חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

ZHITOMIR · OHR HAMEIR, VAYERA

Why did Avraham split the wood for the offering?

Ohr HaMeir

Drawing on the Alshich's reading of "and he placed him on the altar, on top of the wood," the Ohr HaMeir teaches that Avraham's splitting of the wood was a first revelation of divine service, in which he acted in the physical world while hinting at a spiritual altar above, so that the Temple sacrifices and the ongoing avodah of every generation were already present in his deeds, with the hidden becoming physically revealed. AI SUMMARY

"And Avraham arose early in the morning, etc. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, etc." It is known that in every generation, when people prepare their hearts to seek Hashem, and unify themselves in accordance with their recognition, they cause His yichud (unification), may He be blessed.

Avraham Avinu, peace be upon him, opened the beginning of avodah (divine service). He is called Ezrach, meaning that he was the first to shine (zarach), the first radiance in the world, in order to show us the aspects and modes of the Creator's avodah and the hints of the Torah. "And he split the wood for the burnt offering" means that he, together with the aspect of his avodah, was then beginning to split the wood of the burnt offering that would exist in the time of the Temple. For reason dictates that, since he was the first revelation, showing created beings how to serve the Creator, we must say that he hinted to us the very essence of the avodah, from then until the future, with all its actions. He did everything below and hinted above.

This accords with what is found in the Alshich on the verse "And he placed him on the altar, on top of the wood". The substance of his words is this: the lower altar was truly physical, made of physical wood. But the main intention of Avraham Avinu, peace be upon him, was to act below and hint above. The upper altar is spirituality, a bright light. This is the meaning of "he placed him on the altar", the upper altar, which is spiritual, "on top of the wood", that is, above the lower altar of wood, which is physical.

It turns out that he then began to show, and he split the aspect that was destined to be hinted at in the splitting of the wood of the burnt offering that would exist in the time of the Temple. And in truth it is taught that the ashes of Yitzchak are piled up before Him, may He be blessed, from generation to generation until the coming of the Redeemer.

Now, after he had attained the aspect that was destined to be, with his action and his service in splitting the wood of the burnt offering, what is written? "And he took the wood of the burnt offering, etc." This is meant to hint that at first there was only the aspect of splitting alone, which indicates the beginnings of revelation, from concealment to the revealed, as mentioned: "and he split the wood of the burnt offering." Afterward, "and he took the wood of the burnt offering" refers to actual wood, as the words imply, because they then came to a physical revelation, out of the concealment of spiritual and bright lights, to the whole world, on the altar of wood. And he hinted

then, to show those who would come into the world, the aspect of their avodah until the coming of our Messiah, amen.

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

