

# EXPRESS DELIVERY

*by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch*

Last week's Torah portion ended with Yosef (Joseph) languishing in prison, with the Royal Butler forgetting Yosef's request to remember his plight and have him freed from jail. This week, Pharaoh is unable to find someone to interpret his dream of the cows and the stalks of grain to his liking. Consequently, the Butler remembers Yosef and relates the events surrounding his own dream. Upon hearing this, "Pharaoh sent and summoned Yosef, and they rushed him from the pit; he shaved and changed his clothes and he came to Pharaoh." (Beraishis/Genesis 41:14)

Rashi explains that "the pit" refers to the dungeon and that Yosef needed to make himself presentable out of respect for the monarch, but he does not address the significance of Yosef's rush from the pit. Our tradition teaches us that there is not one extra letter in the Torah; every expression used is purposeful. The verse could just have easily reported that Yosef was summoned, shaved, changed, and came to Pharaoh, and the narration would not have suffered. What is the lesson of the "rush"?

Sforno (classic commentary of Rabbi Ovadya Sforno of Rome and Bologna; 1470-1550) explains that all redemptions happen instantaneously. Similar to the story of the Exodus, when the just liberated Jewish nation had no time to allow their dough to rise, from whence came matzos, so too Yosef's personal liberation happened instantaneously, as one moment he was incarcerated and seconds later he was out of jail. Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan of Radin; 1838-1933; author of basic works in Jewish law, thought and ethics and famous for his saintly qualities) takes this theme further, explaining that every event in world history, whether viewed as positive or negative, has an appointed time. When the moment destined to be historic arrives, G-d does not delay a second. Yosef's moment had arrived, and he was out "as quick as a flash."

Chofetz Chaim applies this precept to the eventual arrival of the Messiah (may he come speedily, in our day). In the last chapter of the Prophets, G-d speaks of the time when the Messiah will come. When that appropriate moment comes for our redemption, "suddenly the L-rd Whom you seek will come to His sanctuary," (Malachi 3:1) and He will rush us to from our exile to our Holy Land.

The closing verses of this chapter, part of the haftarah of the Shabbos before Pesach, the celebration of our Egyptian redemption in a time that is predisposed for redemption, affirm "Behold - I send you Eliyahu (Elijah) the Prophet, before the great and awesome day of Hashem." (Malachi 3:23) Why, asks Rabbi Kagan, does G-d say "I send," in the present tense, and not "I will send," in the

future? Because Eliyahu is waiting NOW, he is ready NOW, to fulfill his agency, to alert us to the impending redemption of the Jewish people, to herald the arrival of the Messiah. It is dependant upon us. We need to ready ourselves to accept him.

Have a good Shabbos.

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