

In three days Pharaoh will lift your head from you and hang you on a tree; birds will eat your flesh from you. (40:19)

Why did Yosef interpret the bakers' dream in this manner? What clue did he have that the baker would die? *Horav Meir Shapiro, zl*, responded by citing a story. Once, at an art festival, the organizers hung up a picture that was drawn by a world-famous artist. It was a picture of a man holding a basket of fruit in his hands. The illustration was so realistic that birds would fly over the picture and attempt to eat the fruit! This picture amazed everyone, to the point that a prize was offered to anyone who could find an error in this picture. A wise man came along and said, "Although the fruits truly appear to be realistic, the man does not. If the man really appeared to be alive, the birds would be afraid to go near him. The birds' bold approach indicates that they know the person is not real." The man received the prize.

Similarly, when the baker said that in his dream the birds ate from the basket that was on his head, Yosef knew that he was a dead man. Otherwise, why would the birds not be afraid to approach him?