

“And there, with us, was a Hebrew youth, a slave of the Chamberlain of the Butchers.” (41:12)

A wealthy man once took ill, and no one was able to provide a cure for his malady. The finest physicians that money could buy could not alleviate the illness. A man came along who told the wealthy man, “I know a doctor, a general practitioner who will be able to cure you.” “How is that possible?” questioned the wealthy man. “I have had the most prominent specialists in the world at my side, and none of them has been able to provide a cure. Do you expect me to believe that some unknown doctor can accomplish what has eluded the best doctors?”

The next day, another person came with a strange suggestion: He knew a doctor – well, he was not really a doctor, but he had successfully treated a number of seriously ill people. Perhaps, he might succeed in treating the wealthy man’s illness. The wealthy man quickly responded affirmatively “By all means, let him attempt to cure me,” he said.

What is the difference between the simple practitioner and the non- doctor? Why is one acceptable, while the other is not? Should not the doctor take precedence over the one who has practiced with potions?

The answer is simple: If the most distinguished physicians have not been successful, chances are that this person will also not succeed. The second person, however, did not suggest a doctor. Apparently, conventional medicine could do nothing to help him. Why not try something different?

Horav Yitzchak, z.l., m’Volozhin explains that the same idea applies to the *sar ha’mashkim’s*, wine steward’s, suggestion. He knew that if he would tell Pharaoh that he had met a young man in prison who had the ability to interpret dreams, Pharaoh would scoff at him. After all, he had access to the wisest men. Why would he need an itinerant prisoner? Therefore, the *sar ha’mashkim* referred to Yosef as a *naar*, youth, who because of his age had not yet been able to study much. He was also an *eved*, slave, who really had no access to study how to interpret dreams. Last, he was an *Ivri*, Hebrew, who did not believe in magic. Thus, his interpretation of the dream would not be based on the same impure powers from which the Egyptian “wise men” drew their ability to interpret dreams. No, Yosef was a Hebrew slave, who served the Almighty. Therefore, he was blessed with a unique ability to understand the depth of dreams and interpret the message it conveyed. His wisdom is of a profound nature and is G-d given. He can therefore “go” where Pharaoh’s pagans do not have access. Pharaoh accepted this suggestion and was prepared to listen to Yosef’s new approach.