

Teen's Death in Suicide Bombing Reveals Benevolent Heart of Israelis

The hardest part of telling Daniel's story is that it is in the past tense. Despite heroic efforts to save his life, it does not have a happy ending.

On April 17, 2006, during Passover, a suicide bomber detonated a belt full of explosives and shrapnel in Tel Aviv, killing 11 and injuring 70. Daniel Cantor Wultz, from Weston, Fla., suffered devastating life-threatening injuries to most of his 16-year-old body. His father also suffered severe injuries. It was supposed to be a joyous family gathering in Israel.

Meanwhile in Jerusalem, I was wrapping up my first blood drive for American tourists who were enjoying the holiday in the city our ancestors would ascend to each Passover to bring offerings to the temple. While celebrated universally among Jews, Passover also has a deep meaning to Christians who are aware that Jesus was a Jew, he observed Passover as Jews did in his day, and his last meal was a Passover seder.

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack, Daniel was rushed to the hospital. In the ambulance and at the hospital, EMTs and doctors feverishly tried everything to keep Daniel alive. In order to sustain his severely damaged body, doctors were challenged to replenish the blood being lost, while at the same time trying to repair his badly devastated body.

As the doctors rushed to save Daniel, the blood drive in Jerusalem was ending. Thirty-seven people took time from their holiday to donate blood, making it a very big success.

But an hour away, there was an even bigger need. Israel's national blood center responded instantly by dispatching

hundreds of units of blood to area hospitals in order to help save all the terrorist's victims. In all, Daniel required 80 units of blood just to stay alive in the hours after the terrorist attack.

The doctors were able to stop the bleeding, yet Daniel's life remained in grave danger. For weeks, his family prayed by his bedside, recalling better times and hoping to enjoy more with Daniel soon. At one point, dozens of students from Daniel's school in the U.S. arrived to join the family in prayer. They recalled how much he loved people, especially his family and friends, and was widely loved as well.

Daniel was known for warm, embracing hugs, which his friends and family longed to have again as they hugged and comforted one another.

As the son of a seventh-generation native Jerusalemite, Daniel also loved Israel. Upon arriving in Israel at the beginning of the Passover holiday, Daniel told his parents, "I'm glad to be home." At his young age, Daniel understood the centrality of Israel in Jewish life and loved the feeling of being there. It was in his blood.

Daniel was mature beyond his years. He had a deep sense of humility and respect for the values and beliefs of others. Daniel's ability to respect others enabled him to reach out and be accepted by others in turn. He never spoke badly of others, and if he heard others speaking negatively about their peers, he would actively reach out to encourage them to stop. Daniel's friends remembered what a role model he was to them, as well as to adults who may have been much older but did not possess his maturity.

Daniel loved sports, especially basketball. He looked up to Michael Jordan not only for his incredible athletic gift, but also for overcoming many personal challenges as a young man to become the best basketball player ever. Daniel respected that

Jordan never blamed anyone or felt angry with those who criticized him for not playing well enough.

For Daniel, Jordan embodied the ability to overcome severe challenges. At his hospital bedside, Daniel's friends and family prayed that somewhere deep inside, Daniel would be able to overcome the life-threatening challenges that he faced at the very moment, beseeching God to give Daniel a full recovery.

Daniel loved Xbox and movies and had a great sense of humor. He loved flying airplanes and, at 14½, flew a jet. Daniel loved life, but two years after the "height" of flying a jet, he lay in grave danger as a result of a terrorist's hatred.

On Mother's Day that year, all Daniel's mother wanted was for her son to be well again. But that same day, just weeks after sustaining the devastating injuries which doctors tried to treat with all imaginable means, Daniel's body succumbed to his wounds and he died.

As an American, Daniel's death at the hands of a terrorist in Israel brought the reality and fear of hatred much closer to home. Daniel was related to Congressman Eric Cantor of Virginia, bringing terrorism in Israel to the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

Though Daniel's story has a sad ending, the month he lived after the terrorist attack was a precious time for his family. And as we mark the anniversary of the attack and honor Daniel's memory, let us also remember the generosity of 37 Americans who donated blood in Jerusalem that day. Their blood gave Daniel and others like him a chance at survival. Those who have blessed Israel by donating blood in person or through a virtual blood donation with Heart to Heart () genuinely save lives.

While the Israelis who receive blood rarely know who donated

it, there are countless people for whom this support is simply a matter of life and death and who are alive and well—celebrating holidays, birthdays, weddings and many of life's other blessings—as a result.

Thank you for your support that makes saving lives possible.

Jonathan Feldstein is the director of Heart to Heart, a unique virtual blood donation program to bless Israel and save lives in Israel. Born and educated in the U.S., Feldstein emigrated 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's Standing With Israel. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.