



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות

לכ"ק אדמו"ר

בקשר עם יום הבהיר י"א ניסן

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' בן-ציון וזוגתו מרת בלומא

ומשפחתם שיחיו

שם טוב

## The Doctor, Our Friend

AS TOLD BY RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (EL PASO, TX)

Three weeks after our daughter Zelda was born on Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5778, my wife started feeling excruciating back pains which were entirely inconsistent with her previous postpartum experiences. We went to a doctor on Thursday afternoon and her diagnosis was that it was probably a muscle spasm that would heal over time, but out of an abundance of caution the doctor ordered blood work to rule out any major issues.

My wife's pain intensified, but her doctor's lack of real concern made us confident it would soon pass.

On Friday afternoon, 2 hours and 15 minutes before Shabbos I was entering a store when my wife called me and said that the doctor just called her and said she must urgently go to the emergency room for a chest x-ray. The blood work indicated that something was very wrong and the rush was so great that she suggested we go to a nearby freestanding emergency room where the wait time would

definitely be much shorter than most hospitals on Friday afternoon.

We were both shocked to hear this and as I rushed home I called a bochur who was at the Ohel at the time and managed to get through to him minutes before Shabbos started in New York. I dictated to him a brief letter to the Rebbe.

"The doctor ordered blood tests for my wife, found reason for concern and is sending us to the emergency room for a chest x-ray. I ask a bracha that everything works out in the best way possible and she should have a *refuah shleima*."

We were convinced we would be back home before Shabbos so we arranged a babysitter to stay with the children and headed to the emergency room together with the baby. We were admitted almost immediately and the doctor on call did not seem overly concerned after hearing

my wife's story but ordered the x-ray anyway since her doctor had sent her in for it.

After the x-ray was done we waited for a while with no news from the doctor. Finally 30 minutes to *licht bentchen* I sought out the doctor and explained to him that if all was well we wanted to get out of there as soon as possible.

"I need to speak with you two. Let's go into the room," he said to me.

"The bad news is that the x-ray shows you have a pulmonary embolism, which is a blood clot in your lungs," he tells my wife. "This is a very serious condition and you must be admitted to a hospital immediately to get you on a course of recovery. The good news is that you are perfectly healthy otherwise and you should get over this with no problem."

At that moment we had a hard time focusing on my wife's serious medical condition and needed to immediately make arrangements for the other children and especially the newborn who would not be able to accompany my wife to the hospital. Fortunately we live a few blocks away from my parents and my mother was able to pick up the children while I raced over to her home with the baby and rushed home to prepare some things we would need in the hospital over Shabbos.

During my short ride my father called me from the Chabad House, where the minyan had already gathered for Kabbalas Shabbos, to find out what was going on. I told him the x-ray found a serious problem, so he called a radiologist who was in shul over to the phone and after I described the situation to him he said that it makes sense we were being sent to the hospital.

As they walked back into shul the radiologist told my father, "That new doctor that's here, he's a pulmonary specialist. He's the guy your son really needs to talk to."

Let me explain who this new doctor was. Several months earlier, Dr. Dan Schuller moved to El Paso to chair the Department of Internal Medicine at a new hospital in town and teach at the local medical school. He lived previously in Omaha, Nebraska and was very close to the shlichim there, Rabbi and Mrs. Mendel Katzman.

When Dr. Schuller moved to town, he visited the Chabad House to purchase *mezuzos* and that was the only time I had met him. He was very preoccupied with setting up his new department and that Friday night was the first time he came to the Chabad House for services.

My father approached Dr. Schuller, described the situation and invited him to the phone to speak with me.

I was already rushing back to the emergency room when my father called me back and said, "Dr. Schuller is here in shul. He is a pulmonary specialist, would you like to speak with him?"



At that moment I felt an overwhelming sensation. Here we were faced with an unfamiliar medical emergency on a late Friday afternoon and the earliest we could hope to see a doctor in the hospital would be Monday morning. Now, I was suddenly given access to a specialist in the field and a doctor that I automatically considered a *rofeh yedid* based on his close relationship with the shlichim in Nebraska.

"Rabbi, don't let them send your wife to the hospital," Dr. Schuller said. "There are new methods to treat this issue and going to the hospital will be counterproductive."

"Doctor, I can't argue with the ER doctor. He's already making arrangements for her transfer."

"I'm coming to the emergency room right now. Don't do anything without me."

Dr. Schuller did not belong to the same network as the emergency room we were in but after I explained to the ER doctor that he is a close family friend and that we very much want his opinion on the matter, he graciously allowed Dr. Schuller to see the x-rays and an interesting debate ensued between the two of them.

For me this was significant since the three main instructions the Rebbe would give in medical situations were to seek a second opinion, to confer with a specialist and a doctor who is a friend. Here, minutes after learning of the emergency we had all three things happening in the emergency room. My wife and I both felt the Rebbe's *brachos* and were confident that all would turn out well.

We ultimately followed Dr. Schuller's advice and he assumed responsibility for her medical treatment going forward, resulting in a complete recovery. **T**

## YOUR STORY

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