

## THOUGHT OF NACHMANIDES: TOLEDOT: DESPISING THE BIRTHRIGHT

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### Nachmanides on Genesis 25:30

30. OF THIS RED, RED POTTAGE. The dish was either reddened by the lentils which were red, or it had been compounded with some red substance, and Esau, not knowing what it was, called it edom (red). Therefore was his name called Edom since they mocked at him for having sold an honorable birthright for a small dish. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.

### פרוש הרמב"ן על ספר בראשית כה:ל

(ל) מִן הָאֲדָם הָאֲדָם הַזֶּה. הָיָה הַתְּבַשִּׁיל מֵאֲדָם מִן הָעֲדָשִׁים שֶׁהָיוּ אֲדָמוֹת, או שֶׁרָקְחוּ בְּדָבָרִים אֲדָמִים, וְעָשׂוּ לֹא יָדַע מָה הוּא וְקָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדָם. עַל כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדָוִם. כִּי לְעֵגוֹ עָלָיו שֶׁמָכַר בְּכוֹרָה וְנִכְבְּדָתָּ בַּעֲבוּר תְּבַשִּׁיל מְעֵט, כִּי סָבָא וְזוּלָל יִוָּרֶשׁ (מְשָׁלִי כ"ג כ"א):

### Nachmanides on Genesis 25:31

31. SELL ME THIS DAY ('KAYOM') THY BIRTHRIGHT. "I.e., as this day. Just as this day is certain, so make me a binding sale." This is Rashi's language. The literal meaning of the word kayom is "at this time," just as: "But stand thou still at this time (kayom), that I may cause thee to hear the word of G d;" "At this time (kayom) you shall find him;" "Let the fat be made to smoke at this time (kayom); But unto us belongeth confusion of face, as at this day (kayom).

### פרוש הרמב"ן על ספר בראשית כה:לא

(לא) מִכְרָה כִּיּוֹם אֶת בְּכוֹרְתְּךָ לִי. כִּיּוֹם דִּלְהֵן, כִּיּוֹם שֶׁהוּא בְּרוּר כֵּן מָכַר לִי מִכְרָה גְּמוּרָה, לְשׁוֹן רַשִּׁ"י. וּפְשׁוּטוֹ, כָּעֵת הַזֹּאת, וְכֵן וְאַתָּה עֹמֵד כִּיּוֹם וְאַשְׁמִיעֶךָ אֶת דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים (ש"א ט' כ"ז), אֲתוֹ כִּהְיוֹם תִּמְצָאוּן אֲתוֹ (שָׁם פְּסוּק י"ג), קָטָר יִקְטִירוּן כִּיּוֹם הַחֹלֵב (שָׁם ב' ט"ז), וְלָנוּ בִּשְׁתַּת הַפָּנִים כִּהְיוֹם הַזֶּה (דְּנִיאל ט' ז):

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And some scholars say that the price for the birthright was not the pottage at all. Rather, Scripture tells that when Esau, being faint, desired to eat, Jacob said to him, "Sell me your birthright for money and then eat," and Esau, in his haste for food, answered him, "What is this birthright to me? It is sold to you." He then swore to him upon it, and they sat down to eat and drink. Scripture however did not reveal the price. I do not agree with this interpretation.

וַיֵּשׁ אֹמְרִים (הַרְדֵּ"ק בְּשֵׁם אָבִיו) כִּי אֵין מַחִיר הַבְּכוֹרָה הַנִּזְוֶה רַק הַכֶּתוּב יִסְפָּר כִּי בִבְקָשׁוֹ לֶאֱכֹל וְהוּא עֵינָּה אָמַר לוֹ יַעֲקֹב מָכַר לִי בְּכוֹרְתְּךָ בֶּכֶסֶף, וְאַחֲרַי כֶּף אָכַל, וְעָנָה לוֹ בְּפִתְחוֹתָיו עַל הָאֲכִילָה לָמָּה זֶה לִי בְּכוֹרָה, הֲרִי הִיא מְכוּרָה לָךְ, וְנִשְׁבַּע עָלֶיהָ וַיֵּשְׁבוּ לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת, וְהַכֶּתוּב לֹא פָּרֵשׁ הַמַּחִיר. וְאֵין זֶה דַּעֲתִי:

33. SWEAR TO ME THIS DAY. When Esau said, "What is this birthright to me? I do not desire it," Jacob said to him, "Swear tome that you will not desire it, nor will you inherit it forever." Thereupon he swore to him, and following that he sold it to him, and Jacob gave him the purchase price or the pottage he desired. It is possible that Esau said, "What is this birthright to me? It is sold to you," and Jacob said, "Swear to me that you will never complain about the sale." And when Scripture says that first he swore to him and then he sold it to him, its intent is as if it said that he sold it to him first and then swore to him.

(לג) הַשְׁבַּעָה לִי כִּיּוֹם. כָּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר עֲשׂו  
לָמָּה זֶה לִי בְכוּרָה, אֵינֶנִּי  
חֹפֶץ בָּהּ, אָמַר לוֹ יַעֲקֹב הַשְׁבַּעָה לִי כִּי לֹא  
תִּחְפֹּץ בָּהּ וְלֹא תִירָשְׁנָה לְעוֹלָם, וְנִשְׁבַּע לוֹ  
וְאַחֲרַי כֵּן מָכְרָה לוֹ וְנָתַן לוֹ הַמַּחֲיִיר אוֹ  
הַנְּזִיד שֶׁבִקֵּשׁ. וַיִּתְּכֵן שְׂאֵמֶר עֲשׂו לָמָּה זֶה  
לִי בְכוּרָה, הִנֵּה הִיא מְכֻרָה לָךְ, וַיֹּאמֶר  
הַשְׁבַּעָה לִי שְׂלֹא תַעֲרֹעֵר עַל הַמְכִּירָה  
לְעוֹלָם, וְאָמַר הַכְּתוּב שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ וּמָכְרָה,  
כָּאֵלּוּ אָמַר מָכְרָה וְנִשְׁבַּע לוֹ:

34. SO ESAU DESPISED HIS BIRTHRIGHT. "Who so despiseth the word shall suffer thereby." But, indeed, Scripture has already explained the reason that Esau consented to the sale. This was because he was in mortal danger from his hunting animals, and it was likely that he would die while his father was alive, and the birthright carried with it no distinction except after the passing of the father. So of what benefit was the birthright to him?

(לד) וַיִּבֹּז עֲשׂו אֶת הַבְּכוּרָה. בִּז לְדַבֵּר  
יִתְחַבֵּל בּוֹ (מִשְׁלֵי י"ג י"ג). אֲבָל  
כָּכָר אָמַר הַטַּעַם שֶׁבַעְבוּרוֹ גָּאוֹת לְמַכִּירָה  
מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה הוֹלֵךְ לָמוֹת בְּצוּדוֹ הַחַיּוֹת,  
וְקָרוֹב הוּא שְׂיָמוֹת בְּחַיֵּי אָבִיו, וְאֵין  
לְבְכוּרָה שׁוֹם מַעֲלָה רַק אַחֲרֵי הָאָב וּמָה  
תּוֹעִיל לוֹ הַבְּכוּרָה.

This then is what Scripture says: "And he did eat and drink, and he rose and went, and he despised," for, after having eaten and drunk, he returned to his hunt in the field which was the cause of the despising of the birthright. "For there is no desire in fools" except to eat and drink and to fulfill their momentary desire, not giving a care for tomorrow.

וְאָמַר וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשְׁתֵּי וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּבֹּז. כִּי  
אַחֵר שְׂאֵכָל וְשִׁתָּה חֲזוֹר הַשָּׂדֶה אֶל  
צִידוֹ, וְזוֹ סִבַּת בִּזּוֹי הַבְּכוּרָה, כִּי אֵין חֹפֶץ  
בְּכִסְיִלִּים רַק שְׂיֹאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ חֲפָצֵם  
בְּעֵתָם, וְלֹא יַחֲוִשׁוּ לַיּוֹם מָחָר:

Now Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra has erred here exceedingly by saying that Esau despised the birthright because he saw his father destitute of wealth. Now, [continues Ibn Ezra] many wonder about Isaac's poverty since Abraham left him with great wealth. But have they never seen a person who was wealthy in his younger years and became poor in his old age?

וְרַבִּי אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתַּבֵּשׁ בְּכָאן מְאֹד,  
שְׂאֵמֶר כִּי בָזָה הַבְּכוּרָה בַּעֲבוּר  
שְׂרָאָה שְׂאֵין מָמוֹן לְאָבִיו. וְרַבִּים יִתְמְהוּ  
כִּי עֹזֵב לוֹ אַבְרָהָם מָמוֹן רַב, וּכְאֵלּוּ לֹא  
רָאוּ בִּימֵיהֶם עֲשִׂיר גָּדוֹל בְּנַעֲוָרָיו, כֹּא  
לִידֵי עֲנִי בְּזָקוֹנָיו.

An indication that Isaac was indeed poor is the fact that Isaac loved Esau because of his venison. Furthermore, had there been abundant food in his father's house and he [Esau] "the honorable one in his sight," he would not have 'sold his birthright for pottage. Also, if his father at savory meat every day, what reason was there for him to say to Esau, "Bring me some venison?" Why did Jacob not have costly garments as Esau had? Why did his mother not give Jacob some silver and gold for his journey when he fled to Haran so that he had to say, "And He will give me bread to eat, and a garment to put on? Why did she not send him some money since she loved him so that he was required to tend Laban's flock? The verse which states, "Thus the man grew [in wealth]," must refer to the period before he became old. Now ignorant people think that wealth is a great distinction for the righteous. Let Elijah prove the contrary. These ignorant people further ask, "Why did God cause Isaac to lack wealth?" Perhaps they could also inform us why He caused Isaac's vision to be diminished? And let them not dismiss me with a reply based upon a line of homily for here is indeed a secret in the matter, and we must not probe since the thoughts of God are deep and no man has the power to understand them. All these are Abraham Ibn Ezra's words.

Now I wonder who has blinded Abraham Ibn Ezra's reasoning in this matter, causing him to say that Abraham left Isaac great wealth, and he lost it just prior to this event, [that is, the sale of the birthright], and for this reason, Esau despised the birthright, for this matter of the sale of the birthright took place when Jacob and Esau were still young, before Esau married, as Scripture tells, and after the sale of the birthright, Isaac again became wealthy in the land of the Philistines "until he became very great... and the Philistines were jealous of him." Following that, [according to Ibn Ezra, we must say that Isaac] again became poor, and he desired the venison of his son Esau and the savory meats. All this is laughable.

וְהָעֵד, שֶׁהָיָה יִצְחָק  
אוֹהֵב אֶת עֵשָׂו בְּעִבּוֹר צִידוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הָיָה  
לָחֶם רַב בְּבֵית אָבִיו, וְהוּא נִכְבָּד בְּעֵינָיו,  
לֹא מָכַר אֶת בְּכוֹרְתּוֹ בְּעִבּוֹר נְזִיד. וְאִם  
הָיָה אָבִיו בָּכָל יוֹם אוֹכֵל מִטַּעַמִּים מֵהַ  
טַעַם יֹאמֵר אֵלָיו הִבִּיאָה לִּי צִיד. וְלָמָּה לֹא  
הָיוּ לְיִצְחָק בְּגָדִים חֲמוּדוֹת, וְלֹא נִתְּנָה לוֹ  
אִמּוֹ כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב לְדֶרֶךְ, שְׂאֵמֶר (לְהֵלֵךְ כ"ח כ')  
וְנָתַן לִי לָחֶם לֶאֱכֹל וּבְגָד לְלַבֵּשׁ. לָמָּה לֹא  
שָׁלַחָה לוֹ הוֹן, וְהִיא אוֹהֶבֶת אוֹתוֹ, כִּי  
הִצְרִיךְ לְשֹׁמֵר הַצֹּאן. וְהַפְסִיק שְׂאֵמֶר (לְהֵלֵךְ  
כ"ו י"ג) וַיִּגְדֵּל הָאִישׁ, קֹדֶם זִקְנָתוֹ. וְעוֹרֵי  
לֵב יִחְשְׁבוּ כִּי הָעֵשָׂר מַעֲלָה גְדוֹלָה  
לְצַדִּיקִים, וְהִנֵּה אֵלָיוּ יוֹכִיחַ. וְעוֹד יִשְׁאַלּוּ,  
לָמָּה חָסַר הַשֵּׁם מָמוֹן לְיִצְחָק. אוֹלֵי  
יִוְדִיעוּנוּ לָמָּה חָסַר מְאוֹר עֵינָיו, וְאֵל  
יִדְחוּנוּ בְּקִנְיַת שֵׁל דְּרִשׁ, כִּי יֵשׁ לוֹ סוּד,  
וְאֵין לָנוּ לְחֶפֶשׁ כִּי עֲמָקוֹ מַחְשָׁבוֹת הַשֵּׁם  
וְאֵין כֹּחַ בְּאָדָם לְהִבִּינֵם. כָּל אֵלּוּ דְּבָרָיו:

וְאֵנִי תָמָּה מִי עוֹר עֵינֵי שִׁכְלוֹ בְּזֶה, כִּי  
הִנֵּה אֲבָרָהָם הֵנִיחַ לוֹ הוֹן רַב,  
וְאֵבֶר הָעֵשָׂר הָהוּא מִיד קֹדֶם הָעֲנָן הָזֶה,  
וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה בָּזָה אֶת הַבְּכוֹרָה, כִּי הִדְבֵּר הָזֶה  
הָיָה בְּנְעוּרֵיהֶם קֹדֶם הָיִיתָ לַעֲשׂוֹ נָשִׁים  
כְּאֲשֶׁר יִסְפֵּר הַכְּתוּב, וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן חֲזַר  
וְהָעֵשָׂר בְּאַרְץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים עַד כִּי גָדַל מְאֹד  
וַיִּקְנֶאוּ בּוֹ שָׂרֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים, וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן חֲזַר  
לְעֵנָיו וְהִתְאַוָּה לְצִיד בְּנוֹ וְהַמְטַעַמִּים, וְאֵין  
אֵלּוּ רַק דְּבָרֵי שְׁחֹק:

Furthermore, the verse says, "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that G d blessed his son Isaac." Now the blessing refers to increase of wealth, possessions and honor, but where was His blessing if he lost the wealth of his father and became impoverished? Afterwards it says, "And I will be with Thee, and I will bless thee," (but according to Ibn Ezra you will have to say that Isaac] became rich and then poor! And if it be true that in matters of wealth, "There are righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked," this does not apply to those righteous men who have been expressly blessed by the Holy One, blessed be He, since "the blessing of the Eternal maketh rich, and no sorrow is added thereto."

Rather, the patriarchs all were as kings before whom kings of the nations came and with whom they made covenants. Now it is written concerning Isaac and Abimelech, "And they swore one to another." But if Isaac had suffered bad fortune and lost his father's wealth, how did [Abimelech, King of the Philistines, and Phichol, the head of his army], say, we saw plainly that the Eternal was with thee, when he was already in financial difficulty? Rather, Esau's disdain of the birthright was due to his brutal nature.

It is possible that the law of double portion to which the firstborn is entitled according to the statutes of the Torah was not in effect in ancient times. [At that time the birthright] was only a matter of inheriting the pre-eminence of the father and his authority so that he [the firstborn] would receive honor and distinction in relation to his younger brother. It is for this reason that Esau said to Isaac, I am thy son, thy firstborn, meaning to say that he is the firstborn who deserves to be blessed. Similarly, Joseph said to his father, [Jacob], "For this is the firstborn; put thy hand upon his head," thereby meaning that Jacob should give him precedence in the blessing. Perhaps the firstborn also took slightly more of the inheritance since the law of double portion is an innovation of the statutes of the Torah.

וְעוֹד, כִּי הַכְּתוּב אָמַר (לְעִיל כ"ה י"א)  
וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֶךְ  
אֱלֹהִים אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ, וְהַבְּרָכָה תּוֹסֶפֶת  
בְּעֶשֶׂר וּבְנִכְסִים וְכְבוֹד, וְאַיֵּה בְּרָכְתּוֹ שְׂאֵבֵד  
הוֹן אָבִיו וְהָעֲנִי, וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן (לְהֵלֵן כ"ו ג')  
וְאַהֲיָה עִמָּךְ וְאַבְרָכְךָ, הָעֶשֶׂר וְהָעֲנִי אַחֲרֵי  
כֵן. וְאִם יֵשׁ צְדִיקִים שְׂמִינִיעַ אֲלֵיהֶם  
כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָרָשָׁעִים בְּעֵנֶן הָעֶשֶׂר אֵין זֶה  
בְּאוֹתָם שְׁנֵתְבָרְכוּ מִפִּי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,  
כִּי בְּרָכַת ה' הִיא תַעֲשִׂיר וְלֹא יוֹסֵף עֲצָב  
עִמָּה (מִשְׁלִי י" כ"ב):

אָבִי הָיוּ הָעֲבוֹת כָּלֶם כְּמַלְכִּים, וּמַלְכֵי  
גוֹיִם בָּאִים לְפָנֵיהֶם וְכוֹרְתִים עִמָּהֶם  
בְּרִית, וְכְתוּב (לְהֵלֵן כ"ו ל"א) וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ אִישׁ  
לְאַחִיו, וְאִם הָיָה יִצְחָק רַע הַמֶּזֶל מֵאַבְד  
נִכְסֵי אָבִיו, אֵיכָה אָמְרוּ רָאוּ רָאִינוּ כִּי הָיָה  
ה' עִמָּךְ (שֵׁם שֵׁם כ"ח), וְכִבֵּר הָיָה בְּעוֹכְרָיו.  
אָבֵל בְּזוּי הַבְּכוֹרָה לַעֲשׂוֹ לְאַכְזָרִיוֹת לְבוֹ:

וַיִּתְּבֵן כִּי פִי הַשָּׁנִים בְּבְכוֹרָה מִמִּשְׁפָּטִי  
הַתּוֹרָה לֹא הָיָה בֵּן לְפָנִים, רַק  
לְנַחַל מַעֲלַת הָאָב וּשְׁרָרְתּוֹ, שְׂיָהִיָּה לוֹ  
כְּבוֹד וּמַעֲלָה עַל צְעִירוֹ. וְלִכֵּן הָיָה אוֹמֵר  
לְיִצְחָק אֲנִי בֶנְךָ בְּכֹרֶךְ (לְהֵלֵן כ"ז ל"ב), לוֹמֵר  
כִּי הוּא הַבְּכוֹר הָרָאוּי לְהִתְבָּרֵךְ, וְכֵן כִּי זֶה  
הַבְּכוֹר שִׁים יְמִינְךָ עַל רֹאשׁוֹ (לְהֵלֵן מ"ח  
י"ח), לְהַקְדִּימוֹ בְּבְרָכָה, וְאוֹלֵי הָיָה נוֹטֵל  
גַּם בְּנַחֲלָה יוֹתֵר מֵעֵט כִּי דִין פִּי שָׁנִים  
מִחֲדוּשׁ מִשְׁפַּט הַתּוֹרָה:

And as for the venison in his mouth which Isaac desired so strongly, this is in keeping with the custom of princes and kings. They prefer venison above all food, and out of fear, all nations bring them gifts of venison. Esau flattered his father by bringing him all the venison so that he may always eat of it to his heart's content, and the love of a father for his firstborn is easily understood.

As for Isaac's saying that he would bless Esau after he had prepared the savory meats for him, that was not a reward or a recompense for the food. Instead, he wanted to derive some benefit from him so that his very soul would be bound up in his at the time that he brought him the food so that he would then bless him with a complete desire and a perfect will. Perhaps Isaac discerned in himself that following the meal his soul would be delighted and joyous, and then the Ruach Hakodesh would come upon him, [as was the case with Elisha the prophet, who said], "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Eternal came upon him."

And as for not giving wealth to Jacob, that was [not due to Isaac's poverty but rather] because Jacob was fleeing for his life. He left the country alone without his brother's knowledge, and had he been given along wealth, servants and camels, they would have increased his enemies' jealousy and resulted in their ambushing him and killing him. Our Rabbis do indeed say that Jacob was robbed.

וְהַצִּיד אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּפִיו, בֶּן יַעֲשֵׂי הַשְּׂרִים  
וְהַמְלָכִים, בּוֹחֲרִים בְּצִיד מִכָּל  
מֵאֲכָל, וְכָל הָעַמִּים יוֹבִילוּ מֵהֶם שִׂי  
לְמוֹרָא. וְהָיָה עֲשׂוֹ מַחְנִיף אֶת אָבִיו לְהַבִּיא  
כָּל צִידוֹ אֶל פִּיו לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ כְּרָצוֹנוֹ  
תָּמִיד. וְאַהֲבַת הָאָב לְבָנוֹ הַבְּכוֹר קִלָּה  
לְהַבִּיא:

וַיְמַה שְּׂאֵמֶר לְבָרֶךְ אוֹתוֹ אַחֵר עֲשׂוֹת לוֹ  
הַמְטַעֲמִים אֵינָנו שֹׂכֵר הָאֲכִילָה  
וְשִׁחַד בָּהֶם, אֲכָל רָצָה לְהֵנוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ  
שֶׁתְּהִיָּה נַפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּנַפְשׁוֹ בְּעֵת הַהִנָּאָה,  
וַיְבָרֶךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּחַפְזָא מְלֵא וְרָצוֹן שְׁלָם. אוֹ  
שֶׁהִיָּה יוֹדֵעַ בְּנַפְשׁוֹ כִּי אַחֵר הָאֲכִילָה הִיָּתָה  
מִתְעַנְּגָת וּשְׂמִיחָה וַיַּחֲוֵל עָלָיו רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ,  
כְּעִנְיָן וְעֵתָה קָחוּ לִי מִנְגֵן וְהָיָה כְּנִגֵן  
הַמִּנְגֵן וַתְּהִי עָלָיו יָד ה' (מ"ב ג' ט"ו):

וְלֹא נָתַנוּ בְּיַד יַעֲקֹב הוֹן כִּי בּוֹרַח הָיָה,  
וּבְלֹא יָדִיעַת אָחִיו יָצָא מִן הָאָרֶץ  
לְבָדּוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ נָתַנוּ לוֹ הוֹן וְעַבְדִּים וְגַמְלִים  
הָיוּ מוֹסִיפִים לוֹ קִנְיָאָה לְאַרְבֵּי לוֹ וּלְהִרְגוֹ.  
וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ אָמְרוּ (ב"ר ס"ח ב') שֶׁגִּזְלוּהוּ מִמֶּנּוּ:



And who has told Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra that Jacob had no costly garments, fine linen and silk and embroidered robes? Rather, Scripture states that when going to the field to hunt, Esau would change his garments for his hunting clothes, and due to the fact that [because of his dim eyesight], Isaac always touched his son and his clothes with his hands, Rebekah clothed Jacob with them lest he recognize him by his clothes. You see that this is precisely what Isaac did: "And he smelled the odor of his garments" because he had put them among calamus and cinnamon, even as it is written, Myrrh and aloes, and cassia are all thy garments. The spices grew in the Land of Israel, and it is for this reason that Isaac said, The odor of my son is as the odor of a field. Because he was a man of the field his garments had the odor of the field or that of the blossoms of the trees, just as our Rabbis explained it: As the odor of a field of apples.

And as for the question raised above concerning the quality of Isaac's lack of vision, it is a question raised by the ignorant, for if it was brought about especially by G-d, it was in order that Isaac bless Jacob, this being the purport of the verse, And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, he called Esau. And in line with the natural meaning of Scripture, this was but a manifestation of old age, the explanation of the verse being as follows: "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim in his old age, he called Esau." Now of Jacob himself it is said later on, "Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see." Of Achiyah the Shilonite it is also written, "Now Achiyah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age," and concerning Moses our teacher it is related with wonder "that his eye was not dim."

ומי אמר לו שלא היו ליעקב בגדים  
חמודות שש ומשי ורקמה, אבל  
הכתוב אמר כי עשו בלכתו השדה לצוד  
היה מחליפם בבגדי הציד, ומפני שיצחק  
ממשש תמיד בבנו ובבגדיו הלבשה  
אותם את יעקב פן יכירו בהם, והלא  
אתה רואה שעשה פן וירח את ריח בגדיו  
(להלן כ"ז), כי היה משים אותם בתוך  
גיד וכרכום, כענין שכתוב (תהלים מ"ה ט)  
מור ואהלות קציעות כל בגדתיך, והיו  
הבשמים צומחים בארץ ישראל. ועל פן  
אמר "כריח שדה", כי בעבור היותו איש  
שדה הריחו בגדיו מהם. או ריח ציצי  
האילנות, כמו שאמרו רבותינו (תענית  
כ"ט:) כריח השדה של תפוחים:

והשאף על מאור עיניו שאלת עורי  
לב, כי אם היתה סבה מאת  
השם, הנה היא כדי שיכרך את יעקב,  
והוא ספור הכתוב (להלן כ"ז א') ותכהין  
עיניו מראת ויקרא את עשו. ועל דרך  
הפשט איננו רק ענין הזקנה, וטעמו ויהי  
כי זקן יצחק ותכהין עיניו בזקנתו קרא  
את עשו, והנה ביעקב (להלן מ"ח י') ועיני  
ישראל כבדו מזקן לא יוכל לראות, וכתוב  
באחיה השילוני (מ"א י"ד ד') כי קמו עיניו  
משיבו, ויספר במשה רבנו פלא (דברים  
ל"ד ז') לא כהתה עינו: