חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

LUBLIN · TOLDOT, DIVREI EMET

Why did Yitzchak's humility bring blessings beyond mazal?

Divrei Emet

Drawing on Rabbi Moshe Alshich's explanation that the blessing came from the side of chesed (lovingkindness), the author teaches that Yitzchak's humility at Be'er Sheva drew down children, life, and sustenance from beyond mazal, since Israel has no mazal of its own. Building on the familiar saying that three things come only when the mind is distracted, and on a midrash that reads "living water" through a gezerah shavah, he connects lowliness of heart with the wisdom that is "found from nothing" and with the awe (yirah) that the wells represent. AI SUMMARY

It seems that I have already written this. Further, "and he entreated Him" etc. For it is stated regarding Elisha that he spoke to the Nukva (the feminine aspect), and because of this the son was not viable, and he then needed to revive him. Here, Yitzchak prayed opposite his wife, and nevertheless He, may He be blessed, answered him properly, "and He granted his entreaty," so that the child would be viable. As stated: Knesset Yisrael (the Community of Israel) asks improperly, and the Holy One, blessed be He, answers her properly.

"Sojourn in this land" etc. In brief, "sojourn" (gur) denotes awe and also has the sense of gathering, for through fear of Heaven one acts to gather Israel. For it is attached to the root of Knesset Yisrael, which is the name Adonai, for the attribute of malchut (sovereignty) and lordship includes all Israel, since all of them have awe, as they do not rebel against Him, G-d forbid, each according to his awe. And afterward comes the matter of the wells, as we explained, and it seems to me that I wrote in the earlier books, up to "and he went up from there to Be'er Sheva," which is awe with great vitality.

"And Hashem appeared to him that night." This is seemingly puzzling, [for why should it inform us] that it was at night? But it refers to the awe of exaltation, which is called Be'er Sheva. "And He said, Fear not": you no longer need awe, "for I am with you" etc. "And I will bless you" etc. "for the sake of Avraham My servant," so that the abundance would pass through Avraham. (And above it is written, "because Avraham listened to My voice," and not "for the sake of"; note this well.)

In the midrash (rabbinic exegesis) on "And they told him about the well" etc.: We do not know whether they found or did not find. From what is written, "and they found there a well of living water," it follows that they found living water, and this is very puzzling. Is it not written, "and they said to him, We have found water"?

It seems to me that I already wrote the explanation of the wells, that they refer to deeds, speech, and thoughts; see there. And afterward, "and he went up from there to Be'er Sheva" is the awe close to it, and it is the Sanctuary of Hashem. And this is "and Hashem appeared" etc., "and He said, Fear not" etc., meaning that he should not conduct himself with awe, for "I am with you" is a higher level.

"And he built there an altar": that is, he understood there humility, to slaughter his inclination, for He, may He be blessed, said to him "for the sake of Avraham My servant," implying that he himself was not worthy. In truth, this was not to deduct from his merits, and it was so that it would come from the side of chesed, as explained by Rabbi Moshe Alshich, of blessed memory.

"And he called in the name of Hashem": through attaining greater humility, he drew down, from the realm of mazal, children, life, and sustenance, something from nothing, for Israel has no mazal, as above. "And he pitched his tent there": that is, he drew down his light (through what he bestowed upon the world).

"And the servants of Yitzchak dug a well there": and this is the well about which afterward "they told him" etc. Now it is stated: Three things come only when the mind is distracted: the Messiah, a find, and a scorpion. We explained this to mean that a person should not consider himself great and knowledgeable, but should be lowly in his own eyes. The Messiah: for when we become lowly in our own eyes there will be peace in the land, as opposed to baseless hatred, which still dances about. A find: this is wisdom, which "is found from nothing."

A scorpion (akrav): this is two words, ak, an expression of trouble, and al rav, the elder who will serve the younger. (And it is also simple that a person must not despair of calamities; then of itself it will not come upon him.) And according to what we explained about the wells above, that I wrote that He, may He be blessed, said to him, "I am with you," and that he pitched his light as above, "and they dug there" means to draw down so that there would be a flowing source of wisdom that gives life to its possessor. And this is "living water," lovingkindness from the intellect, which is called life.

And this is why it is not known whether they found, for this is wisdom, the "find" mentioned above. For it is written only "we have found water," and not "living," except through a verbal analogy (gezerah shavah), in the manner of midrash.

"The voice, the voice" etc. One may say that the term "hands" means my hands, what I have accomplished: even though a person has neither the voice of Torah nor of prayer, the money and the bribe that he gives to Esav will avail. And this is "the hands of Esav." For if it were not so, is that not the main thing? That is to say, that he decrees with his mouth.

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