



# The Method Behind Making Miracles

RABBI SHMUEL POLLEN



**W**ho couldn't use a miracle right now? So, let's discover the method behind making miracles. Here's a hint: You don't have to be a *tzadik* to make one happen.

The key concept to understanding how to make miracles is: Where we end, Hashem begins. Only once we've given up *everything* is Hashem able to make *anything* happen.

Every miracle works this way.

Basya, Pharaoh's daughter, saw that Moshe's basket was too far away to reach. So, she simply stretched out her arm as far as it could possibly go. She didn't know a miracle would happen. Stretching her arm out this way had a high probability of making her look like a fool.

Little did she know. She had hit on the formula. She had done *everything* possible, and totally let go of her ego, so Hashem made *anything* happen. Her arm miraculously extended, saving the savior of the Jewish people.

Nachshon Ben Aminadav, amid chaos and confusion,

walked into the Red Sea until his nostrils. He didn't know a miracle would happen. He was willing to give up his entire life to follow Moshe's instructions. Once his life was practically over, Hashem began. And the sea split.

When there was a drought, Choni Hamagal made a circle and promised not to leave until it rained. He gave up his ability to move. Motion is what differentiates the living from the dead. So, when there was no more "Choni," there was only Hashem. That's when the rain came pouring down.

Eliyahu stood up against the priests of Baal at Har HaCarmel. There he put the reputation of the Al-mighty Himself on the line, with a challenge as to who would merit a fire from heaven. What would be left of the Jewish people if that fire didn't come down? Not much. As he waited and prayed, and realized all was about to be lost, Hashem was found. Hashem made the fire come down and lick up the sacrifices amid joy and celebration.

The Maccabees were 14,000 poorly trained, poorly equipped Jews against 40,000 Seleucid Greeks who were armed to the

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teeth and had a herd of war elephants. It made no logical sense to fight this war. They were "dead men walking." But that is precisely why they won the war in miraculous fashion.

On Chanukah the Jews had only one jar of pure oil. They needed to light the menorah for eight days. The rational solution would be to pour one eighth of a jar every day until new oil arrives. But that would be logical and miracles only begin where logic ends.

They dumped it all in on the first day, because if they had a chance to do a *mitzvah* properly now, they would give up everything else to do that. Once they had given over every last drop of oil that they had, Hashem was able to do what He does. He kept that oil burning for all eight days.

Elisha brought a boy back to life, but the boy had to die first.

Chanina ben Dosa's daughter lit vinegar, but only after she had nothing else to light with and her heart was completely broken.

The Jews were miraculously saved on Purim. But only after Queen Esther did something that could have gotten her killed (entering Achashverosh's quarters without being invited).

That miracle also was precipitated by three consecutive days of fasting under the threat of annihilation, which certainly made the Jews feel they had "nothing left."

If you want to make a miracle right now, here's the formula: Set an impossible goal. Choose a *mitzvah* or a *hidur mitzvah* that you think is *way* beyond your abilities.

Then, give over your entire self to achieving it. Keep going until there's no "you" left. Until there's no ego left. Until your heart has absolutely been through the wringer. Fight for it like you've never fought for anything in your life. Then, when it seems like there's nothing else that you can possibly do, Hashem will take you to your goal in miraculous fashion. This actually works.

Even if you don't get the miracle you seek, realize that another miracle has occurred. You have transcended your nature. There are miracles that happen outside of you, and miracles that happen inside of you. Who is to say which is greater?

Jews do not sit idly by and wait for miracles to happen. Hashem makes miracles "*baderech*." In motion. Miracles happen when you're on your way to fulfill a G-dly mission



# Will There Be Miracles When Moshiach Comes?

RABBI NAFTALI SILBERBERG

**T**he prophet Yeshayah depicts the Messianic era as a miraculous time. “A wolf shall live with a lamb, a leopard shall lie with a kid, a calf and a lion cub and a fatling [shall lie] together, and a small child shall lead them. A cow and a bear shall graze, and their children shall lie together; and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw” (*Yeshayah* 11:6–7). The Torah, too, promises (*Vayikra* 26:6): “I will remove wild beasts from the Land,” which seems to imply a new supernatural order. Nevertheless, the words of our sages seem to contain conflicting messages.

On one hand, the *Midrash* and *Talmud* are replete with statements regarding fantastic miracles that will be commonplace during the Messianic era. For example, the *Talmud* (*Shabbat* 30b) tells us that women will give birth, and trees will produce new harvests, on a daily basis, and trees will also sprout ready-made cakes and even clothing!

On the other hand, the *Talmud* (*Brachot* 34b) asserts that “the only difference between today and the Messianic era is [that then will end the Jewish nation’s] subjugation to foreign powers.”

Rambam writes (*Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings* 12:1) that the Messianic era will not be characterized by supernatural phenomena. Instead, he understands Yeshayah’s prophecy to be allegorical: “The Jews will live peacefully with the most vile of the nations, who are compared to leopards and wolves.” Similarly, he understands all the midrashic statements about the Messianic era to be allegorical. Other great sages, however, vehemently disagreed with Rambam’s interpretation of the Messianic prophecies.

The accepted middle ground is that the Messianic era will consist of two periods. During the first period, the world will be at peace and the Jews will be autonomous—but everything will continue operating according to the laws of nature. The second period, which will commence with the resurrection of the dead, will be completely miraculous.

Nevertheless, the prospect of entirely skipping the first period, and Moshiach immediately ushering in the second supernatural period, is a possibility. The arrival of Moshiach is described in the words of the prophets in two manners. Daniel says (7:13), “Behold with the clouds of the heaven, one like a man was coming.” Zechariah (9:9), on the other hand, describes Moshiach as “humble, and riding a donkey.” The *Talmud* (*Sanhedrin* 98a) reconciles the prophecies: “If the Jews are meritorious, then he will fly in on a cloud. If not, he will ride in on a donkey.”

This implies that if we are meritorious, we will merit Moshiach’s arriving in a miraculous fashion and immediately ushering in a miraculous era. May it be today!



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and you've done absolutely everything you can. Hashem will then take you the rest of the way, miraculously. That's how you make miracles.

Not easy. But possible.

Making a miracle may seem like a big accomplishment and you might think you're not ready for it. Remember that even a "tiny miracle" could be all that is required to tip the scales towards the *Geulah*.

Going out of your comfort zone for Hashem, or your fellow man, for just a moment, is still a miracle that changes the entire world.

A group of high-school students once came to see the Rebbe. The students had each prepared a question, which they posed to him. As the meeting neared its conclusion, one student asked, "I've heard that you can perform miracles. Is that true? Do you have supernatural abilities?"

The Rebbe responded, "Miracle-working isn't limited to a few special individuals; it's something that everyone can access. Each of us has a soul, a spark of divinity, which enables us to rise above the limitations of our physical existence, regardless of how challenging it may seem."

To illustrate his point, the Rebbe announced, "I will show you a miracle right now."

The students were riveted. Perhaps they were waiting for a

levitation or for manna to come down from the ceiling. He continued, "Each of you will now commit to making a positive change in one specific area of your life. Choose something you recognize as necessary, yet have previously believed was beyond your reach. By doing so, you will demonstrate to yourselves that your soul truly has the power to transcend what seems like reality."

May Hashem show us the miracles of the Redemption, which will surpass even the miracles of the exodus from Egypt.

These are the final moments of *galus* and the first moments of *Geulah*, and it is completely impossible that we should remain "children banished from our father's table" (*Brachos* 3a) a moment longer! ❄️



*Rabbi Shmuel Pollen is the author of Inspiration Brewed Daily and All In For Hashem, both available on Amazon. He is the founder of Bnei Noah, a non-profit organization that provides food and medicine to the needy of Gujarat, India. Bnei Noah educates non-Jews about their G-dly purpose and the Seven Noahide Laws. He is also a graduate of Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. To receive Rabbi Pollen's regular emails, visit [shmuelpollen.com](http://shmuelpollen.com).*

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