



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לעילוי נשמת
ר' בנימין בן ר' דוד ע"ה
גלב"ע ו' אלול ה'תשע"ט
ת'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש וזוגתו מרת חנה רחל שיחיו
נאוואק

Chabad on Campus -
Rohr Center for Jewish Life
at Washington University in S. Louis

Minutes Later

AS TOLD BY RABBI YOSHI MAJERCZYK (BROOKLYN, NY)

It was Thursday night after Purim 5780* when I started experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. I had a high fever, felt very ill, and the next day I was barely able to get out of bed. After spending days in bed burning up with fever, unable to sleep, I contacted my doctor's office and learned that I probably got the coronavirus. They suggested that I drink a lot of fluids, especially Powerade.

Although it's hard to imagine now, at the time almost no one knew what to expect of this new and terrifying virus. One thing I knew with certainty was that this was not the flu. It was much worse.

For two weeks I was unable to function. Even davening was close to impossible and I started becoming confused,

having trouble connecting with events taking place around me.

On Monday, 27 Adar, Hatzalah rushed me to the hospital since I was having trouble breathing. I started to feel relief that now my illness would finally be treated. I was placed in a solitary room on high doses of oxygen but over the next few days my doctors were very concerned that I was not improving and constantly needed higher doses.

I had taken my tefillin with me to the hospital and my rav advised me to just put them on every day even if I could not daven a full Shacharis. I did this every day with great difficulty and needed to recount the straps again and again to be sure I did it correctly.

Thursday evening the doctors entered my room and notified me that if I would need higher doses of oxygen they would need to intubate me. I was too sick to know what that meant but it was scary nonetheless.

By now I had trouble following what they were saying but it became clear to me that things were bleak and I started to fear the worst.

The next day my friend Rabbi Sholom Simon texted me that a group of activists in Crown Heights commissioned a new *sefer Torah* to be written for the recovery of everyone affected by the virus and asked me if he could purchase a letter in the *sefer Torah* on my behalf. I agreed immediately and he made the purchase right away.

Twenty minutes later the doctors rushed into my room and told me that I was suddenly starting to turn around. They said that they just got test results back and my numbers were starting to improve despite what they saw just the evening before.

Still on oxygen, I was transferred on Sunday to a different wing in the hospital together with another Jewish COVID patient and we had each other for company. While I started feeling better and stronger every day, there was no improvement with my oxygen intake and I was not being discharged because I was dependent on the machine.

A few days later, a research doctor came to see me. He informed me that I had beaten the virus but they were not sure why I still needed the oxygen and that this might be my new normal. He said I may need to be connected to the oxygen tanks for the rest of my life. He made arrangements for machines and a few tanks to be delivered to my home in anticipation for my imminent discharge.

I was terrified and devastated to think that I would be hooked up to an oxygen tank for the rest of my life. I'm just 37 years old...

When I received the receipt from the rental of the machine and tanks that were delivered to my home I saw the rental duration was 99 months and I started to really panic. I couldn't bear to think of spending the rest of my life like this.

Unfortunately that time period was a very busy season for the members of the *chevra kadisha* and that day my friend Rabbi Moshe Schmukler was going to the cemetery for a funeral. He called me on the way to see how I was doing and I said to him desperately, "Moshe, please go to the Ohel and daven for me. I can't spend the rest of my life on machines!"

He assured me he would do so.

A few hours later, the research doctor who had previously broken the terrible news to me, returned to my room and apologized.



"I may have scared you earlier unnecessarily. I just reviewed your charts and your imaging and I see now that you are doing much better than I thought. You should make a full or close to full recovery, even if it takes many months."

Looking at my oxygen levels he said, "In fact, you seem to be doing well enough now that you don't need the machine." And with that he disconnected the oxygen machine from my face.

I was stunned by the remarkable turn of events. This was not even my regular doctor, just a research doctor who was studying COVID and he was taking me off the machine!

After a minute I collected myself and called Moshe Schmuckler and asked him, "When were you at the Ohel?"
"Ten minutes ago."

I started shaking. Minutes after my friend mentioned me for a *bracha* by the Rebbe I was already off the machines!

The next day I was discharged and haven't needed an oxygen supply since. I still don't know the extent of the damage (if there was any permanent damage at all), and *baruch Hashem* I have all my energy back and seem to be almost completely back to normal. **1**

YOUR STORY

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