

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** In this week's Torah portion we read about the power of prayer. The Torah tells us how Eliezer, Avrohom's slave, goes out to find a wife for Yitzchok. The Torah tells us that Eliezer davened (prayed) that he should find a fitting wife for his master's son. The verse states "And he (Eliezer) said, 'Hashem, G-d of my master Avrohom, may You so arrange it for me this day that You do kindness with my master Avrohom.'" (Bereishis 24:12) The Torah then goes on to describe the meeting between Eliezer and Rivka, who would of course later become Yitzchok's wife. From here we see the power of prayer. Eliezer davened, and his prayers were immediately answered.

Uri Zohar, the famous Israeli actor turned Baal Teshuva, once related an amazing story about the power of prayer. Uri related that he had just received a call from an old friend, someone from his old bohemian days. This fellow and his wife had gone out to the beach in Israel like (unfortunately) so many others on the Holy Shabbos!

After a day of sun bathing the man returned to the car with his wife and soon became aware that he could not find his keys. After checking all his pockets he implored his wife to search the depths of her pocket book for the missing keys. She did so, with no luck. He retraced his steps in the sand back to the place where their blanket had been. No keys. He emptied the nearby trash can. No keys. He looked under the car. Still no keys! People were getting into their cars and driving away with ease and now the sun was a setting. In a moment of desperation and frustration he began to march across the sand and out to the water as his wife looked on in horror.

He waded up to his thighs in water. (At this moment Rabbi Uri Zohar stood from his chair to demonstrate. It was obvious he had lost none of his dramatic flare.) The fellow raised his hands and shouted out, "Elo-him! Elo-him! Give me my keys!" At that very moment, floating in the water, touching his leg were his keys (which floated with the help of a key chain.)

He came back to the car shaken and his wife observed that he had found the keys. He told her that he had found more than the keys. That Sunday morning he gave a call to his old friend Uri Zohar to ask, "Where do I begin? Kashrus, Tefillin, Shabbos!?" We should not be so surprised because three times a day we say, "HASHEM is close all, to all who call out to Him in truth!" (Tehillim 145)

And now for a second story... A couple who had gone to a number of seminars decided months earlier to send their boy and girl to a Hebrew Day School. One day soon after, an amazing story happened which only solidified the family's new found faith. Often times, the father of the family would come home from work earlier than his wife. So, often times, he would take his kids and a few others out to a local park after school. Later he would shepherd them back to the apartment for dinner and homework. That week, when it came time to leave the park, and all the children were around him, he realized that he could not find his keys.

Even if the door man would let them into the building he would be left waiting for hours in the hallway till his wife came home. He began to fret anxiously as he searched and searched for the keys. His eight year old boy, now newly immersed in Yeshiva for only a few months watched as his father became nervous, and he too began to feel upset. So he grasped his tennis ball, the one he had just been playing with and he whispered with sincerity, "HASHEM, please help my father find his keys!" Then he threw the ball any which way with all his might. And... when he went to pick up the bally there were his father's keys touching the ball! (heard from Reb Label Lam, Monsey, New York)

And now for a third story about the power of prayer involving yours truly. Once, I was in a court house and it was raining torrentially, as it often does in New York in the summertime. As I waited in the court lobby, a elderly and crippled attorney looked out of the window pensively, as if to demonstrate his consternation about having to get back to his car in the outdoor parking lot during such a downpour. As we stood and "shmoozed" a the court officer looked about me (with my religious garb) and said, "you must have some pull upstairs, why don't you pray that it stops raining."

I told him that of course I could not promise anything, but that I would do my best. I uttered a silent prayer asking Hashem to stop the rain; my main intent behind the prayer was to make a kiddush Hashem, to make Hashem and the Jewish people "look good." Well, it did not take more than a few minutes, and the rain became a light drizzle. I escorted the elderly and crippled lawyer out to his car. Interestingly enough, neither the court officer nor the attorney acknowledged the amazing nature of my "prayer." Was it a coincidence? Well, one thing is clear, when I prayed, it stopped raining!

A man once came to the Ponevitzher Rav told him that he was concerned that Hashem is "not answering his prayers." The Rav responded, Hashem has answered "not!" The Rav meant to say that not all our prayers are answered in the way we want because only Hashem knows what is the ultimate good and thus, Hashem does not grant all of our wishes in prayer, only those which are for the ultimate good. No prayer is wasted. All heartfelt prayers ascend to the highest heights in Heaven. We do not always see it right away, and sometimes it never appears that our prayers are answered, but we should know that our prayers are always heard! **Good Shabbos Everyone.**