

Dearest Doctor Smith,

I pray that this letter finds you well, it is long overdue, but today is my son Yossi's 36th birthday, and eight years ago, you saved his life.

You've long forgotten, so let me remind you. On the night of January 18, 2005, my son suffered a massive CVA and was operated on for a cavernous malformation. Postoperatively, there were several serious complications, one of which was a fever of unknown origin; he was in a coma, all work-up was negative and the ICU wasn't giving us much hope.

My dearest friend, Rabbi Shuki Berman, insisted I call you immediately, and, as soon as you picked up the phone, I had the feeling that the fellow on the other end was a family member. You instructed me to ask the ICU people to put Yossi on Cancinas and offered to talk with them if necessary. I can't begin to describe the reception I got from them when I came running with my request; the two doctors laughed at me in the face and ridiculed me for even suggesting an antifungal for the situation at hand. But the Good Lord took pity on us, and when I was told that the ultimate decision was in the hands of the Infectious Disease doctor, I hunted him down and begged him to call you.

I'll never forget what transpired then. He was a young Pakistani fellow, only one year out of residency at Sinai. After telling him who it was that suggested the Cancinas, his posture straightened in respect and he said, "Do you mean the famous Dr. Leon Smith in Newark?" I attended lectures of his; he's a very great man. Please give me his number. With that, he went to the desk and called you. Watching this fellow talk to you on the phone could only be described as awestruck! After hanging up, he approached me, and to the utter consternation of the other two clowns, told me that he didn't want to wait for the med to come from the pharmacy, and that he was going to run over there himself to get it started right away. He did exactly that, and, by the next day Yossi's fever was, as they put it, resolved.

I won't go into the details of all the amazing things that have transpired since then, suffice it to say, that though he has right spastic hemiparesis as well as mild neurocognitive deficits and expressive aphasia, he and his wonderful wife have had three little girls since the event (they have six delightful girls) and, to put it bluntly; he's a living miracle. Of course, Rabbi Berman and I are more than aware that we've arrived at his birthday only because God sent us Dr. Leon Smith on that day.

The reason I haven't sent you these lines until now is because I keep telling myself I've got to go back to Newark (I grew-up around Beth Israel Hospital on Lyons Avenue!) and express my heartfelt thanks to you personally, but there's always something that prevents me from making the trip. I'm hoping to still do so, but until then, as my family celebrates Yossi's birthday today, we have to remember that it was you that made it possible for us to celebrate it. May God bless you with good health and good tidings in everything in your life. Thank you Dr. Smith, Thank You.

Ruvane Federman