

Say a Prayer for Israel's National Blood Center and Staff

There are no coincidences, and when one has the presence of mind to realize that, it's humbling to see God's hand, even in "small" things in our everyday lives.

Last week, I saw God's hand through one of these "non-coincidences."

I had made a date to meet up with my friend, *New York Times* best-selling author Joel Rosenberg, to donate blood together in Israel's coastal city, Netanya. Driving from two hours away, I arrived early and was excited to be able to spend some time with Joel, whom I have followed for some time, but who I only met in person briefly before. I found his latest book, *The Third Target*, to be exciting, insightful and ominous.

I also was eager to donate blood because it had been more than three months since my last donation, and I know going into the Passover holiday season that Israel typically has a greater need for blood donors.

As I was driving up to where the blood drive would be, my heart skipped a beat as I realized I was in front of Netanya's Park Hotel, the site of a particularly horrific terrorist attack on the first night of Passover in 2002. Israel was in the midst of the "second intifada" where security was tight and fears were high because terrorists were blowing themselves up throughout Israel on a regular basis.

With the eve of Passover just days away, my mind flashed back to the Park Hotel massacre, where 29 people were murdered when a terrorist detonated a bomb in the middle of the dining room where hundreds had gathered to celebrate the Passover Seder,

recounting our exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Land of Israel which God Promised to the Jewish people. Dozens more were injured. Many gravely.

As I was going to be donating blood some 100 yards from the site of this attack, I recalled how hundreds of pints of blood were dispatched from Israel's national blood bank that night, to save the lives of the dozens who had been injured but not killed on the spot. On a festival when we celebrate our freedom, where blood is so symbolic in the redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt, the blood spilled amid the carnage was a vast and grotesque contradiction. Another murderous attack among a plague of other attacks that left more than 1100 Israelis killed, and thousands more injured during the course of this deadly period.

During the holiday season, it's necessary to maximize the number of people donating blood in Israel. The two pints of blood Joel and I donated will be used to save as many as six people. Heart to Heart has been encouraging people visiting Israel to donate in person, and we are grateful to those who also support our virtual blood donation program, making sure Israel always has a safe and plentiful blood supply. For information, please visit .

What struck home—donating blood around the corner from the Park Hotel—is that not only despite the holiday, but because of the holiday, staff is needed 24/7 to be on site, processing and storing the blood, and to be ready at a moment's notice to send blood to the hospitals in the event of a major emergency. As Israelis plan fancy Seder meals and retelling of the Passover story, these people sacrifice spending the holiday with their family in order to be able to keep all Israelis safe, just in case.

Before the Jewish people were able to leave slavery in Egypt, God commanded us to put blood on the doorposts of their homes, so that when the Angel of Death exacted His tenth and final

plague on the Egyptians, showing all God's divinity to the world then, and still today, it would pass over their homes. Blood saves. Blood is redemptive. It was then, and it still is.

This year, Heart to Heart is offering everyone a special opportunity to participate in a most unique way. In celebration of Passover, you can send your prayers and blessings to the staff of Israel's national blood center, who work tirelessly day and night, keeping all Israelis safe. Your prayers and blessings can be sent via the internet, will be posted there for all to see, and will be presented to the staff of the national blood center, thanking them, and providing comfort and encouragement. Please join us at [at at](#) .

Some have offered prayers for the staff of the blood center. Others have offered prayers over the blood center itself, and the millions of dollars of equipment in the blood center to make sure the building and everything that is needed to house, test, and protect the blood center is safe, under His divine cover.

My friend, Annette Garcia, President of Son Broadcasting Network offered the following prayer.

"As nations come against Israel, there is a multitude of people all over the world standing in the gap praying for you and your nation. During the celebration of Passover we remember with you how God delivered your forefathers from the bondages of Pharaoh, destroying his army, as they tried to destroy you at the Red Sea. We continue to call on the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to hold you with His strong righteous right hand and to grant your leaders wisdom as He surrounds the nation of Israel with favor as with a shield. (Psalm 83)"

Amen.

As you and tens of thousands (or more) join us and send your prayers for Israel's national blood center, I pray that the

only “negative” of this special opportunity will be the reams and reams of paper need to print and present all the prayers to the staff there.

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for Charisma magazine’s *Standing With Israel*. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.