

In this week's פרשה ויצא, פרשה (30:22): וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת רַחֵל וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵי אֶלְקִים וַיִּפְתָּה אֶת רַחֵמָהּ. What does רש"י say on this? That רחל remembered רחל because she gave the signs to her sister לאה, enabling her to take her place and marry יעקב. The topic we will discuss this week is ותרנות (the quality of yielding to others).

There was once a gathering arranged before ראש השנה to inspire people in preparation for יום הדין. The organizers asked רב חיים קניבסקי which מידה would be the most important to focus on. רב חיים responded that the key מידה is to be מוותר - to give in to others. A person should never insist on their rights but should always be willing to yield. The only exception, he said, is in matters of רוחניות, where one must not compromise. In all other areas, being מוותר is the best approach, particularly when one is under judgment.

A story illustrates this concept. In the famous Lederman shul, where רב חיים davened, a man who regularly attended the 8 o'clock מנין wanted to daven in the minyan on his father's יארצייט. However, another man who was within a year of his father's פטירה regularly davened at the minyan. The general rule is that someone with a יארצייט takes precedence, but a regular is not displaced by a stranger. The question brought before רב חיים was whether the term "regular" is defined by the shul or by the specific מנין.

רב חיים ruled that the regular status is determined by the מנין. Therefore, the man with the יארצייט could not take the עמוד from the regular ציבור. However, רב חיים added that the regular ציבור could choose to forgo his rights and allow the יארצייט to lead.

Someone asked רב חיים: How could the regular ציבור be מוותר? Leading the davening is a זכות for his father's נשמה! רב חיים explained that the זכות of being מוותר outweighs the זכות of serving as חזן. Thus, if the regular ציבור would yield, it would be a net gain for his father. This idea appears in other ספרים as well and aligns with the consistent clarity of רב חיים's decisions.

The discussion didn't end there. The regular ציבור's father had been a tough individual who never yielded during his lifetime. Could his son now act against his father's approach? רב חיים ruled that the father's conduct was influenced by the fleeting nature of עולם הזה. Now, in the עולם האמת, the father fully appreciates the immense זכות of being מוותר and would eagerly embrace such a chance.

רב חיים often emphasized that one never loses by being מוותר. Someone once asked him, "What have you gained from your ותרנות?" רב חיים replied, "I have often seen that ה' protects me in matters of ציבור. Even when I lack crucial information, ה' ensures I learn what I need to know."

When this was shared with רב חיים, someone asked how such protection is מידה כנגד מידה for being מוותר. רב חיים explained that when dealing with ציבור, it is nearly impossible to avoid mistakes entirely due to the complexities of life. Yet, because רב חיים consistently acted משורת הדין, Hashem treated him in kind, going beyond natural expectations and ensuring he had the knowledge he needed.

רב חיים once used himself as an example of the rewards of ותרנות. He said, "When the סטייפלר passed away, halachah dictates that sons inherit before daughters. Yet רב חיים, the only son, gave up his rights to the ירושה and transferred the publishing rights of his father's ספרים - קהילות יעקב - שו"ת, חי עולם, and שו"ת - to his sister, the widowed Rebbetzin Barzam. Did רב חיים lose anything from this act? Certainly not! Hashem repaid him in full measure". When someone asked רב חיים why he gave up the rights to his father's sefarim, he responded with his characteristic humility: "אבא lived in her house for many years. She deserved it." To him, it wasn't extraordinary - it was simply the right thing to do.

From these stories, we see the power of ותרנות and the great מידות of our גדולים. Let us take these lessons to heart and try, even in small ways, to emulate them and improve ourselves.

