



Benyamin Cohen: This is Hadassah On-Call: New Frontiers in Medicine. I'm your host Benyamin Cohen. In each episode of this podcast, we'll get an inside look at what goes on behind the scenes at one of Israel's premier medical centers. We'll travel to Jerusalem to meet up with the doctors and nurses at Hadassah Medical Organization. From striving for peace through medicine to performing surgeries with robots, they're working on medical breakthroughs that are impacting people around the world. That's what Hadassah is all about; the power to heal our world together. From cornea transplants to developments in pediatric oncology, we'll learn about the latest cutting-edge research coming out of Hadassah Hospital. All that, plus the inspiring stories of patients who have recovered from near death experiences. Our appointment starts now. This is Hadassah On-Call.

Benyamin Cohen: Hello everyone and welcome to the Hadassah On-Call podcast. Today we'll be chatting with Gila Zarbiv, a certified nurse midwife at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. We'll talk with her about what inspired her to choose this career, what exactly a midwife does here at Hadassah, and her research on how the MeToo movement is impacting the OB/GYN field.

Benyamin Cohen: But first I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm Benyamin Cohen, the new host of this podcast. I'm a journalist in the United States and for the past 20 years I've been working at Jewish publications and also served as the content director for a health news website. I'm currently the Editorial Director of FromTheGrapevine.com, a new site that promotes positive stories about Israel as well as the host of the [Our Friend From Israel podcast](#). I'm also the author of a book about interfaith issues, which is a very important part of Hadassah's mission. My parents retired to Israel, so I try to visit the country as often as possible. So when Hadassah asked if I would host this show, I knew there was really only one thing for me to do: Head to Israel.

Benyamin Cohen: Okay, so I am in Jerusalem right now. I'm in the back of a taxi cab. It's a Sunday morning and I'm headed to the labor and delivery ward at Hadassah Hospital's Ein Kerem campus today. I'm going to be meeting up with Gila Zarbiv. She was born in Pittsburgh and has

spent her entire professional career in Israel as a certified nurse midwife at Hadassah. Okay, so we're arriving at the hospital now.

Benyamin Cohen: The Hadassah campus is rather large and we're going to walk now to the labor and delivery ward to meet up with Gila.

Benyamin Cohen: Okay. We're here now, so everybody let's shh. Let's be quiet as we walk inside.

Benyamin Cohen: Okay. Let's see if we can locate Gila. Now, Gila Zarbiv, as I mentioned, she was born in the US and fell in love with Israel as an eight-year-old, managing to spend as much time as she could here: a gap year after high school and every summer and winter vacation during college. After she graduated Yeshiva University in New York, she moved to Israel and began her nursing studies at the Henrietta Szold Hadassah Hebrew University School of Nursing. It was at Hadassah Hospital where she met her husband. He was studying to become a doctor and she had made the decision to become a certified nurse midwife.

Benyamin Cohen: So let's test the microphone. Do you have any children?

Gila Zarbiv: I have four children.

Benyamin Cohen: And what are your children's-

Gila Zarbiv: Is that what my voice sounds like to everybody else? Is it though? I have four children.

Benyamin Cohen: And what are their names?

Gila Zarbiv: Odelia, Hallel, Shael and Shiloh.

Benyamin Cohen: When they told me today that we were going to be talking to a midwife, I was a little perplexed because when I think of midwife I think of the 1800s or something. So normally people would go to the hospital, they give birth in the hospital with doctors and nurses. What does a midwife actually do?

Gila Zarbiv: So I can tell that you are from America. The entire developed world with the exclusion of America uses primarily midwives. There's different types of midwives. In America, there's different levels of midwives. The midwives you'll find in Israel are called certified nurse midwives. We're midwives who have already gone to nursing school.

Gila Zarbiv: We finished our nursing education and then we went on to midwifery school. A midwife is essentially a caregiver, a woman's health provider, who cares for women from the moment that they enter puberty essentially, or generally they'll meet them from their first pregnancy, till a woman can pass away. She can see exclusively a midwife her entire life.

Benjamin Cohen: And you personally, in your line of work, do you mostly work with pregnant women?

Gila Zarbiv: Exactly. We have a clinic. We see women from prenatal throughout birth and postnatal, but less postnatal though. The postnatal period for us is two hours after birth and then she goes up into the ward afterwards. We don't generally do the follow-up. There are midwives in the community who do that follow-up care, but it's not the majority in Israel.

Benjamin Cohen: So do all pregnant women who come into Hadassah have a midwife or it's like that's an optional?

Gila Zarbiv: Ideally the goal is that every single woman who walks into Hadassah will only see a midwife. Doctors' roles come in throughout birth. In Israel, when there's a complication, a doctor will deal with all high-risk pregnancies or all high-risk birth. What does that mean? Anything that's not natural. Anything that is a vacuum or a C-section or forceps or any woman that becomes complicated that she has a pregnancy or birth-related complication, then the doctor will be involved. Otherwise a woman will walk in. I have never seen a doctor throughout any of my births. I do see a doctor prenatal, but we don't see a doctor throughout our births. You walk in, you see a midwife, she follows your care exclusively throughout your entire birth and delivery and only she treats you.

Benjamin Cohen: So, not that any birth is ever average, but for an average birth, you're saying that you could not see a doctor here, and it's not like in the States where you have an OB/GYN.

Gila Zarbiv: Exactly. The OB/GYN is paced the floor. If a woman starts out as low risk and then there's a complication, we'll call the doctor and then she will be turfed over to the doctor's side and we will continue caring for her and continue being involved in her care. But the delivery may be performed by a doctor or we may perform the birth with a doctor by her side. It's very dynamic and very fluid and it changes throughout the births, but generally a woman should walk in and walk out having only seen a midwife.

Benjamin Cohen: So what's the difference between a midwife and a doula?

Gila Zarbiv: Oh, that's a good question. I worked as a doula for 15 years before I was a midwife. A doula is essentially a... The word doula is a Greek word, and essentially the role and the meaning of a doula is someone to support the woman. There have been many studies that show that a woman who has constant companion, there was even a crazy study that showed that they put a nursing student in the corner in the room. She didn't do anything. She just stood in the corner. And those women who had that presence in the corner had less intervention, less epidurals, reported less pain. She didn't do anything. She was just there, her presence. And essentially they support the women emotionally and physically and mentally and psychologically. They're there to massage and breathe and be there for the woman as a constant presence throughout her birth.

Gila Zarbiv: That's essentially the role of a doula. The role of a midwife is a medical professional, a woman's health, medical professional who has gone through extensive training, and we do the medical aspect as well as the doula aspect. I think that anyone who thinks that a midwife is not a doula, I think would be mistaken. I think a midwife by definition is there to support emotionally, physically, mentally, the women. We also just provide the medical aspect as well.

Benjamin Cohen: What are the biggest myths about midwives?

Gila Zarbiv: Well, in the old days, this is not a myth. In the olden days, midwives, are you familiar with the Salem witch trials? So research is now coming out to show that many of the women who were burned were midwives. And that's where a lot of myths of midwives come. If you see the picture of a witch, she has long nails, right.

Gila Zarbiv: And because they would use their long nails to rupture the waters or they had long noses because the midwives were very sensitive to their senses and they could smell certain things. And there was something about the hats they used to wear, about Protestants, I don't remember, but midwives were the original witches essentially in the olden days, there's an incredible book about this, Salem Witches and Midwives Burning, or something like that, that tells the history.

Gila Zarbiv: One of the many accounts of the history where if babies were born deformed, the midwives would be blamed and then they'd be accused of cursing the family. But I think also a lot of the myths about midwives that I hear, specifically coming from places like America where there's not a lot of knowledge, is the lack of understanding of the level of training and the level of professionalism that midwives have, which is unfortunate. Midwives are crucial to women's health and a society without midwives is a society that should maybe consider the significance of what a midwife could offer to its women and its babies.

Benjamin Cohen: This is a silly question...

Gila Zarbiv: No such thing, especially with midwifery.

Benjamin Cohen: Do you have a favorite TV or movie doctor or nurse that you like?

Gila Zarbiv: That is not a stupid question.

Benjamin Cohen: ER or Grey's Anatomy?

Gila Zarbiv: No. You don't know Call the Midwife?

Benjamin Cohen: Oh yes. My wife loves that show, the BBC show.

Gila Zarbiv: Yes. Yes. Call the Midwife is amazing. That is literally what I do day by day and I saw an amazing comic, where it showed men watching sports, eating popcorn and yelling at the screen and midwives watching Call the Midwife and yelling at the screen. "No, don't pull on the cord, what are you doing?" That's literally what I do. I'm obsessed with Call the Midwife.

Benyamin Cohen: When we return, Gila reveals how the MeToo movement is impacting her latest research. Plus, she tells the inspiring story of one of her favorite patients, an Arab mother who gave birth at Hadassah Hospital. All that after the break.

Dina Kraft: I'm Dina Kraft, the host of a podcast called The Branch, which tells the stories of relationships between everyday Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs. I've been reporting on the lives of Israelis and Palestinians for two decades, and people always ask me, "Will things ever get better?" No doubt: the road is long. But when peace does come, it will be thanks to the groundwork being laid by the people whose stories we tell on The Branch. On our show, you'll meet musicians who perform together every night, teachers in a bilingual school, social activists who share their struggle and even parents whose children were killed in the conflict, but who have chosen reconciliation over revenge. The Branch. Stories of real people forging strong connections and having important conversations even when it's complicated. Brought to you by Hadassah. Find us anywhere you listen to your podcasts or at hadassah.org/thebranch.

Benyamin Cohen: And now, back to today's interview with certified nurse midwife, Gila Zarbiv.

Benyamin Cohen: And so did you meet your husband when you moved here, after you moved here?

Gila Zarbiv: Yeah, I made Aliyah. I landed and I met my husband that week in Hadassah. Obviously. We met in the lobby of Hadassah. He was in medical school and I was in nursing school and yeah, and the rest is history, as they say.

Benyamin Cohen: So he's a doctor?

Gila Zarbiv: He's an oncologist.

Benyamin Cohen: Here at Hadassah?

Gila Zarbiv: Here at Hadassah. That's the only time we see each other, is here in Hadassah.

Benyamin Cohen: A family affair. I know you're working on a master's thesis on a very timely subject. It's related to the MeToo movement and in the OB/GYN community. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Gila Zarbiv: I went to nursing school in Hadassah and then I knew immediately in nursing school I was going to come back and do my master's and my doctorate at Hadassah. The topic of my thesis is 'the effects of the MeToo movement on OB/GYNs and midwives'. What does that

mean? The effect of the MeToo movement? The MeToo movement is a movement essentially where women are standing up and saying, 'me too'. Essentially enough, I think that there is nothing more crucial that I would want to relate to my children. That they understand that their bodies are their bodies and that the power and consent lies with them and their bodies. And one of the reasons why I chose this topic was to understand how is such a powerful movement affecting the men and women who are daily treating with women on an intimate basis? The things that I need to do in order to do my job, I need to do a vaginal exam.

Gila Zarbiv: If I don't perform a vaginal exam, I'm not doing my job. How does that affect me that I am now living in an environment with this heightened sense of awareness of consent in my body with this concept that I have to do this exam? And it really intrigued me and the responses I've had have been overwhelming. One of the things I've started doing from my own research is that I no longer ask women, 'May I examine you?' Or 'May I check you?' Or 'May I lift the sheet?' which is something I used to say. Now I say one thing: 'Do you allow me to touch you?' Because I think using this word 'examine' is hiding behind this medical lingo of what is this? 'I would like to touch you now. Is that okay with you?' And that's something I started adopting and the look on the women's faces, when I say to her, 'May I touch you now?' They look startled. Like 'Wow, no one's ever asked me that before.' So I'm very into this research. I'm getting incredible results from this research.

Benjamin Cohen: So you must encounter a lot of patients throughout your career. Is there one or two stories that stick out as something that's really an amazing story, an inspirational story?

Gila Zarbiv: Definitely. There are. Recently we had an incredible story with a woman who came from a remote Arab village. She was 24 weeks pregnant, which is essentially five months pregnant, and she was really, really, really sick. And I think that also what makes this story so unique and really stand out in my mind, I always knew Hadassah was amazing and I know I sound like a promo, but I really mean it. I always knew that we were unique and there's a reason why I work here. When I became a midwife, I could have worked anywhere. I chose to work in Hadassah and this story really solidified for me what makes Hadassah unique in the sense that she came from a remote Arab village after bouncing from hospital to hospital, including other prominent hospitals in Jerusalem. And they told her that they could not treat her and they sent her to Hadassah and said, 'Go to Hadassah. Hadassah will help you.'

Gila Zarbiv: And who doesn't want to work in a place like that? She was incredibly sick. She had 104 fever. She was, what we call, septic, which means she had disease all over her body. She was very, very, very sick and she was delivering. She was having a baby at that moment. The significance of her having a baby at that moment means we didn't have a lot of time to prepare, so then a woman who had been there for weeks and weeks, she just got there and immediately was delivering. We immediately call the top midwives and pediatric physicians and doctors, gynecologists, who are instantly by her side. She delivered a few minutes later to a 24 week old baby. That's a 600g, approximately one pound baby. She was crying, which was incredible. She was severely ill. She had a high fever. She herself was incredibly sick and the woman had

something called chorioamnionitis, which is essentially an infection of the amniotic fluid, which is the water that surrounds the baby.

Gila Zarbiv: You have to resuscitate. She doesn't really have lungs, so we have to begin to help her breathe immediately, but we did the resuscitation in such a way that when she was born, we put her on the bed in between the mother's legs and we left her there. We left her attached to the umbilical cord. That way she was having like a blood transfusion while we were resuscitating and it's a brand new technique. I don't know of many other hospitals in Israel that do it. And it was beautiful. It was like a dance. It was beautiful. She instantly recovered. She went up to the NICU after we stabilized her without being intubated. The significance of a 24 week old child who a few years ago wasn't even considered viable, due to lack of lungs, not needing intubation, where we put a tube in her mouth to her lungs, is something that cannot be described.

Gila Zarbiv: It just shows the level of care and resuscitation that that team had at that moment. It's incredible. She went up to the NICU, not requiring intubation. She just had a mask by her face and she improved every single day. The statistics for a 24 week old preemie surviving are incredibly low, let alone surviving with no complications. It's minuscule and it was amazing.

Benyamin Cohen: And so what's the outcome of that story of the baby?

Gila Zarbiv: She was discharged recently. Wonderful. She was here for months and she improved every single day with no complications. The level of care here is something that I am incredibly proud to be a part of. It is an incredibly unique place to work.

Benyamin Cohen: And you said that was an Arab family?

Gila Zarbiv: It was an Arab woman from a remote Arab village and the husband said at the birth, "This is why we came to Hadassah." He said it at the birth. It's just this concept of working in it. There's something that's not really expressed a lot when you talk about working in Israel specifically.

Gila Zarbiv: Hospitals aren't all hospitals. Everyone in my family is a doctor. I have a lot of experience in hospitals. Hospitals are places that epitomize the highest level of moral and ethical care. You know everyone, every hospital, when there was a shooting in Pittsburgh, I'm sure they would have treated the shooter the same, anywhere you go, the same way they treated the victims, but in Israel you have this unique opportunity to build bridges between communities that are sometimes at odds with each other. This man had never met a Jew before. He said it. He told me, "I have never spoken to a Jew before." His first interaction was with Jewish midwives, doctors and pediatricians fighting for the life of his teeny tiny baby girl.

Benyamin Cohen: Hadassah is like an island of peace or an oasis of peace. Talk about how when people come into the doors of Hadassah Hospital, that race, religion, none of that really matters.

Gila Zarbiv: There are no politics in these walls. When a person walks in in labor, she is a woman in labor. That's it. She's just a woman in labor. No one cares where she's from. Don't care what she believes in. Every single person will receive the same, highest standard of care, no matter who they are, where they're from or what they believe. That's what it means to work in a hospital. That's what it means to work in Hadassah. That's what it means, but I feel in my bones that it is different here. I feel that the part of what we were talking about earlier, that there is no politics in the walls of Hadassah. My very good friend and role model, Julie, she's the head of trauma. The nurse in charge of trauma in Hadassah. She one time said an incredible sentence that really stuck with me.

Gila Zarbiv: She said, "Nursing in Hadassah is bringing the Muslim family that's praying a blanket so they don't have to pray on the floor, or bringing a Jew who may be fasting at the end of the fast, a glass of water from the Arab nurse, from the Muslim nurse." There is a dynamic here working in Israel that does not exist anywhere else in the world, that I'm aware of, and that makes it really powerful. You have these little moments. Just getting a blanket for a Muslim who's praying is a tiny moment that has big impact and I think that's what makes this place unique. That's what makes it different than working in America.

Benjamin Cohen: Being a nurse obviously can be very difficult and challenging at times. We just heard about the story of the preemie baby. How hard is it? How challenging is it when you have to, let's say, break bad news to a family? How do you process that on a personal level and how do you go through with telling the family if you have to tell them bad news or something?

Gila Zarbiv: That's a really good question. That's a really good question. The labor and delivery ward is a place of extremes. When something is happy, it's very, very happy and when something is sad, it's very, very sad and it's not easy. I think what keeps me going every single day is that it's not about the news that you're breaking or the experience that you're in at that moment. It's about the continuation of care and how you're going to be for this woman throughout the entire process of this situation, whatever it is.

Gila Zarbiv: It could be something incredibly simple, that the birth didn't go the way she wanted it to. And some women who have Caesarean sections will actually experienced mourning, real mourning. They came in with a natural birth experience and when they are told that that their child is in danger, God forbid, or they're in danger, they go through an actual mourning process and being there with her in that moment is what gives me the strength to continue to be there, seeing the significance of my presence and getting her through this difficult time is what gives you the strength to go through the next difficult time. That's what it's all about.

Benjamin Cohen: So outside of work, Hadassah keeps you very occupied. You're a mother of four children and you're married to a doctor. What else do you do outside of work that our listeners should know about?

Gila Zarbiv: I'm a birthing coach. A lactation consultant, helping with breastfeeding. We also have a new program where we help women who go through traumatic births where we go and sit with them and debriefing their births. But school and the four kids keep me very busy. Yeah.

Benjamin Cohen: When we return, Gila tells how the shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue in the neighborhood where she grew up impacted her and her hometown community.

Gila Zarbiv: The response from Pittsburgh was incredibly overwhelming and it was a message to the world that terror will not overcome us, doesn't matter Jewish, Christian, Muslim, it doesn't matter. Terror will never overcome it. I think that Pittsburgh sent that message loud and clear. I was very proud to be from Pittsburgh.

Benjamin Cohen: All that and much more after the break.

Benjamin Cohen: Hadassah, the woman's Zionist organization of America, leads several trips to Israel every year. And guess what? You're invited. The trips for 2020 are already filling up. In February, the trip will highlight Israel's bountiful nature and ecology. In March, we will unmask the country's vibrant art scene. In the April trip, we'll celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's independence. In May, participants will visit Israeli wineries. And the August trip will explore the country's vast archeological sites. If this sounds like a can't miss opportunity, head on over to hadassah.org/missions to explore the full year's itineraries and to sign up. That's hadassah.org/missions.

Benjamin Cohen: And now back to today's interview with certified nurse midwife, Gila Zarbiv.

Benjamin Cohen: I can tell by your accent you're not a native Israeli. Is that correct?

Gila Zarbiv: How can you tell that? I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I lived there until I was 18 years old and then I went to Israel. I grew up in a very Zionist family. My father is incredibly Zionist and my mother loves Israel. My father really always wanted to live in Israel and always spoke about Israel. The first time I came to Israel, I was eight years old and ever since then, I fell in love with it, completely fell in love and I always knew from that moment I was going to live here, like it was clear to me that I was going to live in Israel. After that, when I went to high school, I came here every summer and every winter. I found some program or something and just hijacked my way to Israel.

Benjamin Cohen: Your parents are still in Pittsburgh?

Gila Zarbiv: Yes. In the same house.

Benjamin Cohen: And were they okay with you moving across the world?

Gila Zarbiv: It was very hard for them. They're proud, but they're sad. It's hard. It's hard to have your family divided. My sister made Aliyah recently, and she now lives here also. There's six of us all together and four live there and two live here.

Benjamin Cohen: In the States.

Gila Zarbiv: In the States. Chicago, Pittsburgh, all over California.

Benjamin Cohen: Pittsburgh, by the way, we should give a shout out. Pittsburgh. Amazing, underrated American city. I recently moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, which is about an hour south of Pittsburgh.

Gila Zarbiv: Pittsburgh is one of the most incredible places to live as a child. I mean, I'm sure we'll talk about some of the difficult aspects of Pittsburgh that happened recently, but growing up in Pittsburgh, it's like a fantasy and it's one of the friendliest, kindest, beautiful places to raise a family and raise children. I love it there.

Benjamin Cohen: People there take such pride in living in Pittsburgh. I've never seen anything like it.

Gila Zarbiv: We're very, very proud Pittsburghians. Absolutely. And when we signed the Steelers, which my family's obsessed with, yes, 100% there's a lot of Pittsburgh pride. It's a very unique place.

Benjamin Cohen: So you mentioned we should bring up the Tree of Life tragedy that happened in 2018. Is that the synagogue you went to growing up?

Gila Zarbiv: So it's not the synagogue we went to. We went to a different synagogue, but it's very close to my home and when the news broke out in Israel, you have to realize that the Sabbath or Shabbat had ended in Israel while the shooting was going on. So we got records of it live. I found out that it was happening before it was in the news because my brother called me in a panic saying "I heard something's happening in Pittsburgh. Where's mommy and aba?" Which is what we call my parents. It was incredibly surreal. As you were asking, how do my parents feel about me living so far away? Like I get a lot of... Like my parents get very... A lot of messages from my parents about how anxious it is for them to have a child living in a world of... There can be a lot of terror and a lot of scary things that happen in this country.

Gila Zarbiv: And a lot of times I'll get a lot of panic phone calls, "Gila, where are you? Are you okay? Are your kids okay?" And to be the one now trying to find my parents was incredibly awful, incredibly awful. We called them and called them and called them and because it was the Sabbath or Shabbat, they weren't going to answer their phones. So I just kept calling until they ran into a non-Jewish neighbor and they called me and said they were alive, but we didn't know what synagogue it was. It could have been where they had done it-

Benjamin Cohen: It was Squirrel Hill, your parents-

Gila Zarbiv: It was Squirrel Hill. We knew it was down the block from their home. We didn't know what synagogue, they prayed at a place called Poale Zedeck. It could have been there. We didn't know anything. It was really awful. And, of course, Pittsburgh is so tiny and we know everybody who was murdered and it's so surreal that in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, if the terror can exist in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania then terror can be anywhere. That's what it felt like, at least for us.

Benjamin Cohen: Right. I mean the city has done a great job in rebuilding from the tragedy. I know, I've been there, I went to some of the memorial services there and it's made the community so much stronger.

Gila Zarbiv: I agree. I think the response from Pittsburgh was incredibly overwhelming and it was a message to the world that terror will not overcome us, doesn't matter Jewish, Christian, Muslim, it doesn't matter. Terror will never overcome it. I think that Pittsburgh sent that message loud and clear. I was very proud to be from Pittsburgh. Definitely.

Benjamin Cohen: Yeah. I like to end all my interviews with this thought-provoking question. Is there anything I didn't ask you that I should have asked you?

Gila Zarbiv: I love that question. We should have talked more about my kids. Why did you not ask that? You should have asked. If there was a message I would want to get across to the people who are listening today, it would be in 2019, soon to be 2020, as a woman who may be pregnant or considering pregnancy or have young children, the message we need to get across to ourselves as women and to our children is the autonomy over our own bodies and maybe something to leave with the listeners is a way to incorporate that into our daily lives.

Gila Zarbiv: And as a midwife is that if you have to bathe your child and you want to bathe your child and touch them on their, what we call, private parts, you could ask them or you can explain to them why is it different that you are doing this as opposed to somebody else. I think that the MeToo movement can move past, we can start... Not move past. We should continue to bring people to justice who are doing horrible things, but we can also move on to prevention and how to raise a next generation of socially conscious and aware children and adults of my space and your space and what is acceptable. I think.

Benjamin Cohen: I know you've taken a lot of your time today chatting with us. When you leave us today, tell us what types of things you'll be doing on your rounds.

Gila Zarbiv: So essentially in Hadassah as a midwife, there are four places that I can find myself when I come from my shift. There are four options. The options are [foreign language 00:27:33], which means clinic, [foreign language 00:27:35] which is the operating room, [foreign language 00:27:38] which is triage, and [foreign language 00:27:40], which is the actual labor and delivery room.

Gila Zarbiv: If I'm in the clinic, then I will be the only midwife. I sit there and I receive women for prenatal care. They come for all kinds of prenatal things. Anything that's not urgent. They have diabetes, they are post-date. They just want to follow up on their baby's growth. That's anything that's not urgent is our clinic. I could be there.

Gila Zarbiv: I could be in triage. That's all the urgent things. A woman whose water's broken. She's bleeding. She doesn't feel her baby moving or she's in labor, she'll go to triage. There we do the triage. We see her and we decide where she needs to go next: home, hospital, or into the labor and delivery ward.

Gila Zarbiv: I can be in the OR, in the operating room, where we take the role of the pediatrician. We receive the baby after birth. If the baby needs to be resuscitated, we do the resuscitation. If we feel you need a pediatrician, we'll call a pediatrician.

Gila Zarbiv: Or I could be in the actual labor and delivery room where we're actually delivering the babies or doing inductions. Women can be in labor and delivery for hours or days. We do inductions or regular bursts. People can come in fully dilated or people can come in and we can start the entire process. As we stated earlier, the role of the midwife is essentially, it's just one on one care. When there's actually a birth taking place. It's just me and the couple.

Gila Zarbiv: There's not a lot of noise. We try to keep it incredibly intimate, quiet, serene. I would like to use the word serene. We try to make it as beautiful a moment as possible. Just me and the husband and wife. If there's a complication or I feel like I want backup, I can either call another midwife to be in the room with me or have OB/GYN in the room with me and anytime it becomes no longer low risk but high risk, then the OB/GYN will be called and they will take it from there.

Gila Zarbiv: The beauty of midwifery is that you get to see a couple in the most organic, intimate moment of their lives and to be a part of that is really an honor and it's not something I take for granted, to realize that you're thrust in this situation where a woman is going through something that cannot really be described and to be one of the people to help her through this experience is a breathtaking opportunity.

Gila Zarbiv: What we try to accomplish during every birth is truly quiet control and serenity, that it shouldn't be a moment of chaos and yes, it's painful, we know, but it should be, with or without an epidural, it should be a moment where the woman feels in complete control. Many times I will have the woman reach down and take the baby by herself so that she can be truly a part of that moment of bringing her child into the world. I cry at every single birth. Just something else. You know?

Benyamin Cohen: It never gets old.

Gila Zarbiv: No, it never, ever, ever gets old. It's breathtaking. Yesterday I had a birth with a mother who has been doing IVF for eight years. She just had her first child. We all sat in that room and cried and she held this baby. I'm going to cry now and we just cried. It never gets old. Exactly like you said. There's always something magical happening. It's incredible.

Benyamin Cohen: Wow. That's a beautiful place to end our talk today, so I don't want to hold you any longer as you can go and deliver some more babies. Gila, we really appreciate you taking the time to chat with us today.

Gila Zarbiv: The honor is all mine. Thank you for this incredible opportunity. Thank you so, so much.

Benyamin Cohen: Thank you.

Benyamin Cohen: Hadassah On-Call. New frontiers in medicine is a production of Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization of America. Hadassah enhances the health of people around the world through medical education, care, and research innovations at the Hadassah medical organization. For more information on the latest advances in medicine, please head on over to hadassah.org/news. Extra notes and a transcript of today's episode can be found at hadassah.org/hadassahoncall. When you're there, you can also sign up to receive an email and be the first to know when new episodes of the show are released. Subscribe to our show on Apple podcast, Google Play, or your favorite podcast app. If you haven't already, please leave us a review on the Apple podcast store. It only takes a minute and when you do it helps others discover Hadassah On-Call. The show is edited by Skyler Inman and produced by the team at the Hadassah offices in both New York and Israel. I'm your host, Benyamin Cohen, and thanks again for joining us today. We'll see you next month.