

THE DIGNITY OF MAN

Background

Yaakov pleaded with his son, Yosef, “Please do not bury me in Mitzrayim,” and to make sure that his wishes would be carried out, he even made his son swear. This is clearly something that was of major concern to Yaakov. The *Dos Zakainim* explains his fear: Yaakov was afraid that if he would be buried in Mitzrayim, HASHEM would not bring the Ten Plagues out of respect for him.

ספר בראשית פרק מז

כט) וַיִּקְרָבוּ יְמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמוֹת וַיִּקְרָא לְבָנוֹ לְיוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִם נָא מָצְאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ שִׁים נָא יָדְךָ תַּחַת יְרֵכִי וְעָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדֵי חֶסֶד וְאַמַּת אֶל נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרַיִם

And the day that Yaakov was to die drew near, and he called to his son Yosef and said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, place your hand under my thigh, and do for me a favor and truth: please do not bury me in Mitzrayim.”

דעת זקנים מבעלי התוספות על בראשית פרק מז פסוק כט

ואומר ר"ת שהיה ירא שלא ינצלו מצרים מעשר מכות בעבורו אם יקבר במצרים שהרי נקרא ישראל שה פזורה ומצרים נקראים חמורים שנאמר אשר בשר חמורים בשרם וכתוב פטר חמור תפדה בשה

Rabbeinu Tam teaches that Yaakov was afraid that he would save Mitzrayim from the Ten Plagues if he would be buried there, as Yaakov is called the redeemer and the Mitzrim are called donkeys.

Questions

Aren't the Ten Plagues of extreme importance? They are signs of HASHEM's control over the world we live in and are part of our *emunah* system. Why would Yaakov think that if his body were buried in Mitzrayim, HASHEM wouldn't bring the *makos*? First, that was many years in future, and by then, Yaakov's being buried there would be ancient history. Second, it was only his body being buried there, not him. And finally, even if HASHEM wanted to show some sign of respect, He could leave that small area of Yaakov's grave unaffected and still bring the plagues over the rest of Egypt.