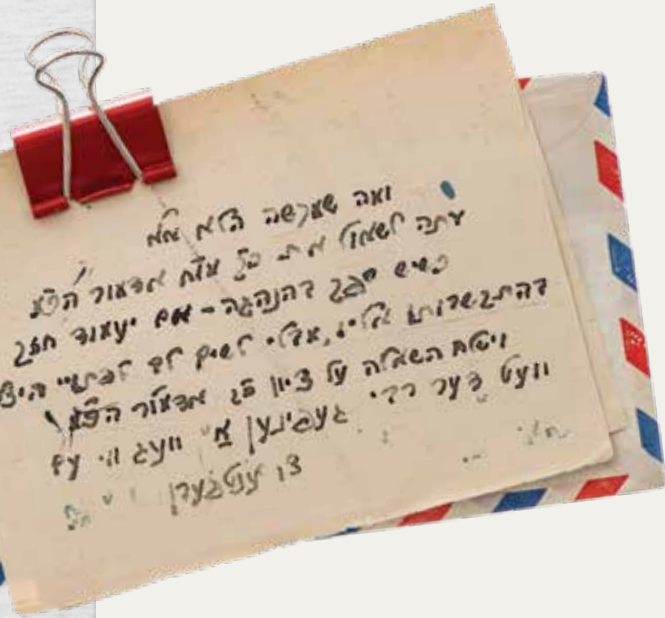




Story

לזכות
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יששכר
שלמה שיחי' בן ח'ל' פייגל
טייכטל
לרגל יום הולדתו לאורך
ימים ושנים טובות

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' דוד חזוגתו מרת פערל
גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל
שמפיין אילינוי



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

“Not What I Was Expecting”



AS TOLD BY
RABBI ENAN FRANCIS
(Houston, TX)

During the month of Adar I 5784 my twelve-year-old son Shaya started feeling a lot of pain in his leg. For years he had felt pain there, and various medical professionals we consulted explained it was regular growing pains. Still, this time he was taking Advil every day to handle it so we decided to take him to an orthopedist. Our appointment was on Friday, 7 Adar 1.

Reviewing the X-rays the Orthopedist said he was not

comfortable with what he saw and instructed us to take him to the hospital for an MRI as soon as possible. At first, we figured this was nothing too serious; but when I showed the X-rays to a friend of ours who is a radiologist, he said, “Enan, your son needs to get a biopsy in addition to the MRI. This doesn’t look good at all.”

The MRI happened on Monday morning and we were told the results would be in within 24 hours, and when I

received them on Tuesday morning, my heart sank. After researching the meaning of the various medical terms in the report, I understood that it described a frightening growth on the bone of Shaya's leg. However, there was no clear diagnosis that it was malignant.

I called my wife with the news and we both came home and cried bitterly. The orthopedist who had ordered the MRI notified us that an oncology team was being assembled to work on Shaya's medical case and we would meet with them on Wednesday afternoon to discuss a plan.

"Doctor, is the growth malignant?" I asked.

"I refuse to discuss the details until we meet with the oncology team tomorrow afternoon."

That was all we needed to hear to go into panic mode. I reached out to friends who are well-connected in the medical community, and within minutes our case was being handled by Chai Lifeline and the Rofeh Cholim Cancer Society (RCCS). The care, concern, expert advice and tremendous help we received from the wonderful doctors and activists of these organizations greatly encouraged us, but it also confirmed that we were potentially dealing with the worst of the worst.

We decided that Shaya, my wife, and I would fly to New York to come to the Rebbe at the Ohel right away unless the doctors at the oncology meeting said we needed to do medical procedures the next day.

Shaya did not join us at the Wednesday meeting. We decided to only give him the information he needed to know. The oncology team refused to diagnose the growth as malignant until Shaya underwent a bone biopsy which they scheduled for the next Wednesday morning. It is an invasive procedure that would force him to walk on crutches for several weeks. The meeting was not encouraging to say the least, and since there were no medical procedures scheduled for the next day, we immediately booked our flights for early the next morning, Erev Purim Katan. We took all our mezuzos with us to be checked as well.

Throughout the flight, my wife and I cried. There is a well-known Chassidische niggun called "*Fort a Yiddele*" which describes the story of a Jew on a boat that capsizes.

He calls out to both his father and mother to save him, but they cannot help. He finally calls out to the Rebbe and the Rebbe says "You will not drown." We sing this niggun often in our home, and during the flight, I told my wife that we were going to the Rebbe and surely the Rebbe will ensure "we don't drown."

She responded that she always had a problem with that *niggun*. How can a mother not possibly help her child? But now she realizes how helpless she is...

We wrote separate letters to the Rebbe and davened at the Ohel for a long time. At one point I took a copy of Shaya's MRI and X-ray, while tearing it before placing it at the Ohel, I thought, "Rebbe, please make sure Hashem tears up this entire problem and it should just go away!"

One of the Rebbe's instructions regarding medical issues is to get a second opinion. On Friday, Purim Katan, I reached out to Rabbi Lazer Lazaroff who runs the Aishel House, a Chabad House dedicated to catering to the needs of the many Jews who travel to Houston from around the world to receive treatment in Houston's world-renowned hospitals. He has strong connections to the best doctors at the local hospitals, and I asked if he could arrange an appointment with a specific pediatric bone oncologist who had been recommended to us. Although he had no prior connection with this particular doctor, he sent an email requesting an appointment on our behalf.

On Motzei Shabbos Rabbi Lazaroff called my wife. "Mrs. Francis, you won't believe what happened!" On Shabbos one of the couples staying at the Aishel House had an urgent appointment at Texas Children's Hospital. The doctor said to them, "Tell your rabbi I will help his people. Tell the family the doctor will take their case and the office will be in touch with them on Monday."

Our appointment to get a second opinion was scheduled for Tuesday morning and we took Shaya along with us. As we were waiting to meet the doctor, a nurse entered the room and handed Shaya a gown because he would be taking another X-ray. He became very upset and my wife protested that we were just here for a second opinion on the X-ray that was already done a week ago. The nurse explained that the doctor ordered a new X-ray taken, and



RABBI FRANCIS
GAVE HIS SON
SHAYA A COIN
FROM THE REBBE
PRIOR TO HIS
SURGERY.

I started to feel a glimmer of hope. “This is how miracles start happening. We ripped up the other results at the Ohel. They will find new results today,” I said excitedly to my wife, and Shaya went ahead with the X-ray.

Shortly afterward the doctor entered the room and started reviewing the results of the new X-ray in front of us while muttering “very good” “looks good” and such comments. Unable to contain myself I said, “Doctor, the results of the last week’s MRI sounded very bad. Are you sure things are good?”

The doctor explained that notwithstanding last week’s results, the X-ray she was looking at showed that there was a growth on Shaya’s thigh bone, but she was absolutely confident it was benign and there was no need for any biopsy at all. The growth could be removed by surgery that week and Shaya would be fine.

Stunned and overwhelmed with emotion we had no idea how to react. Dancing in an oncology ward of the hospital did not feel appropriate, but that’s exactly what we felt like doing. On our way out to the parking lot the other hospital called to confirm our appointment

for the biopsy the next day, and we happily canceled it on the spot.

On Thursday morning Shaya was wheeled into surgery to remove the growth. The doctor said it should take approximately 3 hours and if she came out earlier that meant there was trouble. Two and a half hours later the doctor walked into the waiting room and said “It wasn’t what I was expecting.”

For a moment my heart dropped but then the doctor explained that the growth was more on the cartilage of the bone than on the bone itself. The surgery was a success and Shaya could go home that day. Four months later Shaya was walking on his own two feet with a clean bill of health! **T**

YOUR STORY

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