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Giving the Gift of Life in Israel: A Conversation with Hadar Koplovich

07/26/2018



The day before **Hadar Koplovich** donated a kidney to a complete stranger, she was interviewed for MOMentum, and a little over a month later, she explored Israel and her Jewish identity with her JWRP sisters. A wife, mother of five children, and an insurance agent who lives in Yakir, Israel, Hadar says, "The best insurance policy is to invest in giving. It makes me a happier, kidneyless person!" In our conversation, Hadar shares what almost stopped her from donating her kidney and how it felt to meet her kidney recipient.

What inspired you to donate your kidney?

About six months ago, my older brother donated a kidney. When I saw what a difference this made to the patient and to his whole family, I decided to donate a kidney, too. I was raised with the value, "*Kol Yisrael Achim*," which means that the Jewish people are one big family. By donating my kidney to another Jewish person, I feel like I've done something truly valuable for my people.

How did your family react to your decision?

My family supported me throughout the process, and without the help of my husband, Tomer, I wouldn't have been able to make it through the pre-donation period nor the post-donation recovery period. As a mother to a child with a genetic disease, which may lead to renal failure in the future, I was unsure if I should donate my kidney or keep it for my son — just in case. My 18-year-old daughter finally helped me make my decision. She told me that if her brother needed a kidney donation one day, his four healthy brothers and sisters, as well as his community, would be happy to help him.



Can you tell us about the process of donating a kidney in Israel?

Before the donation, I underwent months of physical and mental tests, which included an interview with the committee of the Ministry of Health. On May 29, I underwent the surgery. My kidney was transplanted into the body of a 28-year-old man, a total stranger who has suffered from kidney disease since the age of 16 and has been on dialysis for the past two years.

Thanks to Israel's transplantation law, which was enacted in 2009, donors receive special benefits after their surgery to make their lives easier during this difficult procedure — including 40 paid sick days, psychological treatments, covered travel expenses, and more.

Today, there are about 800 dialysis patients awaiting kidney donations in Israel. Unfortunately, because there are very few donors, many of these patients die before they can receive a kidney.

Rabbi Yeshayahu Haber, who is a kidney recipient, created "[Matnat Chaim](#)," "The Gift of Life," an organization that helps patients find altruistic kidney donations. I was the organization's 540th donor.

What was it like meeting your kidney recipient?

I met Avishay in the hospital, a couple of days after the transplant. Though we felt like the meeting was somewhat embarrassing, the people around us couldn't hold back their tears. We keep in touch over WhatsApp and plan to get together with our families. Last month, Avishay traveled to Madrid. I was happy to know that, thanks to me, he was able to do that!