

PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS



Tumors are Miracles Too

A tumor? In my little nephew's brain?

by [Rivka Zahava](#)

Tumors are tragedies that happen in other people's families, shaking them up and setting their world spinning in a different direction. Not in our family. Not to us.

A year ago, my nephew, Shimon started having headaches. My sister-in law took the six-year-old to every kind of doctor -- the eye doctor, the dentist; they even did cat scans of his little head and found nothing. But the headaches persisted and escalated. A week ago, the headaches became unbearable. Another cat scan revealed a tumor in his brain.

A tumor? In his brain?!

The news was shocking for us all. A tumor is a frightening thing and the brain is a crucial organ. And a six-year-old... little dimpled faced Shimon with his dancing chocolaty eyes and deliciously wild imagination...

I spent the first few hours crying, the words just turning over and over in my head – tumor, brain, tumor, brain. How did a tumor get into his brain?! Why did his brain cells suddenly decide to do something different than the rest of his body, something different than the rest of the worlds' brains? Suddenly, I was struck with awe. God really can do miracles. I had never thought of a tumor as a miracle before, in all of its havoc-wreaking glory. A tumor turns lives inside out, but can it inspire like a purple-pink sunrise or the birth

of a baby?

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Those physiology textbook pages started reappearing in my head, playing me words like suppressor genes, cell division, and neoplasm. The concept slowly began to dawn on me that just like the brain in itself is a marvelous testimony that there is a God that has fashioned man, so is the extraordinary disturbance of its usually perfect homeostasis. I know what I learned in college Physiology and Pathology; I know that there are many logical theories and scientific explanations for sudden disruptions in the division of cells. But bottom line is: who decides? Who decided that Shimon's brain is going to change its course from the norm?

Only the same God that decided that my brain is going to keep on functioning as it has been until now. And if God can design a beautiful, complex brain and even have the ability to orchestrate the growth of a tumor within that invention, then that very same God has the ability to cure that tumor.

On the day that I received the difficult news, a strange thing happened to me. Every time I sat down to ruminate about the seriousness of my nephew's situation, another person approached me to pour out their heart about their worries. People I didn't really know. First there was the bride at the eye doctor's office. She is a few years older than me, but married only a month and a half. I asked her how it felt to be a newlywed and her eyes told me that she needed to talk. And she did. We discussed, I listened; she cried, I advised. For an hour, I completely forgot about my own fresh worries and let myself feel someone else's struggles.

A couple hours later I closed my eyes and leaned my head against the window of the bus. I needed a few minutes of sleep to make it through the rest of the day, but thoughts of my precious nephew spiraled through my head, warding off slumber. An unfamiliar voice spoke to me as though we were mid-conversation.

"Can I ask for your advice?"

The woman sitting next to me began to relay her worries about the cysts growing in her uterus and the pain it is causing her in her pregnancy. She needed someone to listen to her, so I did. Once again, I was barred from the leisure of wallowing in my own troubles.

These acts of kindness felt far more productive than the self-pity and worry that comes so naturally.

Arriving at home, I was greeted with the phone ringing. An old friend in a new complicated life situation, needing a listening ear. The idea was beginning to set in. God was giving me a gift -- a practical way to actually help my nephew's situation. It is not common for my day to be comprised of a steady chain of opportunities to give my ear and heart to others. But these acts of kindness were my way of adding merits to our family's scale. This was my chance to tip things to our benefit. This feels so far more productive than the self-pitying and useless worrying that comes so naturally.

The past week has been a whirlwind of telephone calls, emails and 'Twittering' between family members. My parents and my four siblings and I have been brainstorming and networking to do our part in bringing about Shimon's cure. Charity is being given in his merit. People are learning the laws of proper speech to propel improvement. My other sister-in-law divided up the book of Psalms between 30 family members, assigning us each a few chapters to say every day. Uttering the ancient words of King David's Psalms is known to have astonishing effects in even the direst situations. As a family, we are now saying the entire book every day. Forty women in Israel and the U.S. are praying for Shimon while making challah for Shabbos.

Chain emails were sent out, we are begging, we are pleading. We turn to God through prayer, and through connecting to God, we inculcate into our hearts the truth that God is the Healer of all men, He is running this show. The more people realize it, the closer Shimon is to treatment success.

Surgery is scheduled for Monday, August 10th. The top surgeon was found, the method of treatment is carefully being planned. But the ultimate outcome will be decided by One Almighty factor.

Please, take a moment to feel the apprehension of the parents of a six-year-old child. Let yourself feel the weight of this upcoming surgery and its effect on my nephew's life. Please keep my nephew in your prayers, and that God should show us His incredible healing powers.

I appreciate everyone's concern about my nephew and am so happy to report that he is doing miraculously well! The surgery was very successful, the biopsy showed a very, very benign tumor. Recovery from brain surgery is no easy deal but within a few weeks, my determined nephew was living no differently than anyone else his age! He started school on time with his class and is reading and writing and learning Torah!

***With thanks to the Almighty
Rivka***