חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

POLNOYE · TOLDOT YAAKOV YOSEF, VAYERA

How God's presence with Avraham reaches the world

Toldot Yaakov Yosef

Reading the oath of Avimelech and Pichol as a hidden allusion to the divine attributes, the author holds that God's presence with Avraham flows through chesed (lovingkindness), which conveys the flow downward and sustains malchut (sovereignty), the land that the Zohar and Bava Batra call Avraham's daughter, so that the oath becomes a request that this kindness never fail to bring forth chochmah (wisdom) in the world. Citing his teacher, the author also explains that a tzaddik (righteous one) who engages in Torah and prayer among wicked people can scatter their falsehood, and reads "if you deal falsely with me" in that light. AI SUMMARY

On the verse "At that time Avimelech and Pichol, the commander of his army, said to Avraham: God is with you in all that you do. Now swear to me, etc., that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring, or with my posterity; according to the kindness that I have done with you, you shall do with me and with the land in which you have sojourned" (21:22-23). The questions are many.

Now I heard from my teacher: when there are several wicked people in a city or country who conduct themselves with falsehood, and among them is a tzaddik (righteous one) who conducts himself with truth, then when he engages in Torah and prayer and attaches himself to truth, all the workers of iniquity and falsehood will be scattered, etc., and ודפח"ח. This is the meaning of "if you deal falsely with me." Understand this.

In truth, according to the inner way, it seems to me: "And Avimelech said" (A-vi Me-lech) refers to Hashem, may He be blessed, who is called chochmah (wisdom), in the mystery of "Abba founded the daughter," who is malchut (sovereignty). "Pichol" (Pi Chol) is the joining of yesod (foundation) and atarah (the crown), who is called "the commander of his army." "To Avraham" is the attribute of chesed (lovingkindness), through which the flow passes in order to bestow below, and through it "the north freezes the waters and the south dissolves them," etc. (Zohar I, 29b, 161b).

This is the meaning of "God is with you in all that you do": the tikkun (repair) and the making of malchut, who is called Elokim, is through chesed, in the mystery of "And a throne shall be established through chesed" (Isaiah 16:5), and in the mystery of "Shield of Avraham" mentioned in the writings (Pri Etz Chayim, Sha'ar HaAmidah, ch. 17). This is also the meaning of "Avraham had a daughter, and Bakol was her name" (Bava Batra 16b), and so "God is with you in all that you do." "Now swear to me that you will not deal falsely": let chesed be like waters whose waters do not fail, so that it will not fail to bestow upon me, and upon my offspring and my posterity.

That is to say, to bring forth the will of chochmah in the world; "my offspring" refers to Zeir Anpin (the "lesser countenance"), and "my posterity" to netzach (victory) and hod (splendor), in the mystery of "Torah scholars increase peace in the world" (Berakhot 64a). "According to the kindness that I have done with you," in that I gave you the land (ha'aretz), which is malchut, who is called the

daughter of Avraham, "so shall you do with me," for "By wisdom He founded the earth" (Proverbs 3:19), "and with the land in which you have sojourned." And Hashem, may He be blessed, will atone.

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

