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By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director

As of June 25, 2024, Baby Kfir Bibas has spent 263 days as a hostage, if he is alive, and only 262 days with his family. Please let this sink in. The first months of an infant's life are crucial to their development.

Kfir Bibas was born on Jan. 18, 2023. He spent just under 9 months with his family and on Oct. 7, 2023, was taken by terrorists. This is what he is missing for his development. (All milestone information is taken from www.babycenter.com)

At 9 months, Baby Kfir was able to: clap his hands, attempted to wave and used his fingers to point. Did he experience any joy that gave him a reason to clap? He remembered the location of toys and other objects, did he remember where his family was? He started to experience separation anxiety, was probably afraid of strangers and would probably have been clingy with his parents. Can you even imagine what this was like for Kfir?

At 10 months, Baby Kfir should have been able to: Experiment with toys by shaking, throwing or banging them; copying his parent's patterns of speech (was anyone speaking Hebrew to him?); he might have been able to crawl. Where could Kfir have gone? Is he being given the opportunity to safely explore areas and toys that are developmentally appropriate?

At 11 months, Baby Kfir should have been able to: Look at objects when named; waved bye-bye; might have been able to pull himself up to stand or at least been cruising along furniture; he might have been able to say his first words. Who was there to kvel at these milestones? Who recorded them on their phone to share with saba and safta?



I could go on but focusing on all of these stages that Kfir's parents are missing out on, that Kfir may be missing out on, is too much to bear. These milestones might not have been met at this point but maybe he could have far exceeded them in the care of his parents and extended family. Living on a Kibbutz, there were many people involved in his life, adding to the kindness and safety he should have felt. I speak in the past tense only because this safety and security is no longer his reality. It isn't his parents' either.

But what if the past tense is appropriate for another reason? I don't know which is more horrific: thinking about him alive in the "care" of terrorists? Or thinking of him not on this Earth anymore?

The tragedy of Kfir's kidnapping is not more important than any of the other hostages however when you think about the irrevocable harm that is befalling Kfir's development it is devastating.

I wonder what these anti-Israel protesters would say to this? The terrorists, in their bid to punish Israel for perceived offenses, should have attacked military bases. They should have not attacked innocent civilians, innocent infants and children.

263 and the number of days away continue to grow.

Shabbat Shalom.