

## *A Closer Look- Parshas Vayeishev*

The Text:

*Joseph asks his fellow inmates to tell him their dreams, so he can interpret them.*

“[The Torah means] to speak in praise of Joseph: he was a youth and a slave [while the baker and wine steward were] two prominent officials ...each of whom could have ordered him killed. Yet he was not afraid to ask them [about their dreams], and speak his mind concerning their interpretation, for he trusted in his wisdom - [although] if the baker had escaped [the execution predicted by Joseph], he would have hung him.”

[Ramban - comments to Genesis 40:7]

The Puzzle:

We might have expected to read that Joseph trusted in *God*. Instead, we are told that he trusted his own wisdom. Why is this worthy of praise?

The Answer:

Confidence in our abilities does not negate trust in God. On the contrary: when we recognize that talent is a Divine gift, we can trust that God will help us succeed. Joseph trusted his wisdom *because* it was God-given; had he attributed the power to himself, he might have been too afraid to try.

The Message:

We know that *bitachon* – trust in God’s benevolence – grants us the serenity to deal with life’s challenges. But *bitachon* gives us something else too: the courage to act with the confidence, knowing that God has the power to grant us success.