

"So now let Pharaoh look for a man discreet and wise. And set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, appoint officers over the land and impose a fifth on the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty." (41:33,34)

Yosef advised Pharaoh to seek a wise man who would be capable of managing Egypt during the ensuing years of plenty and famine. Yosef was chosen for this position because of his profound wisdom. He proceeded to suggest that food be stored during the years of plenty in order to provide sustenance for the Egyptian people during the approaching years of famine. At first glance, Yosef's advice hardly indicates great wisdom! Any person with minimal intelligence would realize that one must prepare for the years of famine during the years of abundance. What was the mark of Yosef's great wisdom?

Horav Y. Lubshensky, z.l., suggests that upon careful scrutiny, Yosef's advice appears to be indicative of one who is particularly perceptive. People who are not currently in need will rarely concern themselves about the future. Countries that have surplus food, often squander this excess, never giving thought to the morrow. An individual who concerns himself with the future during moments of abundance is a wise unique individual. Thus, Yosef illustrated his prudence. He was able to see the problems that would occur tomorrow, despite the illusionary abundance of today.

We glean this idea from the words of *Chazal* in *Pirkei Avos*: "*Who is a wise man? He who sees what will be born!*" One who is able to anticipate the future, to perceive it as if he were seeing it now, is truly a wise man. It is not sufficient to know what is in store for the future, one must experience this knowledge now.