



# Yusef's miraculous journey to rehabilitation

**He fell into a five-story lift shaft and had a big fracture in his skull. Last week, after a complicated operation and a long rehabilitation, Yusef Jardat was released from the hospital and spoke for the first time to the press: "They saved me and now things are much better." And also: his father talks about the fears, his son's fear of entering a lift alone, and the difficult months the family went through: "Four months that looked like ten years."**

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Yusef Jardat waited for this day for a long time. After a head injury which was caused by a fall down the shaft of a lift and a two-month rehabilitation at ALYN Hospital, he was released this week to go back to his home in Kfar Aqab, but continues to be undergoing treatment as an out-patient.



*Yusef at ALYN Hospital. Photo credit: Yoav Dodkevich.*

"I want to go back to my friends and to my home, and I also miss school," he told us this week in his first conversation since he was hospitalised, underwent surgery and underwent rehabilitation. "My head was open, they operated me, they saved me, and now things are much better."

## **The lift opened and Yusef fell into the shaft**

Yusef's serious accident occurred mid-December, when the boy pressed the lift button in the 12-story building where he lived. When the doors opened, the lift was not there. Yusef fell down the shaft and was severely wounded in his face. "It was a rainy and stormy evening, he fell down on iron in the dark, like in a movie," recalls his father, Kazem. "A neighbor said that there was a child from the Jardat family who fell in a lift," says the father. "I went down quickly and realised that it was Yusef. The doctors told me that they couldn't believe that he was alive after what happened."

Yusef was taken by ambulance to Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, with a large fracture that split his face in two. At Hadassah, they performed the unbelievable – they were able to put his skull back together during a complicated operation. He was later transferred to ALYN Hospital for rehabilitation, with his family accompanying him throughout the process. "When Yusef came to ALYN Hospital, he was not able to get up," says his father. "Twice a day he underwent physiotherapy. He also received emotional care and a lot of encouragement from the staff. Because his head was badly injured, it affected his entire face."



## "I felt there was no point in anything"

The serious injury didn't just change Yusef's life, his whole family was affected by it.

He is my little son," says his pained father, "and when I saw him that way, I felt that I had no energy to do anything anymore. I stopped going to work, and since then my wife and I have become very close to him."

His mother Lina makes sure to always be by his side and notes that she is inspired to do so by the seeing how far her son has come. "We knew from the beginning that it would be very difficult for Yusef to get through this, because of his severe head injury. We waited for a miracle," she says. "Here, thank God, the situation has improved, the doctors treated him very well and his mood is getting much better."

His father adds: "The life of everyone has changed because of what happened. My wife can't even go to the doctor because Yusef doesn't want her to leave him. His older brothers visit him as soon as they come back from work. Everyone spoils him. These four months have looked like ten years to us."

## Rapid recovery

Yusef underwent rehabilitation treatment, during which he got back on his feet and began walking again. "We had to teach him how to walk again because he had a very complicated leg fracture. He also had difficulty speaking because of the fracture in his jaw and we helped him with that as well, in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and he was helped to eat independently", explains Yusef's accompanying physician in the rehabilitation department of Alyn Hospital. "His head injury was significant, but he was lucky that there was no brain damage. He also had fractures in his skull, and it's very rare for someone who has experienced such an event to recover relatively quickly. He has progressed very well in rehabilitation, and I can say that he is also a brilliant child."

"He will have to undergo a long treatment for facial scars, but there is no doubt that his rehabilitation is developing amazingly."

Recently, as the rehabilitation process progressed and his condition improved, Yusef began to go to the school that was established inside Alyn Hospital and learned Hebrew and English there. He will no longer be able to complete his school year in Kfar Aqab, but the improvement in his condition gives him hope that he will be able to join his classmates and go with them next year to fourth grade, and especially to return to his regular life in his village.

He will have to go to Alyn Hospital's outpatient clinic three times a week for supportive treatment and follow-up, but for Yusef and his parents, this is great news.

"Of course we're happy," says the father. "In recent months I have barely left Yusef's side, I have been with him all along, and his situation has improved slowly, but now he will be able to return to his family. Lately, he was able to come home on weekends, but now he will finally be able to sleep at home every day. This is the biggest relief."

## When Yusef goes home, does he agree to enter the lift?

"He goes in the lift, but only with other people, not alone," he said.