

Nuclear Power

What is the secret to true miracles?

Miracles

This last week has been difficult for all of us, but we cannot begin to imagine what the people of Ukraine have been going through.

Let me tell you what I know firsthand about the experiences of the Shluchim in Odessa.

This week, in the midst of all the fury of war, they managed to evacuate all the children of their orphanage in a long caravan of buses. They left Odessa on Wednesday, crossed the border from Ukraine to Moldova, then to Romania, then to Hungary, and from there to Germany. They left Odessa on Wednesday morning and arrived in Germany this Friday; just calculate how many hours the children spent on the road.

Thank G-d, they are now safe and sound, in Berlin, out of danger. But that's only a tip of the iceberg of the miracles they experienced.

The project of the evacuation really began six weeks ago, when they saw that the situation was getting worse and realized that they had to be ready to move the children to another country. They contacted the Ukrainian Ministry of the Interior to issue passports, but they were told that the office was very busy; they should return in August!

At first, they seemed to have no choice but to remain in Odessa. But as the situation continued to deteriorate, they realized that they needed to head immediately for the border. Some of the children did not have any documentation, only birth certificates, so they began making phone calls and pulling connections.

Miraculously, they managed to move not only through one border but through four borders. In Moldova and in the other countries, they somehow arranged to be received as guests of the German embassy, and so, despite the long lines of thousands of vehicles attempting to cross the borders, the convoy of buses from Odessa was immediately waved through.

It was truly amazing; a trip which seemed impossible three weeks ago was now aided and abetted by numerous governments.

Many people have defined this war as David versus Goliath; President Zelensky of Ukraine is David, and Putin and the Russian might is Goliath. Impressively, the modern day David, Zelensky, has managed to unite the entire world against the Goliath, which is a miracle in itself.

But what was the secret of how David defeated Goliath?

Nuclear Energy

One of the very disturbing pieces of news over this past week has been Putin's order to his military to step up nuclear readiness to the highest level.

More than seventy years ago, during the Rebbe's first Purim farbrengen, he spoke about the atomic bomb, which, in 1951,

was a brand-new invention. The Rebbe pointed out that “the discovery is that by splitting the atom into tiny particles, an amazing amount of energy could be produced — an amount which previously was thought to have needed a much larger physical basis.”

In other words, the Rebbe said, it’s not a question of quantity. By utilizing the potential in even the smallest quantity — and by splitting that quantity into even smaller particles — amazing things could be accomplished. By nullifying the entity — *bitul hayesh* — minute matter can accomplish great things. (Toras Menachem vol. 2 pg. 315).

The Rebbe learned the following lesson: just as a very small amount can produce enormous nuclear energy which could change the world, so too, one person can influence the entire world. However, the condition is that he nullify himself. When a person reaches a state of mind in which he does not think about himself, and dedicates his life to the purpose at hand, he can discover in himself forces that can change the world. As soon as he recognizes that this matter is beyond his ability — but he is nevertheless willing to give his life for it, G-d comes to his aid and helps him achieve his goal.

This is what happened when David faced Goliath. He knew that he was a little guy, but he nevertheless faced Goliath to save the Jewish people. As he told Goliath, “You come to me with the sword and the spear, and I come to you in the name of the L-rd of hosts, the G-d of Israel” (Shmuel I, 17:45).

When a person knows that he has no chance of winning with his

own abilities, and nevertheless goes into battle because he trusts in G-d, he becomes a worthy vessel for G-d to give him supernatural powers, and a miracle to be done through him.

On this note, there is a short but wonderful chapter of Psalms:

“A song of praise by David: L-rd, my heart was not proud, and my eyes were not haughty, nor did I pursue matters too great and too wondrous for me” (Psalm 131).

The Jerusalem Talmud explains that King David was saying: “My heart was not proud” when Samuel anointed me king over Israel, “my eyes were not haughty” when I killed Goliath, “nor did I pursue matters too great” when I brought back the Ark of the Covenant, “and [nor did I pursue matters] too wondrous for me” when I was reinstated to my kingship (Sanhedrin 2:4). It was David’s humility that made him worthy of these miracles.

Moses Power

This brings us to this week’s Torah portion.

This week, we read in the Torah portion how the People of Israel finished fashioning the Tabernacle and brought it to Moses. Why did they bring it to Moses? Says Rashi: “They were not able to erect it due to the weight of the planks; no man had the power to erect them.” The Tabernacle was very heavy; it was built of 48 planks, each ten cubits high (about 15 feet) and a cubit-and-a-half wide (approximately 2.25 feet) and one cubit thick. In addition, each was plated with gold, which is a heavy material. In other words, each plank weighed more than one ton.

Rashi continues to say that “Moses erected it.” How exactly did

Moses succeed where all the expert builders failed? Rashi continues and says, “Moses said to G-d, ‘How could it be erected by a human being?’ G-d told him: ‘Act as if you are erecting it,’ and it rose by itself” (Pekudei 39:33).

Why did this miracle happen to Moses and to no other? Why was he able to do something that others were not? Because, as the Torah says, “And the man Moses was the humblest of all men on the face of the earth.” (Bihaalosecha 12:13).

Moses personified the ultimate *bitul*, self-abnegation. It was never about him. And when a person reaches such a level, he has nuclear energy; he can move even the heaviest objects.

We find the same idea in the Book of Esther. When Queen Esther went to King Achashverosh to beg for her people, she went without being summoned, knowing full well that one who approaches the king without a summons could be put to death unless the king pardons her. Nonetheless, she chose to go.

The Megillah says that on the third day, as she prepared for this meeting, “Esther put on royalty.” On the most literal level, it means that she wore the royal clothes to appear in her full beauty before the king. But our sages offer a deeper interpretation: “This teaches us that she put on the holy spirit” (Megillah 15a). “Royalty” means that she internalized that the power of salvation does not lie with her; rather, it comes from G-d alone. That is what made the redemption possible.

The Message

Times of war make us realize that we can't always control the

world situation, or even our personal situation. But this very recognition — that everything is in G-d's hands — makes us vessels for the revelation of the Divine powers within us. When we connect to this place in ourselves, we gain nuclear power. As the verse says, "Even the little one will become a thousand, and the young one to a powerful nation — I am G-d, in its time I will hasten it." (Isaiah 60:22)