



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לע"נ  
מרת חנה רבקה  
בת הרב ר' מנחם מענדל ע"ה  
נלב"ע י"ב אדר ה'תשס"ב  
ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'  
נדפס ע"י  
משפחת לענט שיחיו

## “He can see light!”

AS TOLD BY RABBI SCHNEOR OIRCHMAN (TALLAHASSEE, FL)

Thursday, Lag B'Omer 5778\*, was a very busy morning for us in the Chabad House of Tallahassee. In addition to preparing for the Lag B'Omer event we were hosting later in the afternoon, we were preparing for our newly born son's *bris* which was scheduled for Shabbos morning.

My children were playing in the yard when suddenly I heard a terrifying shriek from my four-year-old son Shmuly. We rushed to him and saw a terrifying scene—an arrow in his eye. The night before, an attendee to our

weekly JLI class had brought a hunting bow and arrow in connection with Lag B'Omer, and it was now tragically in my son's eye.

Frightened by the scene, my wife, Chanie, immediately called 911 while I called someone at the Ohel to notify the Rebbe immediately of the situation and to ask for a *bracha*.

When we arrived at the emergency room, Shmuly was wheeled into an examination room and over a dozen doctors and nurses continuously came in and out of the



room shocked at what they saw. From the outset I was told that it was a miracle the arrow did not do any damage to the brain, but the damage to the eye was very serious.

Word of the accident had spread like wildfire and I was receiving dozens of messages from fellow shluchim in Florida and around the world offering help and referrals to prominent eye specialists, but before we could contemplate the next move it was critical to close up the wound. While we waited for the surgeon to arrive I sat down with a pen and paper and wrote a detailed letter to the Rebbe about what was going on. I also made sure to put on tefillin with the paramedic who took us to the hospital who we had found out was Jewish.

The first surgery took over three hours, much longer than expected. Afterwards the surgeon explained that when she saw the extent of the damage that had been caused to the eye she figured it would be impossible to save the eye and contemplated removing the eye on the spot. However, she has a four-year-old child at home too and she knew that if it was her child on the operating table and there was even a slight chance that the eye could be saved, she wouldn't remove it. This was the second clear and open miracle we experienced with Shmuly's injury and treatment.

On Friday, Shmuly came home with lots of pain medicines, and as we celebrated the *bris* of our son we knew that after the weekend we would have to make a decision where to continue Shmuly's treatment.

The doctors in Tallahassee saw no hope for the eye to recover. The retina was damaged, his lense was dislocated and permanently missing. He could see nothing with that eye, not even light. They told us that we would likely need to have the eye removed.

Hoping for a better diagnosis, we went to see a world renowned retina specialist in Baskin Palmer Eye Institute in Miami. I flew there with Shmuly on Monday, just four days after the injury but very quickly heard that he had the same diagnosis as the other doctors and we had to make a decision about removing the eye.

Leaving the damaged eye can present a risk to his healthy eye and the surgery to save the eye was complicated with very little chance of success and a difficult recovery process. He would need to lay face down for two whole weeks after the surgery, which makes it almost impossible for a four-year-old to endure. On the other hand if the surgery is successful, there is a slight chance to repair the eye. We had two weeks from the day of the injury to make that decision and thus far all the doctors who saw the injury told us we should probably get the eye removed.

Seeing how dire the situation really was, I decided to fly with Shmuly to New York right away so that we can go to the Ohel and ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. When our local doctor heard we were traveling to New York she arranged an appointment for Shmuly to be checked by a top specialist at the Wills Eye Center in Philadelphia.

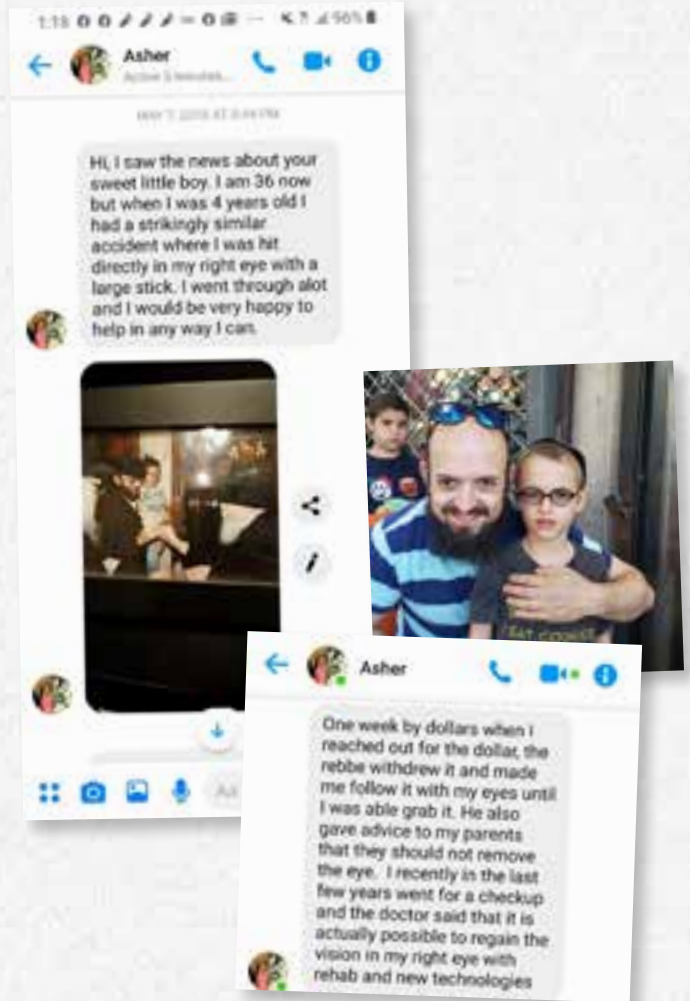
Writing my pan at the Ohel the next day, with Shmuly seated next to me, I poured out my heart to the Rebbe, begging for a clear directive as to how to proceed.

We drove to Philadelphia for our appointment, but the doctor said the same thing. No light means no hope for the eye to recover. However, he suggested that if we wanted another opinion, we could go see Dr. Steve Schwartz in Los Angeles, who he did his residency with. I asked him to arrange the appointment for us and then we drove back to New York to the Ohel.

While driving to the Ohel from Philadelphia, my wife who was at home following through the process from far away, was also asking the Rebbe for clear guidance. Should we remove the eye or not...? At the exact same time she was thinking about it, she received a message on her phone from a person named Asher.

Over 30 years ago, when Asher was a four year old boy, between Lag B'Omer and Shavuot, he had been injured in his eye which was severely damaged. His parents took him to dollars and the Rebbe held the dollar close to his eye and made him follow it. The Rebbe also advised his parents not to remove the eye.





Asher offered to loan us the dollar he had received over 30 years ago so that we should have it during this difficult period.

That was all we needed. Here we are, devastated, trying to make a crucial, painful decision for our four-year-old son, and the Rebbe found a way to answer us!

We were stunned and overwhelmed by this timely and pertinent message. Asher was the exact age our Shmuly was and his ordeal had taken place during the same time period. We felt the Rebbe was telling us not to remove the eye and everything will turn out all right. The special dollar provided us with much confidence and relief.

We went to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for the clear guidance and *brachos* we had experienced and then flew out to Los Angeles. When Dr. Schwartz checked Shmuly he excitedly reported that he was seeing light! After a full week of not seeing light, there was now a change against all the odds.

Now, there was no doubt that we were going to proceed with the surgery, and with Hashem's help and the Rebbe's *brachos* it would be successful.

The surgery was scheduled for Rosh Chodesh Sivan. Before Dr. Schwartz went into the operating room, I asked him if he would put on tefillin in honor of Shmuly

and that he should please hold the Rebbe's dollar in his pocket during the surgery. Dr. Schwartz happily agreed to both requests and after putting on tefillin walked into the operating room to perform the highly complicated surgery to save Shmuly's eye.

A week later at the follow-up visit, the doctor was amazed by the miraculous progress Shmuly's eye was making. Over the next year we continued visiting doctors for various checkups and went to Los Angeles several times as well.

Before Pesach 5779\*, Dr. Schwartz performed one final surgery on the eye and told me that the recovery of this eye from such a wound was a great enough miracle to make him *frum*. **T**

## YOUR STORY

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