematria (numerical value), Kohen (priest), and he is from the side of chesed, and from there the blessings came to him. But he still did not know whether the gevurot (strengths, severities) had agreed. "And you are sixty-three years old" hints at the Name of sixty-three, which is in Imma (the Mother), and it appears that the gevurot agree to your blessing.

This is what he wondered about: from where did he merit this? And Yaakov answered him in the way of humility, as is the way of the upright, who belittle themselves and attribute things to the merit of others. He said, "Because Hashem your G-d caused it to happen," that is, in your merit, for you are the one who serves Hashem and bequeaths goodness to children.

He hinted further: If for your offerings He provided [the ram] for your food, how much more so [here]. For Yaakov knew the holiness of his father, who ate in holiness and purity and performed wondrous yichudim (unifications) through his eating. He also hinted at what we have already said, based on what they said in the Gemara: a person's table takes the place of the altar.

We add to this and magnify the greatness of the table by a kal vachomer (an a fortiori argument): If the altar, which was nothing but earth and wood, causes the one who brings an offering upon it to be regarded as having brought a fire-offering, a

pleasing aroma to Hashem, how much more so one who eats in holiness and purity, and through his eating is strengthened to engage in Torah and in avodah (divine service). Is it not right that the table should atone for him?

And so too is the view of the other, who said, "If for your match." And understand.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5.5)