חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

APTA · OHEV YISRAEL, VAYERA

Why did God appear to Avraham while he sat at the tent entrance?

Ohev Yisrael

Avraham's humility led him to feel unworthy of the Shechinah's resting presence, so that even in his own heart he saw himself as still standing at the entrance of the tent while Mamre alone received the Divine Presence. The author presents this as the constant experience of the tzaddikim, who serve God all their days yet feel they have not yet begun. AI SUMMARY

"Hashem appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre." The explanation is that our father Avraham, peace be upon him, was so humble in his own eyes that he thought in his heart that he himself was unworthy of the resting of the Shechinah (the Divine Presence). Only Mamre, the tzaddik (righteous one) who serves Hashem, may He be blessed, was worthy, and the resting of His Shechinah, may He be blessed, was with him. Avraham himself had not yet reached this level. This is the meaning of "appeared to him": that is to say, this is how it always appeared to him in his heart and thoughts.

"Hashem by the terebinths of Mamre" means that Hashem was by the terebinths of Mamre. That is, the resting of His Shechinah, may He be blessed, was only with Mamre, because he was a tzaddik who served Hashem, may He be blessed, in truth, while Avraham was still outside and had not entered into holiness. This is the meaning of "and he was sitting at the entrance of the tent": in his thoughts he was still at the entrance of the tent of holiness.

This is also the way of the tzaddikim. Even though they serve Hashem all their days, nevertheless it truly seems to them, in their hearts and thoughts, that they have not yet begun to serve Hashem, may He be blessed, at all. They are still outside the tent of holiness, standing only at the entrance of the tent.

And the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious. With this the question of the Or HaChayim is resolved; see there.

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