“When Adar begins, our joy increases.”

This saying does not mean we should be happy only in Adar, and sad the rest of the year. Rather, in the month of Adar our joy increases.

As is well-known, *Magen Lacholeh* helps people who, unfortunately, are going through times of trouble, uncertainty, and grief. Our goal is that every Jew should be happy, despite his or her medical condition. We give people the support they need to feel content and secure, every day of the year: weekdays, Shabbat, and holidays.

We work to prevent the situation in which the Jewish people found themselves at the time of the Book of Esther: divided and dispersed. We serve the entire Jewish people: religious, secular, ultra-Orthodox, whether they live in Israel or in the Diaspora.

We pray that this month will be a time of joy for all the people of Israel.

With blessings,

Rabbi Benjamin Fisher

[In the following stories, all names are pseudonyms, to protect individuals’ privacy]

Chaim, a prominent and beloved member of his community in Jerusalem, was injured in a serious car accident. He was taken to a hospital in Jerusalem, in moderate condition, with multiple fractures. After X-rays and examination, the emergency room staff decided that he needed to undergo complex surgery to repair the fractures. His family members were confused by the information they were given. They felt helpless and did not know what to do. Someone in the family suggested calling *Magen Lacholeh*.

Immediately after they contacted us, Rabbi Fisher looked into the case. He suggested that the family transfer Chaim to another hospital, where there was an expert physician specializing in this area of medical care. The family followed Rabbi Fisher's recommendation.

Chaim was taken to the other hospital by a *Magen Lacholeh* ambulance team. The specialist physician examined his case and all the medical reports. He concluded that Chaim should not undergo major surgery. Instead, the medical staff would splint the fractured bones. With the help of a more moderate type of treatment and rest at home, he would be able to recover from the injury.

The family expressed their gratitude to Rabbi Fisher, who spared Chaim the difficult surgery and the pain and long recovery that would have followed.

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Isaac's family was called to their father’s hospital bed. The physicians spoke to them about Isaac's condition, and asked for their decision as to whether or not to put him on life-support. One of Isaac’s sons decided to call the Chief Rabbinate to ask a halakhic question. The Chief Rabbinate referred the son to Rabbi Fisher, in light of the rabbi's vast experience and understanding of the medical system. He told them: "Do whatever Rabbi Fisher says."

The son called Rabbi Fisher and explained the case to him. Rabbi Fisher did not feel he had enough information, so he asked to speak with the physician, with the permission of Isaac’s family members. After a conversation with the attending physician, Rabbi Fisher instructed the family not to agree to any major life-prolonging treatments, but also not to prevent the medical staff from giving Isaac basic care, without which his life might be shortened.

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Rivka, a mother of five children in her 30s, gave birth to a healthy daughter in a hospital in central Israel. After the birth and several days of recovery in the hospital, she moved to a recovery center in Jerusalem near the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. At this time, she began to feel intense pain and pressure in her chest and shortness of breath. Within minutes, she was rushed to the emergency room at nearby Hadassah Ein Kerem Rivka Hospital.

At this point, her family called the office of *Magen Lacholeh*, for advice about the best course of action, and to for ask us to make sure that Rivka was undergoing the necessary tests.

It turned out that Rivka was having heart failure. However, at that point, this was not yet known. She was rushed to the ICU and then to catheterization. She was diagnosed as having congestive heart failure as a result of a problem with one of her cardiac arteries. Throughout this time, Rivka was suffering from recurring pain, severe weakness, fainting, and loss of consciousness.

Rabbi Fisher was in frequent contact with the doctors and the Ein Kerem medical team. He also contacted the top physicians in Israel, to determine how to best help Rivka.

After numerous tests, the hospital team decided that the only solution was a heart transplant, because her heart would not be able to continue functioning in its existing condition.

Following consultations with expert physicians in Israel and abroad, Rabbi Fisher advised the family and medical team what could be done to prevent her condition from deteriorating, and suggested they wait before doing a heart transplant. The physicians at Ein Kerem agreed to this, and with the grace of heaven, we are now celebrating a year since Rivka’s miraculous recovery!

Rebecca did not have a heart transplant. After several months, she was able to go home in good health, to the delight of her husband and children, who were eagerly waiting for her. The treatment she received resulted in a faster and more complete recovery than would have been possible after a heart transplant. Rebecca and her family came to celebrate her “new birthday” with the *Magen Lacholeh* at our office.

***Magen Lacholeh*’s “Save a Life” system**

A year and a half ago, *Magen* *Lacholeh* launched a fundraising campaign to set up a computerized system to help us address the growing need for help from our organization. About ten months ago, this system began to operate and to gradually be integrated into our work. With the help of this system, the *Magen Lacholeh* team has been able to improve our service to the public.

At this time, we feel confident that we have found a method that enables us to provide the needed responses to the public, while allowing the organization’s system to address the heavy load of requests for help.

We would like to share with you some of our findings from this process:

*Magen Lacholeh* has a personal response team operating 3-4 telephone lines, every day from 9 am to 7 pm. Staff members receive applicants’ detailed information, questions, and requests. The staff updates the applicants’ referrals using our new software. They attach any existing relevant medical documents, and send to Rabbi Fisher the orderly, focused, and updated referrals. This enables him to answer them in detail, as needed.

In most cases, staff members reply to the calls, giving them Rabbi Fischer's response. However, there are times when Rabbi Fischer decides to speak personally with the patient or the family members.

The team is, of course, trained to determine which cases are most urgent. Using the innovative system, these questions are directed to Rabbi Fisher, in order to get an appropriate response.

Using this new system, the team can work quickly and efficiently. We are able to receive inquiries from many more people, with extremely short waiting times, and to provide them with quick responses.

We are aware that some people are not used to this new system at *Magen Lacholeh*. However, in light of the overwhelmingly positive responses and feedback, we are confident that everyone who needs our help will benefit from this welcome change.