חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

SUDILKOV · DEGEL MACHANEH EPHRAIM, TOLDOT

Why a personal lack is really a lack in G-d's presence

Degel Machaneh Ephraim

Drawing on the Zohar's teaching that children depend on mazal (fortune) rather than merit, the author reads Yitzchak's prayer "opposite his wife" (lenochach) as a prayer that resolves a lack in the Shechinah, so to speak, whose completion through the alef of Adonai (the letter that brings daat, knowledge, and so yichud, unification) makes birth possible. Along the way, the author links the numerical value of atar and nochach to mazal, and treats Chazal's teaching on mazal as the key to the verse's wording. AI SUMMARY

"And Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife," etc. "And Hashem was entreated by him, and Rivkah his wife conceived." There are profound matters here, in line with what my revered grandfather, whose soul is in Eden, may the memory of the righteous be a blessing in the life of the World to Come, said: all things come from the Shechinah (the Divine Presence), so to speak. Every lack a person has, he should understand to be a lack in the Shechinah, so to speak, blessed be He and blessed be His name, as he illumined our eyes in this matter with expansiveness of mind. Therefore in all our prayers we must pray that the lack of the Shechinah, so to speak, be filled, and then his own lack will automatically be repaired.

This is the meaning of "the tzaddikim (righteous ones) are the emissaries of the Matronita." Through their own lack, the tzaddikim understand that there is a lack in the Shechinah corresponding to theirs, and they unify her with a complete yichud (unification). It is evident that all unions come about through daat (knowledge), and therefore a union is called by the name daat, as in "And Adam knew," etc. And daat is the alef. This is the "ayeh" in the Musaf of the holiness of Shabbat; see there, in the kavanah (intention) of the Ari, of blessed memory.

This is also the meaning of "Also, without daat the soul is not good." "Good" means the union, as is known, in line with what they said, "Say of the righteous that he is good." So "without daat the soul is not good" means that no union can take place without daat. Only through daat, which is one, are they unified and bound together in union. It is known that Adonai is din (judgment), and the alef of Adonai sweetens the dinim and raises malchut (sovereignty) ascent after ascent. For the alef is daat, and through daat yichud is made, as above, because it sweetens the dinim at their root. Understand this.

And when yichud is made, birth comes about. And it is called by the name Ima. It is known that the name Adonai in its fillings has the numerical value of 671 (תרע"א). When the alef is missing, that is, when malchut, which is Adonai, is without yichud, it is 670 (תר"ע).

This is what is alluded to in the verse "And Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife." That is, he understood this through his wife, who was not bearing, a parallel to this, that there is a lack, so to speak, in the Name, in that the alef is missing and "atar" (עתר) remains. This is "vaye'atar laHashem." It means that he prayed that the Master of the World, the alef, be joined to atar, and from this 671 (תרע"א) is made, which is the "gate of the heavens," for the

heavens enter there, because "there Hashem commanded the blessing," and there they beget. Understand this.

This is "And Hashem was entreated by him": his prayer ascended, and yichud, union, and birth took place there, through the alef, which is the Master of the World, being joined to atar, as above. Automatically, "Rivkah his wife conceived," for as it happens in the upper world, so it happens in all the worlds. Understand this well, for through this "Rivkah his wife conceived," since "life, children, and sustenance depend on mazal (fortune)," which is "ayeh," as stated in the Musaf of Shabbat in the kavanah of the Ari, of blessed memory. The wise will understand.

Or one may say: "And Yitzchak entreated Hashem opposite his wife," based on the statement of Chazal (our Sages). This also resolves the word "lenochach" (opposite), since it should have said "on behalf of his wife." For Chazal said: children, etc., do not depend on merit but on mazal. See in the holy Zohar what the matter of mazal is. Now Yitzchak was the bechinat (the aspect of) merit, which is the fourth chamber, as is known, and he needed to pray for children, but children do not depend on merit. So he had to pray "lenochach," because nochach (נכח) has the same numerical value as mazala (מזלא), since the matter depends on mazal. Understand this well, for I have been brief.

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