

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's Parsha, we read about the beginning of the redemption from slavery in Egypt. Hashem speaks to Moshe telling him "...I have heard the groan of the Bnai Yisroel whom Egypt enslaves..." We see here that the redemption was largely due to prayer. The following true story will inspire us all to pray with feeling.

From here we can see the power of prayer. Rabbi Abraham Yehoshua Heschel, the Rebbe of Kopischnitz (1888-1967) was a lover of his people. In post-WWII America, he carried the pain and suffering of countless individuals on his weak and frail shoulders. Indeed, often when he heard the problems of others he would break down in uncontrollable weeping. The grief of his fellow Jews tormented him much more than his own afflictions, and countless times the Rebbe put his name and honor at risk in an attempt to help others.

Once a broken survivor of the Nazi inferno showed up at the Rebbe's door. He had just arrived from Europe and was hoping to settle in America. His wife, however, had been refused entry due to her ill health and was on Ellis Island awaiting imminent deportation. The man was inconsolable and indicated that if his wife was indeed deported, he wouldn't think twice about taking his own life. "Don't worry, please don't worry," implored the Rebbe. "I promise you that by next week your wife will be here together with you!"

Upon hearing the Rebbe's words an immediate feeling of calm overtook the distressed man, and greatly relieved, he went away a new person. Rabbi Morgenshtern, one of the Rebbe's disciples who had witnessed the scene, gathered up his courage and asked the Rebbe how it was possible for him to make an outrageous guarantee like that with such ease. It was no less than promising a miracle!

"You saw how desperate the poor man was," the Rebbe replied. "My first concern was to calm him down and thank G-d, I succeeded. At least for the next week he will feel better. If after a week he sees that I was wrong and his wife was deported, he will say, 'Avrohom Yehoshua is not a real Rebbe, Avrohom Yehoshua is a liar.' But at least for a week I succeeded in bringing some peace into his life."

With that the Rebbe took his Tehillim (book of Psalms) and began to recite its verses with intense emotion. As the tears were streaming down his face he could be heard pleading, "Please, G-d, please, see to it that Avrohom Yehoshua didn't say a lie. I was only trying to help a Jew in a pathetic situation. Please don't let me be a liar..." In this fashion his prayers continued long into the night. The Almighty heard his prayers. The woman was granted permission to stay in America, and was reunited with her husband and they lived "happily ever after." The Rebbe's prayers were answered! **Good Shabbos Everyone.**