



DVAR TORAH TOLDOS



By: Rabbi Chaim
Yeshaya Freeman

The Power of the Brachos and Our Eternal Mission

Yitzchok Avinu intended to give the brachos to Esav, the firstborn, as the rightful heir. However, Rivkah Imeinu, guided by prophecy, knew that Yaakov was destined to carry out Hashem's mission. How could she ensure the brachos reached the correct son? She carefully instructed Yaakov how to dress, speak, and act in Esav's place, fully aware that this involved significant personal risk.

The outcome makes it clear that Hashem's plan was for Yaakov to receive the brachos. Yet this raises two pressing questions: Why did Hashem orchestrate the episode in such a seemingly deceptive way, with Yaakov disguised as Esav? Why did Rivkah need to risk so much personally?

The Drashos Haran (5) explains that part of Hashem's purpose was to create an eternal tension between Esav and Yaakov. Rashi (Vayishlach 33:4), citing Reb Shimon, notes that Esav's hatred stems from believing the brachos were stolen. Why include such hatred in the divine plan? Rashi (27:40) teaches that the brachos were conditional upon Torah observance. When we stray, Esav has a valid claim, and the Ran explains that this dynamic ensures accountability.

History confirms this pattern: many of the greatest waves of teshuvah were sparked by opposition from Esav's descendants. The Gemara (Megillah 14a) notes that even the removal of Achashveirosh's signet ring, which enabled Haman's decree, ultimately produced more teshuvah than forty-eight Nevi'im.

Despite these challenges, the episode offers profound lessons of chizuk. Bereishis Rabbah (68:7) explains that Yaakov reminded himself, "If I give up, I will forfeit all the efforts my mother invested in securing the brachos." Rivkah's actions were not mere strategy; they modeled unwavering emunah, mesiras nefesh, and clarity of purpose.

What does this teach us today? First, the hatred and antisemitism in the world are not random, they are connected to the story of the brachos. Our success depends on remaining faithful to Torah and mitzvos, seeing challenges as opportunities to fulfill Hashem's plan. Second, Rivkah's courage reminds us that with emunah, clarity of purpose, and perseverance, we can overcome obstacles and leave a lasting impact for future generations.

HALACHA CORNER

POOLS ON SHABBOS

By:
Rabbi Chaim
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Can one go swimming in a pool on Shabbos?

Can one lay in the sun on Shabbos with the intent to get a suntan?

Is one allowed to apply sunscreen on Shabbos?

Regarding swimming, poskim discuss four possible concerns: 1.) sechitah (squeezing water from hair or a bathing suit), 2.) carrying water on the body, 3.) carrying a towel, 4.) gezeirah that one may come to make or repair a flotation device. The concerns of carrying do not apply to a privately fenced area that is halachically a private domain. Also, the concern of making or repairing a flotation device only applies to open natural waters. Nevertheless, there remains a longstanding minhag not to swim on Shabbos due to the concern of sechitah.¹

In regard to suntanning, some poskim² prohibit it because it intentionally darkens the skin (tzovei'a) and it intentionally enhances one's physical appearance (tikkun gavra). However, most poskim³ permit suntanning since the tanning occurs naturally and is not considered a halachic act of coloring.

Concerning sunscreen, thick creams and ointments involve the melachah of memareiach, whereas liquid or spray forms that are applied without smoothing are generally permitted.

Pool: One should not swim on Shabbos even in a fenced-in private pool.

Suntanning: It is a dispute amongst the poskim

Sunscreen: It may be used if it is liquid or spray and applied without smoothing.

1. Shu"t Maharil 139 and Maharil Chadashos 96
2. Minchas Yitzchok 5:32
3. S.S.K 18 fn. 70 and oral ruling of Rav Moshe Feinstein

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9:45
Dvar Torah from local Rabbanim

Kollel Avreichim of Hollywood
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