



Dr. David Applebaum

Sept 9, 2003 - Dr. David Applebaum, 51, of Jerusalem, was one of seven people killed in a suicide bombing at Cafe Hillel on Emek Refaim St., the main thoroughfare of the German Colony neighborhood in Jerusalem. His daughter Nava was also killed in the blast.

Dr. Applebaum, a specialist in emergency medicine, had just returned from New York where he had delivered an address on managing the medical response to mass casualty events at a major downtown symposium on emergency preparedness. The symposium was timed to mark the second anniversary of the September 11 attacks. He had arrived home just in time for his daughter Nava's wedding. Father and daughter went out for coffee together for a heart-to-heart talk the last night before her wedding. Both were killed in the blast, in which seven were killed and over 50 wounded. Nava's fiancé Chanan Sand collapsed in the emergency room of Shaare Zedek upon hearing the news.

Dr. Applebaum, born in Detroit, immigrated to Israel in 1981 from Cleveland, Ohio, where he had received his medical training. He also received rabbinical ordination at Yeshiva University. He served as a medical director of Magen David Adom in Jerusalem, as well as working in Shaare Zedek from 1985 to 1988. He left the hospital to found the Terem Immediate Care Center, which revolutionized emergency care in Jerusalem by treating relatively minor injuries and ailments in a freestanding clinic, freeing up hospital emergency rooms to deal with more serious cases. In 1986, Dr. Applebaum was presented with an award by the Knesset after treating terror victims at the scene of an attack on King George Street in Jerusalem while still under fire.

In 2002, Dr. Applebaum was appointed head of Shaare Zedek Medical Center's Department of Emergency Medicine, and was viewed in Israel's medical community as one of the country's leaders in the field. He introduced a number of groundbreaking changes to improve efficiency, and had extensive plans to continue this process following the completion of the new Weinstock Department of Emergency Medicine, which is now under construction. He began to staff the department with emergency medicine specialists, rather than relying on specialists in the various departments of the hospital. He also introduced the computer tracking of patients, and was insistent on cutting waiting time to an absolute minimum. When he was out of the hospital, he continued to monitor the treatment of each patient via a computer connection, even when he was abroad.

"He was one of the '36 righteous men' of the world," his oldest son Natan said. "His whole life was dedicated to saving lives." The hospital staff spoke of Applebaum as having an outstanding personality, as a man who was intrinsically kind and who had regard for his team.

"Thousands of Jerusalemites owe their lives to him," said hospital director, Professor Jonathan Halevy. He said that the hospital had suffered a grave loss, while other doctors spoke of a "great Torah scholar," a "sparkling personality," and a "model family man." He also continued to find the time to present lectures on Jewish law.

Applebaum had often been among the first to reach and treat terror attack victims. "He would appear at the site of every attack, volunteer, get in the ambulances to evacuate the injured to the emergency room," said Dr. Kobi Assaf, director of the emergency room at Jerusalem's Hadassah University Hospital, Ein Kerem.

Dr. David Applebaum and his daughter Nava were buried in Jerusalem. He is survived by his wife Debra and their five remaining children - Natan, 24, Yitzhak, 22, Shira, 18, Shayna, 15, and Tovi Belle, 12.

