



FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

Vayishlach – Yaakov’s Authenticity

Genuineness in our relationships is critical.

At the beginning of our Parsha (32:5) Yaakov instructs his messengers, “This you shall say to my master to Eisav: ‘So said your servant Yaakov: I have sojourned with Lavan...’”

We notice that even when speaking privately to his own servants Yaakov refers to Eisav as his master. This would seem odd. Certainly, Yaakov recognized his spiritual superiority and knew as well that he had been given the blessing to rule over his brother. While we can appreciate his adoption of humble language, “your servant, Yaacov,” in the diplomatic message he sends his brother, why would he refer to Eisav as his master in private as well?

Clearly, Yaakov was not ready to present or to be represented with a false standard. He would only ask his servants to address Eisav as the master if he would use the same language privately. And he could honestly do so, as – while he was undoubtedly mindful of his moral and spiritual superiority - he retained an awareness of Eisav being the older brother and occupying a powerful worldly position relative to Yaakov. When he said it, he meant it (see Ramban there).

This quality carries forward to the next generation as we see in next week’s Parsha (37:4), where we read how the brothers of Yosef could not speak with him peacefully. Rashi notes that while the situation described was negative, it nevertheless highlights their integrity as they did not present themselves as friends while harboring hatred in their hearts.

Our relationships with those around us – family, friends, community, and colleagues – are the fundamental elements of our lives. It is critical that we convey a true sense of those bonds, being real and honest. ■

May the Torah learning in this issue be in loving memory of and

לעילוי נשמת my mother

Esther Goldstein ע"ה

לע"נ אסתר בת אהרן צבי ע"ה

on her 16th yearzeit כ"א כסלו

Harriet Goldstein-Mark and family

Condolences to

Jonah Mann and family

on the passing of his brother

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Mann z"l

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים