



RABBI MOSHE HAUER ZT"L

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Rabbi Moshe Hauer's zt"l divrei Torah were enthusiastically read each week by tens of thousands of readers of Torah Tidbits. His sudden death this past *Shemini Atzeret* came as a shock to our community and to the Jewish world at large. In the coming weeks and months we will honor Rabbi Hauer's memory by publishing some of his most compelling and thought-provoking divrei Torah. May the study of his exquisite words of Torah be a source of *chizuk* and bring blessing to his memory.

The Soft Voice of the True Torah Personality

In this piece, from 2024, Rabbi Hauer zt"l alludes to those who use strident voices when disagreeing with others, even when the substance of the disagreement is just. The voice of one truly influenced by the Torah is one that maintains its pleasantness in every interaction.

Torah was given to shape our personalities and to inform and uplift our every interaction, integrating our learning with our values and actions and producing people of wisdom, faith, and elevated character. These qualities are bundled into the single phrase "*hakol kol*

Yaakov, that voice is the distinct voice of Yaakov," describing a voice with three qualities: First, it was pleasant and appealing, *m'daber b'lshon tachanunim*, free of the gruff and demanding assertiveness characteristic of Eisav. Second, it was faithful, *shem shamayim shagur b'piv*, spurning human arrogance in favor of humble prayer and acknowledgment of our dependence on G-d. Finally, it was wise and searching as it engaged in the unending pursuit of the wisdom of Torah. The power of G-d and His Torah to shape man in His image is visible only when all these qualities come together in the Torah personality, as Rambam (Yesodei Hatorah 5:11) wrote, based on Yoma 86a:

When a Torah scholar conducts himself carefully, speaks pleasantly, relates well socially, greets people warmly, does not humiliate them even when he is humiliated by them, honors even those who disrespect him, is trustworthy, and does not while away

**Condolences to
Rabbi & Mrs. Shlomo Marcus
on the passing of their daughter**

TALI LIBA a"h

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

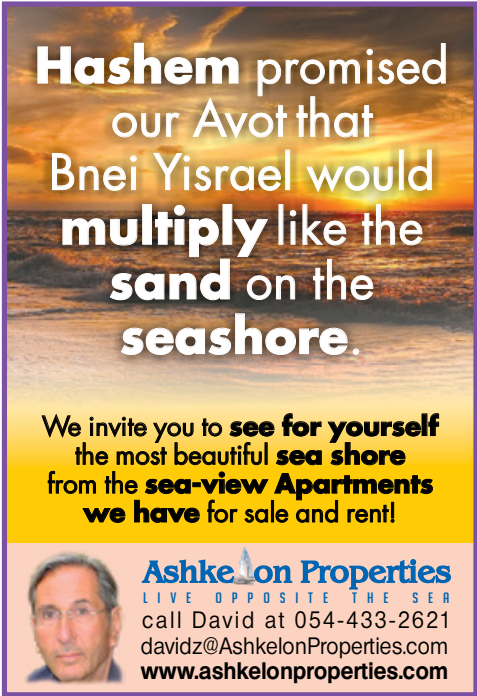
his time in idle social settings but is seen at all times studying Torah, wrapped in *tzitzit*, crowned with *tefillin*, carrying out all his deeds beyond the measure of the law in a way that does not seem alien and extreme and that leads others to praise him, love him, and find his deeds worthy of emulation - such a person sanctifies Hashem's name. The verse [Isaiah 49:3]: "And He said to me: Israel, you are My servant, in whom I will be glorified" refers to him.

Thus, even when Yaakov had to deceive his father so that he would be empowered by his blessings and prevent the dominance of his wicked brother Eisav, he could not and would not compromise on his characteristic humility, pleasantness, and refinement. While he disguised himself in Eisav's clothes and used the hairy goatskins to cover up the smooth skin on his arms, he chose to risk discovery rather than speak even for a few moments with his brothers' language and tone (see Rashi to Bereishit 27:21-22). Yaakov represented the ideal image of man whose beauty was reminiscent of that of Adam (Bava Batra 58a), the original person created in G-d's image and endowed with the uniquely human power of speech. That capacity was the ultimate tool of human relationship and must always reflect the *tzelem Elokim*, the divine image within us.

Yaakov even did his best towards Eisav. While he did what he had to do in taking from him the birthright and the blessings, he understood how justifiably angry Eisav was with him. Rather than "being angry back" and perpetuating the confrontation, Yaakov left for a while to allow things to calm down, and then – upon his return – made every effort to minimize their tensions

by humbling himself before Eisav and even claiming defeat rather than triumph (see parshat Vayishlach).

"*Hakol kol Yaakov*, that voice is the distinct voice of Yaakov." Torah scholars and all those who speak in the name of Torah bring honor to Torah when they display unrelenting humility and pleasantness, demonstrating gratitude rather than triumphalism, and refusing to adopt the voice of Eisav, the gruff, arrogant, and strident language and tone of the political battlefield. ■



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