

פרשת ויחי

ויאמר השבעה לי וישבע לו וישתחו ישראל על ראש המטה [מז,לא]

רש"י brings down two explanations why יעקב bowed now. The second פשוט is that he bowed in thanks to Hashem that all of his offspring were צדיקים. Even יוסף who was the king of מצרים and lived amongst the גוים remained righteous. This incident took place towards the end of יעקב's life after living in מצרים for seventeen years. If so why did יעקב bow down now after asking יוסף to bury him in ארץ ישראל? After being together with יוסף for so many years he surely must have recognized the righteousness of יוסף?

יעקב requested from יוסף that he bury him in ארץ ישראל, and made יוסף swear that he would do it. The Ramban explains that יעקב did not suspect יוסף of disregarding his instructions, rather he was concerned that פרעה would not allow it. There were many reasons for פרעה to stop יוסף from carrying out his father's wishes. He might say that יוסף was needed in מצרים to run the country and can't leave. Furthermore he may insist on burying יעקב in מצרים as a blessing for the country, a national monument or for some other reason. To prevent this from happening יעקב made יוסף swear. Now that he swore, he would be bound to fulfill his father's oath come what may. יעקב understood that there was a good chance that פרעה might become upset with this decision and it may jeopardize יוסף's position. Nevertheless, יוסף still swore and any possible repercussions would not deter him. It was at this time that יעקב saw the true nature of יוסף. Although he had the highest position in the country, this was not of real importance to him. His true allegiance was with his father and not with פרעה, even at the expense of his career. Now יעקב could bow down and give his thanks for truly righteous children.

Many times we too are faced with challenges of doing what we want or doing what's right. Like יוסף, we need to keep in mind what holds real value and importance. When we recognize that our true place is with our Father in heaven, we will be able to overcome any obstacles and נסיונות and ultimately bring us closer to Hashem.

Have a good Shabbos.

Rabbi Yitzchok Davis

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