Parshat Toldot (תולדות): who tithes the salt?

Helping Phriendly Book · Parshat Toldot 5787 · 13 November 2026

This week's parsha is about the things we DO, and how much of it we actually know we're doing. Some of our deeds we hand to Hashem on purpose. But most of the week, we're running on autopilot, or with mixed motives, or in a rush just to get through the day... So what happens to all of that? Does any of it count?

Toldot answers that question, and it starts in the dark.

Yitzchak is old, and his eyes have gone dark.

"vatichhena einav meirot" - "וַתִּכְהֶיןָ עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת" - "and his eyes were too dim to see."

> 🎶 ***'Where do you go when the lights go out?'***

He calls in Esav, his older son. Take your bow, go out to the field, hunt me something and cook it the way I love it, "בַּעֲבוּר תְּבָרֶכְךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת" - "so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Wait. Yitzchak Avinu, the man who lay on the mizbeach, wants to give the bracha to ESAV???

Rashi gives the answer we all heard as kids: Esav "hunted" his father with his mouth. He'd come in with a question that made him sound "frum": "אַבָּא, הַאֵיךְ מְעַשְּׂרִין אֶת הַמֶּלַח וְאֶת הַתֶּבֶן?" - "Abba, how do you tithe salt? And straw?" Salt and straw don't get tithed at all... and Yitzchak thought, look at this kid, "מְדַקְדֵּק בְּמִצְוֹת" - "so careful with mitzvos."

Hold on to that salt. We're coming back for it.

Because the Izhbitzer school won't accept that Yitzchak was fooled. The son of the Mei HaShiloach, Rav Yaakov Leiner, says it flat out in the Beit Yaakov: "חלילה לא היה ליצחק טעות בעשו" - "Heaven forbid, Yitzchak made no mistake about Esav."

The proof is one pasuk before Yitzchak's eyes go dark. Esav marries two Hittite women, and they are "מֹרַת רוּחַ לְיִצְחָק וּלְרִבְקָה" - "a bitterness of spirit to Yitzchak and Rivka."

> 🎶 ***'I saw it all you know I was so blind'***

He knew. So why on earth is he blessing Esav?

Rav Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitz, in the Mei HaShiloach, opens with a pasuk from Tehillim: "זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים" - "a light shines in the DARKNESS for the upright." Yitzchak saw that Esav's deeds "אֵינָם טוֹבִים" - "weren't good." What he couldn't see was which of his sons was more beloved to Hashem... so he davened that Hashem should show him the truth.

And he had a reason to wonder. Esav moves "בְּשֶׁטֶף וְזֶרֶם" - "like a flood and a torrent."

Yitzchak looked at all that force going everywhere at once, and saw what it could become. "אִם יְבָרְרוֹ הַשי״ת לְטוֹב אָז יִהְיֶה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד" - "if Hashem would SORT him out for good, he'd be very great." (And Esav was the bechor. Yitzchak's way is din, says the Mei HaShiloach, "יִקּוֹב הַדִּין אֶת הָהָר" - let the law pierce the mountain. Rules are rules.)

Sort him out. That word, *levarer* (לברר), runs through this whole teaching. So what does it mean for a person to be sorted?

The Beit Yaakov answers that question with Esav's **own** question... about tithing the salt.

When you give ma'aser, you take a tenth of your grain and give it to the Levi. The Beit Yaakov says that's "כמו שמסרו להשם יתברך" - "as if he handed it to Hashem."

That's what sorted means: a deed you do with intention, but a SPECIFIC intention that it's לשם שמים בלבד - it's done purely and solely for Hashem.

Most of what we do isn't that clear.

The Mishna in Maasrot gives the rule for what gets tithed: "כָּל שֶׁהוּא אֹכֶל, וְנִשְׁמָר, וְגִדּוּלָיו מִן הָאָרֶץ" - "whatever is food, and is guarded, and grows from the ground."

So why not salt? The Beit Yaakov says salt only "גורר תאות האכילה" - it drags your appetite along, makes you hungry for the real food. And straw? "אין לאדם שום טעם ותפיסה בו" - "a person has no taste of it and no grip on it at all."

Nothing to grab... so nothing to tithe.

And that, says the Beit Yaakov, is a whole part of every person's life: "במקום שישן האדם ושלא מדעת" - "where a person is asleep, acting without awareness."

The drive to work you don't remember. Eight hours at a desk. Eating a midnight snack standing over the kitchen sink. The Mincha you tried to squeeze in at a red light, sort of. A whole week of a hundred things that never really had a thought of Hashem in the forefront...

> 🎶 ***'Most of them are clockwork'***

And the Beit Yaakov isn't scolding anybody: "באדם מוכרח להיות לפעמים מעט שכחה" - "a person has to forget sometimes." You can't be awake every second. Nobody is. Because we're human.

And autopilot is only one kind of what we're calling "unsorted." The Beit Yaakov says even the holy deed of tzedakah can need this special "sorting." Somebody gives to a poor man "כדי שיחיה בנו" - "so that his son should live." The Gemara calls him a tzaddik gamur! And still, says the Beit Yaakov, this deed, this mitzvah, needs sorting, "פן היה כוונתו להנאת עצמו" - because "maybe part of it was for himself."

Half for Hashem, half for me... and it can get hard to tell which half is which.

So who tithes, or "sorts" all of THOSE deeds? The Beit Yaakov: "וזהו רק השי״ת בעצמו" - "that's only Hashem Himself."

Which means Esav was asking a real question. How do you tithe the salt? What happens to all the parts of me I can't get my hands on, that I have no way of sorting myself?

Esav's life was salt and straw... an unsortable life! Yitzchak wanted to bless exactly that part of him... so that even those deeds would last forever.

Could Hashem sort a life like that? Of course He could. The Beit Yaakov says so straight out.

The question is: Would He?

Now open your hearts, phriends, and let's go deeper:

Hashem sorts "רק למי שמברר עצמו בדעתו ושכלו עד מקום שידו מגעת" - "only for someone who sorts himself, with his own mind, as far as his HAND reaches." And for that person, Hashem goes further, "במקום שאין ידו מגעת" - "to the place his hand doesn't reach."

Do the part you can reach... and Hashem does the rest.

And Esav? "אף במקום שיודע שרצון השי״ת הוא כך הוא עושה להיפך" - "even where he KNOWS what Hashem wants, he does the opposite." The Beit Yaakov says that's what the salt question really meant. He threw himself into bad deeds "בכדי שהשי״ת יבררו על ידם" - "so that Hashem would sort him through them."

He took the part he could reach and turned it into salt and straw on purpose. Then he sat back and waited for Hashem to tithe it, to sort it all out for him.

So here's the whole difference between the brothers. Both of them have a week full of salt and straw. Yaakov does what his hand can reach, and Esav won't.

Now let's go back to Yitzchak's tent, the bracha, and the moment when Yaakov walks in.

Rivka dresses him in Esav's best clothes and wraps goatskins around his smooth hands and neck. Yitzchak reaches out and feels him:

"hakol kol Yaakov v'hayadayim yedei Esav" - "הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו" - "the voice is the voice of Yaakov, and the hands are the hands of Esav."

"וְלֹא הִכִּירוֹ כִּי־הָיוּ יָדָיו כִּידֵי עֵשָׂו אָחִיו שְׂעִרֹת וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ" - "and he didn't recognize him, because his hands were HAIRY like his brother Esav's... and he blessed him."

Hairy. The Beit Yaakov says hair is "הפעולות שאין להאדם שום דעה בהם ואינו מרגיש בהם כלל" - "the actions a person has no awareness of, and doesn't feel at all." (Cut your hair. Feel anything?) Esav was born that way, "כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר" - "all over like a coat of hair." And now Yaakov walks in with it on his hands.

> 🎶 ***'Took all of my old clothes with him'***

Look at what Yaakov is wearing. The Beit Yaakov says Esav's clothes are the outside of a Jew's life that looks like everybody else's: "מוטרד בפרנסה או באיזה טרדא" - "harried by parnassah, or some other pressure." Working, rushing, earning a living. He might even trip in there. From across the street, he looks exactly like Esav. But inside those clothes, "עומק לבו ודעתו ורצונו" - "the depth of his heart, his mind and his will" - want nothing except what Hashem wants.

Now the chiddush of the Mei HaShiloach. Why did this have to happen in the dark? Hashem could have opened Yitzchak's eyes and let him bless Yaakov on purpose!

He could have. And then Yaakov "הָיָה מִתְבָּרֵךְ רַק בְּאֹפֶן שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו יִהְיוּ מְבֹרָרִים" - "would be blessed only as far as his deeds were sorted."

A knowing bracha covers what you knowingly did. The tithed grain. And the Beit Yaakov spells out what happens to everything else Yaakov did without awareness: "היו מתבטלים" - "it would have been lost."

Hold on. Wasn't Yaakov the sorted one? Why does he need a bracha for the unsorted stuff?

Because the Beit Yaakov says "וגם יעקב צריך לברורים" - "Yaakov too needs sorting," as long as he isn't finished. And nobody in this world is finished. Yaakov had both kinds of deeds, like the rest of us.

And here's how I understand why the knowing bracha can't reach the rest. You can only bless on purpose the good you can see. Nobody can see the good hiding inside a mess... so the bracha for the mess had to come in the dark.

But Yitzchak thought he was blessing Esav, the man of salt and straw. So he aimed his bracha at the whole hairy coat... and it landed on Yaakov. Clothes, goatskins and all.

And Yaakov is about to need every bit of it. Twenty years with Lavan: "הָיִיתִי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלַנִי חֹרֶב וְקֶרַח בַּלָּיְלָה" - "by day the heat ate me, and the frost by night." Twenty years of Esav's clothes.

So even if Yaakov, chas v'shalom, does things that aren't sorted, "יִתְבָּרְרוּ לְטוֹבָה וְלֹא יִדַּח מֵהֶם נִדָּח" - "they will be sorted out for GOOD, and not one of them will be cast away." Hashem will save, says the Beit Yaakov, "ואפילו להשערות של יעקב" - "even Yaakov's HAIRS."

And then maybe the deepest line of all. When Hashem sorts the places a person's hand couldn't reach, the Beit Yaakov says they come out "יקרים יותר מבאם האדם היה מאיר אותם מדעתו" - "MORE precious than if the person had lit them up himself."

Yitzchak saw more light hiding in Esav's dark than in Yaakov's revealed radiance. He was right about the light... and Hashem made sure it went to Yaakov.

When Yitzchak finds out, he trembles, "חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד" - "a trembling, great beyond measure"... and then he says, "גַּם־בָּרוּךְ יִהְיֶה" - "he will indeed be blessed."

There's the light in the darkness from the Mei HaShiloach's pasuk. Hashem led Yitzchak "לְמַעְלָה מִדַּעְתּוֹ" - "above his own knowledge"... and Yaakov walked out with a bigger bracha than anyone could have given him

on purpose.

Phriends, come back with me to the night before Pesach. בדיקת חמץ.

Lights off. Candle in one hand, feather and wooden spoon in the other. The kids trail you from room to room in their pajamas, and somebody hid ten pieces of bread in tinfoil. (Every year one of them turns up around Shavuos. Behind the couch. Don't ask.)

You check every room, every coat pocket, every corner your candle can reach.

And then the Mishna in Pesachim lets you stop: "אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין שֶׁמָּא גָּרְרָה חֻלְדָּה מִבַּיִת לְבַיִת" - "we don't worry that maybe a weasel dragged chametz from house to house." Because if you did, "אֵין לַדָּבָר סוֹף" - "there's no end to it."

The Izhbitzer's grandson, in the Tiferet Yosef, brings a teaching from his grandfather and hangs it on that Mishna, and it's our parsha all over again. A person who checks himself "עד מקום שידו מגעת" - "as far as his hand reaches" - doesn't have to worry about the corners he can't. "יברר אותו השי״ת" - "Hashem will sort him."

But a person who skips the part he can reach and leans on Hashem to sort everything? "אז אין השי״ת מברר אותו" - "then Hashem doesn't sort him."

And notice the order. Only after the search do we say Kol Chamira, handing over all the chametz "וּדְלָא יְדַעְנָא לֵהּ" - "that I don't know about." Search first, then let go.

Yaakov takes the candle into every room he can. Esav skips the search, says Kol Chamira, and goes to bed.

So tonight, before candle lighting, take the candle through your week.

Some of it your hand can reach. The kid you snapped at on Tuesday... he's in the next room. Go fix it. The phone call you've been putting off since Sunday. One bracha on the challah tonight, said slowly enough that you actually hear it.

That's your ma'aser. That's the sorting of your deeds that YOU control! Pick it up, on purpose, and hand it to Hashem.

And the rest of it? The hours at the desk, the drive you don't remember, the davening that went by on clockwork... don't go chasing the weasel. There's no end to it. It's salt and straw, and the Beit Yaakov already told us Who tithes it for us.

Just don't skip the search. Bring your deeds to the line where you need to hand off the rest to Hashem. Don't fall into Esav's line of saying "Hashem will sort it all for me" without putting in your part.

And the week you spent in Esav's clothes, out there in the world of גשמיות? The parnassah, the carpool, the inbox? Hashem sorts all of that, and the Beit Yaakov says it comes out more precious than what you lit up

yourself. There may be more light in that week than you'd ever guess, so long as you sort your part with everything you've got.

Then give it to Hashem to take care of the rest. Have Emunah that He has Emunah in YOU!

Take that light with you into Shabbos. Light the candles with it. Bless your kids with it. Bless the wine with it.

> 🎶 ***'May the good Lord shine a light on you'***

May Hashem shine His light into our dark corners, "זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים"... may He take everything our hands can reach as our ma'aser, and sort everything that's *pashut* out of our hands, so that not one piece of our week, not even one hair, is ever cast away.

Good Shabbos, phriends.

Sources

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Best versions to listen to

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  https://phish.in/1993-12-31/harry-hood
- Beauty of My Dreams — 1997-08-17 (Loring Commerce Centre, Limestone, ME)
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- Shine a Light — 2009-10-31 (Empire Polo Club, Indio, CA)
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Study guide: salt, straw and the blind bracha

The Hebrew is from Sefaria, with the cantillation marks removed; Hashem's names are written in printable form, so this page is not *sheimos*. English for the pesukim, Rashi, the Mishna and the Gemara is Sefaria's (JPS, Davidson, Kulp), with "G-d" and "Hashem" substituted. Sefaria has no English for the Mei HaShiloach, Beit Yaakov or Tiferet Yosef; those translations and summaries are mine. Where the dvar gives its own reading rather than a source's (why a knowing bracha cannot reach the mess, the order of bedika and Kol Chamira, Yaakov's twenty years with Lavan as Esav's clothes), the connection is ours, not the commentator's.

I. The pesukim

Read them straight through before the commentaries. Notice how close 26:35 (Esav's wives, a bitterness to his parents) sits to 27:1 (Yitzchak's eyes go dim), and count how many times hair and hands come up.

Bereshit 25:24-28

[24] וַיִּמְלְאוּ יָמֶיהָ לָלֶדֶת וְהִנֵּה תוֹמִם בְּבִטְנָהּ

When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb.

[25] וַיֵּצֵא הָרִאשׁוֹן אַדְמוֹנִי כֻּלּוֹ כְּאַדֶּרֶת שֵׂעָר וַיִּקְרְאוּ שְׁמוֹ עֵשָׂו

The first one emerged red, like a hairy mantle all over; so they named him Esau. “hair.”

[26] וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וְיָדוֹ אֹחֶזֶת בַּעֲקֵב עֵשָׂו וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וְיִצְחָק בֶּן־שִׁשִּׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם

Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel of Esau; so they named him Jacob. “heel.” Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

[27] וַיִּגְדְּלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו אִישׁ יֹדֵעַ צַיִד אִישׁ שָׂדֶה וְיַעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יֹשֵׁב אֹהָלִים

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob became a mild man who stayed in camp.

[28] וַיֶּאֱהַב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו כִּי־צַיִד בְּפִיו וְרִבְקָה אֹהֶבֶת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב

Isaac favored Esau because he had a taste for game; but Rebekah favored Jacob.

Bereshit 26:34-35

[34] וַיְהִי עֵשָׂו בֶּן־אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה אֶת־יְהוּדִית בַּת־בְּאֵרִי הַחִתִּי וְאֶת־בָּשְׂמַת בַּת־אֵילֹן הַחִתִּי

When Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite;

[35] וַתִּהְיֶיןָ מֹרַת רוּחַ לְיִצְחָק וּלְרִבְקָה {ס}

and they were a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah.

Bereshit 27:1-4

[1] וַיְהִי כִּי־זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיןָ עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־עֵשָׂו בְּנוֹ הַגָּדֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו בְּנִי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הִנֵּנִי

When Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son.” He answered, “Here I am.”

[2] וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה־נָא זָקַנְתִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי יוֹם מוֹתִי

And he said, “I am old now, and I do not know how soon I may die.

[3] וְעַתָּה שָׂא־נָא כֵלֶיךָ תֶּלְיְךָ וְקַשְׁתֶּךָ וְצֵא הַשָּׂדֶה וְצוּדָה לִּי (צידה) [צָיִד]

Take your gear, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open and hunt me some game.

[4] וַעֲשֵׂה־לִי מַטְעַמִּים כַּאֲשֶׁר אָהַבְתִּי וְהָבִיאָה לִי וְאֹכְלָה בַּעֲבוּר תְּבָרֶכְךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטֶרֶם אָמוּת

Then prepare a dish for me such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my innermost blessing before I die.”

Bereshit 27:11

[11] וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל־רִבְקָה אִמּוֹ הֵן עֵשָׂו אָחִי אִישׁ שָׂעִר וְאָנֹכִי אִישׁ חָלָק

Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man and I’m a smooth-skinned one.

Bereshit 27:15-16

[15] וַתִּקַּח רִבְקָה אֶת־בִּגְדֵי עֵשָׂו בְּנָהּ הַגָּדֹל הַחֲמ�super ד�ֹת אֲשֶׁר אִתָּהּ בַּבָּיִת וַתַּלְבֵּשׁ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב בְּנָהּ הַקָּטֹן

Rebekah then took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which were there in the house, and had her younger son Jacob put them on;

[16] וְאֵת עֹרֹת גְּדָיֵי הָעִזִּים הִלְבִּישָׁה עַל־יָדָיו וְעַל חֶלְקַת צַוָּארָיו

and she covered his hands and the hairless part of his neck with the skins of the kids.

Bereshit 27:21-23

[21] וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־יַעֲקֹב גְּשָׁה־נָּא וַאֲמֻשְׁךָ בְּנִי הַאַתָּה זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו אִם־לֹא

Isaac said to Jacob, “Come closer that I may feel you, my son—whether you are really my son Esau or not.”

[22] וַיִּגַּשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיְמֻשֵּׁהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הַקֹּל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדַיִם יְדֵי עֵשָׂו

So Jacob drew close to his father Isaac, who felt him and wondered, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, yet the hands are the hands of Esau.”

[23] וְלֹא הִכִּירוֹ כִּי־הָיוּ יָדָיו כִּידֵי עֵשָׂו אָחִיו שְׂעִרֹת וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ

He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; and so he blessed him.

Bereshit 27:30-33

[30] וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַךְ יָצֹא יָצָא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו וְעֵשָׂו אָחִיו בָּא מִצֵּידוֹ

No sooner had Jacob left the presence of his father Isaac—after Isaac had finished blessing Jacob—than his brother Esau came back from his hunt.

[31] וַיַּעַשׂ גַּם־הוּא מַטְעַמִּים וַיָּבֵא לְאָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יָקֻם אָבִי וְיֹאכַל מִצֵּיד בְּנוֹ בַּעֲבֻר תְּבָרְכַנִּי נַפְשֶׁךָ

He too prepared a dish and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father sit up and eat of his son’s game, so that you may give me your innermost blessing.”

[32] וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי־אָתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי בִּנְךָ בְכֹרְךָ עֵשָׂו

His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” And he said, “I am your son, Esau, your first-born!”

[33] וַיֶּחֱרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה גְּדֹלָה עַד־מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֵפוֹא הוּא הַצָּד־צַיִד וַיָּבֵא לִי וָאֹכַל מִכֹּל בְּטֶרֶם תָּבוֹא וָאֲבָרְכֵהוּ גַּם־בָּרוּךְ יִהְיֶה

Isaac was seized with very violent trembling. “Who was it then,” he demanded, “that hunted game and brought it to me? Moreover, I ate of it before you came, and I blessed him; now he must remain blessed!”

II. Rashi: how do you tithe salt?

The question the whole teaching turns on. Rashi (from the Tanchuma) reads it as Esav fooling his father.

Rashi on Bereshit 25:27

ידע ציד. לָצוּד וּלְרַמּוֹת אֶת אָבִיו בְּפִיו וְשׁוֹאֲלוֹ אַבָּא, הַאֵיךְ מְעַשְּׂרִין אֶת הַמֶּלַח וְאֶת הַתֶּבֶן? כַּשָּׁבוּר אָבִיו שֶׁהוּא מְדַקְדֵּק בְּמִצְוֹת (תנחומא):

יודע ציד A CUNNING HUNTER literally, understanding hunting — understanding how to entrap and deceive his father with his mouth. He would ask him, “Father how should salt and straw be tithed”? (Genesis Rabbah 63:10) (although he knew full well that these are not subject to the law of tithe). Consequently his father believed him to be very punctilious in observing the divine ordinances.

Mishna Maasrot 1:1: what is liable for maaser

כְּלָל אָמְרוּ בַּמַּעֲשְׂרוֹת, כָּל שֶׁהוּא אוֹכֶל, וְנִשְׁמָר, וְגִדּוּלָיו מִן הָאָרֶץ, חַיָּב בַּמַּעֲשְׂרוֹת. וְעוֹד כְּלָל אַחֵר אָמְרוּ, כָּל שֶׁתְּחִלָּתוֹ אוֹכֶל וְסוֹפוֹ אוֹכֶל, אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא שׁוֹמְרוֹ לְהוֹסִיף אוֹכֶל, חַיָּב קָטָן וְגָדוֹל. וְכָל שֶׁאֵין תְּחִלָּתוֹ אוֹכֶל אֲבָל סוֹפוֹ אוֹכֶל, אֵינוֹ חַיָּב עַד שֶׁיֵּעָשֶׂה אוֹכֶל:

They said a general principle concerning tithes: whatever is food, and is looked after, and grows from the land, is liable for tithes. And they have further stated another general principle [concerning tithes]: whatever is considered food both at the beginning and at the conclusion [of its growth] even though he holds on to it in order to increase the quantity of food, is liable [to tithe] whether [it is harvested] in its earlier or later stages. But whatever is not considered food in the earlier stages [of its growth] but only in its later stages, is not liable [to tithe] until it can be considered food.

III. The Mei HaShiloach, in full

One paragraph. Mark the moves: the opening pasuk from Tehillim; Yitzchak knew Esav's deeds were not good but did not know which son Hashem loved more; Esav as the vessel most ready to receive good, if Hashem would sort him; din and the bechor; and the chiddush, that a knowing bracha would have reached only Yaakov's sorted deeds.

Tehillim 112:4: the Izhbitzer's opening pasuk

> [4] זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק

ז A light shines for the upright in the darkness; gracious, compassionate, and beneficent.

Mei HaShiloach, Vol. II, Toldot 3

> וַיְהִי כִּי זָקֵן יִצְחָק וַתִּכְהֶיןָ עֵינָיו מֵרְאֹת וְגוֹ׳. זֶה שֶׁאָמַר הַכָּתוּב (תהלים קי״ב,ד׳) ״זָרַח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק״, זֶה נֶאֱמַר עַל יִצְחָק אָבִינוּ, שֶׁבֶּאֱמֶת הָיָה יִצְחָק מַכִּיר אֶת מַעֲשֵׂי עֵשָׂו שֶׁאֵינָם טוֹבִים, וְגַם מַעֲשֵׂי נָשָׁיו שֶׁהֵם בְּרוּרֵי הָאָדָם (וכמבואר בחלק ראשון בד״ה ויאהב יצחק), רַק הָיָה מְסֻפָּק מִי מִבָּנָיו הֶחָבִיב אֵצֶל הַשי״ת וְהִתְפַּלֵּל לְהַשי״ת שֶׁיַּרְאֶה לוֹ הָאֱמֶת, וְזָרַח לוֹ הַשי״ת אוֹר בְּהַחֹשֶׁךְ הַיְנוּ בְּהַסָּפֵק, וּבְפָרָט כִּי כָהוּ עֵינָיו, כִּדְאִיתָא בַּזה״ק (תולדות קמ״ב.) אֲבָל יִצְחָק כָּהוּ וַדַּאי מִכֹּל וָכֹל וְאִתְעֲבִיד חֹשֶׁךְ. וְזֶה הָיָה בְּנִפְלְאוֹת אַהֲבַת הַשי״ת לְיַעֲקֹב שֶׁלֹּא הֶרְאָה לְיִצְחָק בְּדָעָה מְפֹרֶשֶׁת רַק שֶׁלֹּא מִדַּעַת, וּמִזֶּה תִּגְדַּל הַבְּרָכָה בְּיוֹתֵר, כִּי הוּא רָצָה לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עֵשָׂו שֶׁנִּדְמָה לוֹ שֶׁהוּא הַכְּלִי הַיּוֹתֵר מוּכָן לְקַבֵּל טוֹבָה. שֶׁאַף שֶׁהִכִּיר שֶׁהוֹלֵךְ בְּשֶׁטֶף וְזֶרֶם, אָכֵן אִם יְבָרְכוֹ הַשי״ת לְטוֹב אָז יִהְיֶה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד. וּמִצַּד מִדָּתוֹ שֶׁהוּא יְקוֹב הַדִּין אֶת הָהָר לָכֵן הָלַךְ בְּמִשְׁפָּט מֻחָמַת שֶׁהוּא הָיָה הַבְּכוֹר, אַף שֶׁיַּעֲקֹב הוּא מְבֹרָר יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ הֲרֵי הַשי״ת מִצִּדּוֹ יָכוֹל לְבָרֵר גַּם אוֹתוֹ וְאָז יִהְיֶה הוּא הַנִּבְחָר וְהָרָאוּי, וּלְפִי שֶׁרָאָה שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו לְעֵת עַתָּה אֵינָם מְבֹרָרִים לֹא מָצָא חֵשֶׁק בְּלִבּוֹ לְבָרְכוֹ, וְלָכֵן אָמַר לוֹ שֶׁיָּבִיא לוֹ מַטְעַמִּים וְיַכְנִיסוֹ בְּרָצוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה וְיֵיטִיב דַּעְתּוֹ וְיִמְצָא בְּלִבּוֹ חֵשֶׁק לְבָרְכוֹ, וְאָז יַסְכִּים הַשי״ת עַל בְּרָכוֹתָיו, וְלָכֵן אָמַר ״וְצוּדָה לִּי צַיִד״ בְּהֵ״א כִּדְאִיתָא בַּזה״ק (תולדות קמ״ג.) וּמֻחָמַת שֶׁהַשי״ת חָפֵץ בְּיִשּׁוּב הַדַּעַת לָכֵן הִנְהִיגוֹ לְמַעְלָה מִדַּעְתּוֹ וּבֵרַךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב, וְזֶה הָיָה לְטוֹבַת יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ, כִּי בְּאֹם הָיָה מְבָרֵךְ אֶת יַעֲקֹב בְּדַעָה וְכַוָּנָה הָיָה מִתְבָּרֵךְ רַק בְּאֹפֶן שֶׁמַּעֲשָׂיו יִהְיוּ מְבֹרָרִים, לָכֵן הָיָה בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁהוּא עֵשָׂו וְנִתְבָּרֵךְ יַעֲקֹב אַף שֶׁחִלְילָה עָשָׂה מַעֲשִׂים שֶׁאֵינָם מְבֹרָרִים יִתְבָּרְרוּ לְטוֹבָה וְלֹא יִדַּח מֵהֶם נִדָּח כִּי כֵן כִּוֵּן יִצְחָק בְּבִרְכָתוֹ, כִּי בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁמְּבָרֵךְ לְעֵשָׂו. וְזֶה הָיָה מֻחָמַת שֶׁהַשי״ת חָנּוּן וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק לָכֵן זָרַח לְיִצְחָק בְּהַחֹשֶׁךְ אוֹר וְהוֹלִיכוֹ בַּדֶּרֶךְ הַיָּשָׁר, וְזֶהוּ אוֹר לַיְשָׁרִים.

My summary (Sefaria has no English): "A light shines in the darkness for the upright" is said about Yitzchak. He knew Esav's deeds were not good, but he was unsure which son was dearer to Hashem, and prayed to be shown the truth.

Hashem shone light for him in the darkness, meaning in the doubt, and did not show him openly. He wanted to bless Esav, who seemed the vessel most ready to receive good: though he moved like a flood and a torrent, if Hashem sorted him he would be very great. And by his midda of din ("let the law pierce the mountain") he followed the law of the bechor. Because Hashem wants a settled mind, He led Yitzchak above his own knowledge to bless Yaakov. This was for Yaakov's good: blessed knowingly, he would have been blessed only as far as his deeds were sorted. Since Yitzchak thought he was blessing Esav, even deeds of Yaakov's that are not sorted will be sorted for good, and not one of them will be cast away.

IV. The Beit Yaakov: maaser, salt and straw

Rav Yaakov Leiner, the Izhbitzer's son, on the same pesukim. First, that Yitzchak made no mistake; then what maaser is, and why salt and straw cannot be tithed.

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 41 (excerpt)

> והיינו שיצחק אבינו עיקר כחו הוא מה שעושה שלא מדעת, וזה רומז על צידה בה״א, שבאמת היה יצחק גם כן יודע שעשו הוא רשע, כדכתיב, ותהיין מרת רוח ליצחק ולרבקה. חלילה לא היה ליצחק טעות בעשו, ובאמת היו מעשי עשו רעים בעיני יצחק, ורק שלא רצה לסמוך על דעתו כלל רק על השי״ת, והשי״ת יכול ליתן תיקון לכל המעשים, ובאם יברר השי״ת מעשי עשו יהיו יותר מאירים מהפעולות של יעקב

My translation: "Yitzchak's main strength was in what he did without knowing... Yitzchak also knew Esav was wicked, as it says, 'they were a bitterness of spirit to Yitzchak and Rivka.' Heaven forbid, Yitzchak made no mistake about Esav; Esav's deeds really were bad in his eyes. He just did not want to rely on his own understanding at all, only on Hashem, and Hashem can repair every deed. If Hashem sorted Esav's deeds, they would shine more than Yaakov's."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 41, continued (excerpt)

> ולכן שאל אותו האיך מעשרין את המלח ואת התבן, כי במעשר איתא (מעשרות פ״א) כלל אמרו במעשרות כל שהוא אוכל ונשמר וגדוליו מן הארץ, והיינו כל מה שהוא ביד האדם וברשותו יכול לעשות בה רע, זה מחויב במעשר ליתן ללוי. ואם נותן מעשר ללוי הוא כמו שמסרו להשם יתברך, שבלוי כתיב (מלאכי ב׳ :ה׳) ואתנם לו מורא וייראני, ומלח אינו מאכל בעצם רק גורר תאות האכילה ונותן חשק לאכילה

My translation: "So he asked him how to tithe salt and straw. The Mishna says: whatever is food, guarded, and grows from the ground. That is, whatever is in a person's hand and power, that he could do bad with, is liable for maaser, to give to the Levi. Giving maaser to the Levi is as if he handed it to Hashem... Salt is not really food. It only draws the appetite and gives a desire to eat."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 41, continued (excerpt)

> וכן בתבן שהוא יד לפרי, ובאמת היה צריך להיות שביד הפרי יהיה עיקר הטעם, שמהיד נשתלשל הטעם להפרי, ובאמת בהתבן אין לאדם שום טעם ותפיסה בו, ובאמת מצד השי״ת אמר השי״י עץ פרי, ואיתא במד״ר (בראשית ה) שהיינו שטעם עצו ופריו שוין, והארץ לא שמעה את המאמר (כמו שנתבאר בפ׳ בראשית לעיל אות לה), כדי שהאדם יראה שיש מקום שאין להאדם שום תפיסה והכרה רק השי״ת בעצמו, ואין צריך ליתן מזה מעשר, היינו להכיר שהוא

מהשי״ת, כיון שזה עצמו הוא ההכרה. ובאמת כשהאדם מקבל את הטובה וממליך עליו מקודם את השי״ת, שם יש כבוד שמים כדכתיב (ישעיהו מ״ג:ז׳) כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי וגו׳, אבל במקום שישן האדם ושלא מדעת אז אין ניכר שום כבוד שמים, כי באדם מוכרח להיות לפעמים מעט שכחה, אך ששם השי״ת מבררו, וזה נקרא מעשר מלח ותבן. וזהו רק השי״ת בעצמו

In short: straw carries the fruit, yet a person has no taste of it and no grip on it. There is a place where a person has no grasp or awareness, only Hashem Himself. When a person receives good and first crowns Hashem over it, there is kavod shamayim; "but where a person is asleep and acts without awareness, no kavod shamayim is visible, for a person has to forget a little sometimes, and there Hashem sorts it. That is called tithing salt and straw, and it is only Hashem Himself."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 41, continued (excerpt): the rule

אך השי״ת אינו רוצה לברר רק למי שמברר עצמו בדעתו ושכלו עד מקום שידו מגעת, את זה מברר השי״ת אף בשעה ובמקום שאין ידו מגעת מבררו השי״ת שהוא כולו ביד השי״ת, אבל למי שאינו מברר עצמו מצדו, זה לא יחפוץ השי״ת לברר שהוא מתנהג במשפט

My translation: "But Hashem only wants to sort someone who sorts himself, with his own mind and understanding, as far as his hand reaches. That person Hashem sorts even at the time and place his hand does not reach. Someone who does not sort himself, Hashem does not want to sort."

V. The Beit Yaakov: clothes, hair, and mixed motives

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 33 (excerpt): Esav's clothes

אך במלבושים של עשו היה צריך יעקב להתברך, והיינו אפילו אם יארע ליעקב מכשול ח״ו, השי״ת יבררו, מפני שרק הלבוש שלו הוא כך, שהוא מוטרד בפרנסה או באיזה טרדא, לזה אפילו במקום שהלבוש נראה כמו לבושים של עשו, אבל עומק לבו ודעתו ורצונו אינם רוצים רק מה שהוא רצון הש״י, וזה שסיבב הקב״ה שיטול יעקב אבינו את הברכות במלבושי עשו ויצחק ידמה עליו שהוא עשו, כדי שיתברך שאף הלבושים האלו יהיו אצלו מבוררים לטוב

My translation: "Yaakov had to be blessed in Esav's garments: even if Yaakov, Heaven forbid, stumbles, Hashem will sort it, because only his clothing is like that. He is harried by parnassah or some other pressure, so even where the clothing looks like Esav's, the depth of his heart, his mind and his will want only what Hashem wants. That is why Hashem arranged that Yaakov take the brachos in Esav's garments."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 34 (excerpt): more precious

אך במקום שאין יד האדם מגיע לברר, מברר השי״ת, ואז יהיו יקרים יותר מבאם האדם היה מאיר אותם מדעתו

My translation: "But where a person's hand cannot reach to sort them, Hashem sorts them, and then they are more precious than if the person had lit them up with his own awareness."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 34, continued (excerpt): hair

> וכל מה שיצחק רצה לברך את עשו לא יושיע השי״ת רק זה שיתכלל בתוך יעקב, ואפילו להשערות של יעקב יושיע השי״ת, והיינו הפעולות שאין להאדם שום דעה בהם ואינו מרגיש בהם כלל. וזה היה חלקו של עשו שהיה איש שעיר

My translation: "Of everything Yitzchak wanted to bless in Esav, Hashem will save only what is included in Yaakov. Even Yaakov's hairs Hashem will save: the actions a person has no awareness of and does not feel at all. That was Esav's portion, a hairy man."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 34, continued (excerpt): why it had to happen in the dark

> ולכן היה נצרך בכאן להיות שיצחק יסבור שמברך לעשו, ויעקב יתלבש בלבושים של עשו, כי באם היה נתברך יעקב בדעת יצחק לא היה נתברך רק במדתו של יעקב, היינו בפעולות מבוררים שעשה עם הדעה שלו לכבוד שמים, אבל פעולות שלא מדעת היו מתבטלים, אבל עתה שבירך ליעקב בלבושו ומדתו של עשו, היינו שאפילו פעולות הגוף של יעקב יברר השי״ת שהיו בשביל כבוד שמים, ועשו עצמו יתבטל לגמרי

My translation: "So Yitzchak had to think he was blessing Esav, and Yaakov had to wear Esav's garments. Blessed with Yitzchak's knowledge, Yaakov would have been blessed only in his own midda, the sorted deeds he did knowingly for Heaven's sake; the deeds done without awareness would have been lost. Now that he was blessed in Esav's garment and midda, Hashem will sort even Yaakov's bodily deeds as being for Heaven's sake."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 36 (excerpt)

> אך אמר בלבו כי באמת אין צדיק בארץ עד שיחתום השי״ת עליו, וגם יעקב צריך לברורים בעוד שלא נשלם

My translation: "But he said in his heart that truly there is no tzaddik on earth until Hashem seals him, and Yaakov too needs sorting while he is not yet complete."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 36, continued (excerpt): mixed motives

> ובאמת כל היראות צריכים בירור אולי לא היה כונתו לשם שמים בלתי להנאת עצמו, כגון הנותן צדקה לעני כדי שיחיה בנו או כדי שיהיה בן עוה״ב צריך לבירור. ואף דאיתא בש״ס (ר״ה ד.) דהרי זה צדיק גמור, מ״מ צריך בירור פן היה כוונתו להנאת עצמו

My translation: "Truly, every act of fear of Heaven needs sorting, in case the intent was not for Heaven but for his own benefit: for example one who gives tzedakah to a poor man so that his son will live, or so that he will merit the World to Come, needs sorting. And though the Gemara (Rosh Hashana 4a) says he is a complete tzaddik, it still needs sorting, in case his intent was his own benefit."

Rosh Hashana 4a: the baraita the Beit Yaakov cites

> וּמַאן דְּעָבֵד הָכִי לָאו מְעַלְּיוּתָא הִיא? וְהָתַנְיָא, הָאוֹמֵר: ״סֶלַע זוֹ לִצְדָקָה בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁיִּחְיוּ בָּנַי״, וּ״בִשְׁבִיל שֶׁאָזְכֶּה בָּהּ לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא״ — הֲרֵי זֶה צַדִּיק גָּמוּר.

The Gemara asks: And one who acts in this manner, is he not acting in exemplary fashion? Isn't it taught in a baraita: If one gives charity, saying: I give this sela for charity in order that my children may live, or: I give it in order that through it I may merit life in the World-to-Come, he is still considered a full-fledged righteous person? If so, what was wrong with the king bringing offerings so that the Jews would pray for his life and the life of his children?

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 36, continued (excerpt): what Esav's question meant

> וזה ששאל עשו האיך מעשרין את המלח, היינו שהכניס עצמו למעשים רעים בכדי שהשי״ת יבררו על ידם, וזה אסור לעשות לאדם, רק כשיזמין לו השי״ת שלא מדעתו, ולא שיכניס עצמו במכוון לזה

My translation: "Esav asked how to tithe salt: he put himself into bad deeds so that Hashem would sort him through them. A person may not do that. Only when Hashem arranges it for him without his knowledge, not when he walks into it on purpose."

Beit Yaakov, Toldot 33 (excerpt)

> אבל עשו אף במקום שיודע שרצון השי״ת הוא כך הוא עושה להיפך

My translation: "But Esav, even where he knows Hashem's will is so, does the opposite."

VI. Bedikat chametz and the Tiferet Yosef

The Izhbitzer's grandson brings his grandfather's rule and hangs it on the weasel Mishna.

Mishna Pesachim 1:2

> אֵין חוֹשְׁשִׁין שֶׁמָּא גָּרְרָה חֻלְדָּה מִבַּיִת לְבַיִת וּמִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם, דְּאִם כֵּן, מֵחָצֵר לְחָצֵר וּמֵעִיר לְעִיר, אֵין לַדָּבָר סוֹף׃

After conducting the search, one need not be concerned that perhaps a marten dragged leaven from house to house, or from place to place, placing leaven in a house that was already searched. As if so, one need also be concerned that perhaps leaven might have been dragged from courtyard to courtyard and from city to city. In that case, there is no end to the matter, and it would be impossible to rely on any search for leaven.

Tiferet Yosef, Pesachim 9a

> (ט.) אין חוששין שמא גיררה חולדה מבית לבית וממקום למקום וכו׳ דא״כ אין לדבר סוף. הענין בזה, כמו שאמר כבוד אזמו״ר זללה״ה, אם האדם מצידו מנקה ומטהר ומברר עצמו עד מקום שידו מגעת. אז השי״ת מעיד עליו שהוא נמשך תמיד אחר רצונו ית׳, ויש לו חיבור עם אור רצונו ית׳. כמו שכתוב באאע״ה (בראשית י״ז ׃ד׳) אני הנה בריתי אתך וגו׳ המול ימול וגו׳, אף שבאמת הדין הוא המל ימול, ואיך מל אברהם אבינו את עצמו, ומה זה שאמר לו השי״ת אני הנה בריתי אתך קודם שמל עצמו. אך הענין הוא, כיון שאאע״ה בירר עצמו עד מקום שידו מגיע, ממילא העיד עליו השי״ת שהוא מבורר וכאילו הוא נימול, כיון שלא היה בידו לברר עצמו יותר. אבל מי שאינו מברר עצמו מצידו עד מקום שידו מגיע, אלא שהוא סומך את עצמו על השי״ת שיברר אותו על הכל, אז אין השי״ת מברר אותו. וכמו

שאיתא בש״ס (פסחים קיז:) בקריאת שמע גאל ישראל ודצלותא גואל ישראל, כי בק״ש מקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים, ומי שהוא מקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים מעבירין ממנו עול מלכות ועול דרך ארץ, היינו שהשי״ת יברר אותו שאין לו שום סבלנות. וזה בק״ש גאל ישראל, כי זה היה בגאולת מצרים, כמו שאנו אומרים ויוצא את עמו ישראל מתוכם לחרות עולם. ודצלותא גואל ישראל, היינו כי זה מה שהאדם בא לברר עצמו מצידו מתפלל גואל ישראל, היינו שמתפלל שיראה לו השי״ת איך שע״י עבודתו יהיה נגאל משאר גלויות. וזה אין חוששין שמא גיררה חולדה כו׳ דא״כ אין לדבר סוף, היינו שאין לאדם לחוש מזה מה שאין לדבר סוף, היינו שיש מקומות שאין ביכולת האדם לברר עצמו אין לו לחוש על זה, כיון שמצידו מברר עצמו עד מקום שידו מגיע. ועל אלו המקומות שאין ביכולת האדם לברר עצמו, יברר אותו השי״ת, כיון שמצידו טיהר ובירר עצמו עד מקום שביכולת האדם לברר:

In short: as his grandfather said, if a person cleans, purifies and sorts himself as far as his hand reaches, Hashem testifies that he always follows His will. So Avraham, who sorted himself as far as he could, is told "My covenant is with you" as though already circumcised. But one who does not sort himself as far as his hand reaches, and relies on Hashem to sort him in everything, Hashem does not sort. That is the Mishna: there are places a person cannot sort himself, and he need not worry about them, since he sorted himself as far as his hand reaches; Hashem will sort him there.

VII. Twenty years in Esav's clothes

Bereshit 31:40-41: Yaakov to Lavan

40 הָיִיתִי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלַנִי חֹרֶב וְקֶרַח בַּלָּיְלָה וַתִּדַּד שְׁנָתִי מֵעֵינָי

Often, scorching heat ravaged me by day and frost by night; and sleep fled from my eyes.

41 זֶה־לִּי עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתֶךָ עֲבַדְתִּיךָ אַרְבַּע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בִּשְׁתֵּי בְנֹתֶיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנֶךָ וַתַּחֲלֵף אֶת־מַשְׂכֻּרְתִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת מֹנִים

Of the twenty years that I spent in your household, I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flocks; and you changed my wages time and again.

VIII. Questions to look into

1. **Fooled or not?** Rashi says Yitzchak thought Esav was careful with mitzvos. The Beit Yaakov says he made no mistake. Read 26:35 and 27:1 together. Which reading does the order of the pesukim support, and can Rashi's reading still stand?
2. **Why salt, why straw?** Mishna Maasrot gives three conditions: food, guarded, grown from the ground. Which does salt fail, and which does straw fail? Does the Beit Yaakov's reading follow the halacha or go beyond it?
3. **Maaser as handing it over.** The Beit Yaakov defines maaser as what is in your hand and power, "that he could do bad with." Why does the ability to misuse something make it the thing you tithe?
4. **A complete tzaddik who still needs sorting.** Rosh Hashana 4a calls the person who gives "so my son will live" a tzaddik gamur. The Beit Yaakov says it still needs sorting. How can both be true?

5. **Bitachon or Esav?** The Tiferet Yosef: one who leans on Hashem to sort everything is not sorted. Where is the line between trusting Hashem with what you cannot reach and Esav's "Hashem will sort it"?
6. **Esav's question.** The Beit Yaakov (36) reads "how do you tithe salt" as Esav walking into bad deeds so Hashem would sort them. Is there a version of that question a person may honestly ask?
7. **Hair.** Yaakov calls himself אִישׁ חָלָק, smooth (27:11), and gets the bracha with borrowed hair on his hands. What does it say that the bracha came through what he did not feel?
8. **Why in the dark?** The Mei HaShiloach also says Hashem led Yitzchak above his knowledge "because Hashem wants a settled mind." How does that fit with the reason the dvar stresses, that a knowing bracha covers only sorted deeds? (The dvar's "you can only bless the good you can see" is our gloss.)
9. **More precious.** The Beit Yaakov says what Hashem sorts beyond your reach comes out more precious than what you lit up yourself. Why would that be? Read it next to Tehillim 112:4.
10. **"He will indeed be blessed."** Yitzchak trembles, then confirms the bracha (27:33). The Beit Yaakov (41) says what he did without knowing was precious to him. Why confirm a bracha that came by deception?
11. **Search, then let go.** Kol Chamira is said only after the search, over chametz "I don't know about." Map the bedika and the Kol Chamira onto the Beit Yaakov's terms. (The order as a lesson is ours.)
12. **Twenty years.** Read 31:40-41. How does Yaakov's time with Lavan look in light of a bracha given "in Esav's clothes"? (The connection is ours.)