

Complete this week and this one also will be given to you for the work which you will do for me for another seven years. And Yaakov did so. (29:27-28)

We may be puzzled by Yaakov's passive acquiescence to Lavan's proposal. Surely, Lavan had no legal or moral claim for Yaakov to work another seven years to receive Rachel as a bride, which their original contract had stipulated. After seven years, Lavan acted reprehensibly towards Yaakov by putting Leah under the *chupah* in place of Rachel. Yaakov clearly owed Lavan nothing, since he had explicitly stated his desire to marry Rachel. Why did Yaakov accede to Lavan's manipulation without objection?

Horav Dovid Feinstein, Shlita, suggests that Yaakov's actions were motivated by his sensitivity to Leah's feelings. He knew that Leah's self-esteem would be destroyed if he were to protest working seven years for Leah in place of Rachel. Imagine Leah's despondency, her feelings of dejection, over this hypothetical reaction.

Horav Feinstein notes the great demands that the *Torah* places upon us in our relationships with our fellow man. Rather than demean Leah, Yaakov was willing to dedicate an additional seven years of his life to working for the unethical Lavan in an atmosphere entirely antithetical to *Torah*. Inherent in the arrangement, Yaakov was giving up another seven years of *Torah* study! Yaakov did not view these seven years as unnecessary "*bitul Torah*", cessation of *Torah* study, since its performance was critical to Leah's continued self-esteem. How much more so should we be ever vigilant in our speech and actions in order not to cause harm to another person's feelings.