

Appendix A

Amir Zini, father of the Niral Zini z"l, who was murdered in Kfar Gaza (nephew of Prof. Avi Zini, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Medicine)

"Time has come to a standstill. We, within the Gaza envelope, now we feel embraced, unlike before the tragic events of Oct. 7th. What we experienced was absolute shock without any prior warning. Let me share the story of Niral and Niv Raviv, a young couple in the prime of their lives. Niral, who had just turned 31, met a tragic end, buried on the very day of his birth.

Niral had been discharged from the IDF just a year ago after serving diligently in various units. Eight years prior, he had been gravely wounded in Hebron. We had been gifted another eight years with him. Tragically, his initial injury and subsequent murder unfolded on the same date as his Hebrew birthday.

On October 7th, a group of their friends from different military units attempted to rescue the couple. They were affectionately known as the 'couple' and those who tried to rescue them paid the ultimate price for their valor. Tragically, their independent actions resulted in many casualties. I accompanied approximately 25 soldiers who lost their lives, some of whom were close friends of Niral and Niv.

When Niral served in the IDF, he was a sergeant major in Givati and played a pivotal role in establishing the Cheetah Battalion.

One Saturday morning, they were not supposed to be in Kfar Aza; they were supposed to be in Netanya. Fate had other plans, and they decided to return to the Kfar Aza at midnight.

Before Oct. 7th we had lived with the belief that we coexisted with those we considered fellow human beings. But they were not human – they were monsters. Their intent was not only to kill; otherwise, why bring a knife for cutting and a burner for burning?

In every corner of the Gaza envelope, as part of an ideal, there were workers from Gaza. They, along with their sons and families, had been living and working amongst us for 20 to 30 years. They were provided with homes, slept here, and only returned to Gaza for vacations. In hindsight, it was revealed that these very 'Gazaites' from within our midst possessed the most accurate intelligence, and in some cases, were the first to breach the defenses towards Israel. The disillusionment is excruciating. Today, we all understand that what once was, cannot be what lies ahead. Our hearts are heavy as we pray for the safe return of the hostages.

The first recorded abduction in our history was that of Lot, the brother of our revered patriarch, Abraham. What did Abraham, the father of our nation, do in response to this dire situation? The scripture narrates, "And Abraham heard that his brother had been taken captive, and he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan..." Without hesitation, Abraham swiftly rallied every able-bodied man within his camp and set out to rescue Lot. He fearlessly engaged in battle against five kings, unwavering in his pursuit until he succeeded in freeing his nephew.

The significance of the Torah specifying the exact number of people, 318, should not be overlooked. In gematria, this number corresponds to the word "discourse," conveying a profound message: there are moments when action, not words, is required. We must recognize that not every situation warrants discourse. When people have been murdered, women, children, men, young and old, and hostages taken, there is a need for action. We must emulate individuals like Niral and Niv. They understood the importance of speech when it was appropriate – but they were people of action when it mattered most."

Shai Dikman cousin of Carmel Gat who was kidnapped from Kibbutz Be'eri and is now being held by Hamas in Gaza

"My name is Shay, and I am a medical student at Hebrew University. This year, my aunt, my cousin Carmel Gat, my brother, and I were all set to embark on our studies at Hebrew University. However, instead of attending lectures or diving into thesis work, our plans were disrupted as Carmel Gat, my beloved cousin, was taken hostage to Gaza on Oct. 7th.

Carmel was born and raised in Kibbutz Be'eri, where her father, mother, brothers, uncles, and cousins all resided until October 7th. On that particular Shabbat, Carmel, along with her brother and his family, paid a visit to their parents in the kibbutz, and they joyously celebrated Simchat Torah together.

At 6:30 in the morning, a barrage of rockets started to rain down, prompting the entire family to seek refuge in the shelter. Carmel had time to read a story to her niece in the shelter, before the terrorists broke into the house and kidnapped Carmel from it. Her father, David Lee, witnessed her kidnapping and he watched the family members being taken one by one by terrorists.

Since that morning, a month ago, we haven't heard from Carmel.

Her mother, Kinneret, was also taken, led away in handcuffs by terrorists. Today is her 69th birthday, which she did not get to celebrate. Kinneret was murdered on the kibbutz's land on Oct. 7th. Carmel may not know what happened to her mother. Carmel's brother, his wife, and daughter were also taken and forced into a car that drove towards Gaza. Near the border, Carmel's brother managed to escape from the car with his daughter. They made it to a hiding place, and when it got dark, he carried her back to Be'eri. The two made it to safety and they are here with us. His wife, Jordan Roman disappeared during the escape attempt, and apparently she too, like Carmel, was kidnapped by Hamas.

On October 7, I reluctantly joined two families, the family of the bereaved and the family of the hostages. Kibbutz Be'eri, the kibbutz where my mother and her brother grew up, and where we spent Shabbats and holidays as a family, suffered a fatal blow. A tenth of its residents were murdered, kidnapped or are still missing.

To the scientists among us, I present the following data: Since October 7th, 1,400 individuals were killed, including 86 from Kibbutz Be'eri. I extend my deepest sympathies to all the families who have lost their beloved ones. This pain is shared by bereaved parents, orphans, grandmothers who have nurtured their grandchildren, as well as spouses left behind and dear friends. My heart goes out to each of you. Together, we will honor the memory of our

departed loved ones and strive to heal, working towards a reality that would make them proud.

In addition to the tragic loss of life, there are now 29 members of Kibbutz Be'eri who have been kidnapped. For them, hope still remains. The challenging circumstances we find ourselves in force us to reexamine our moral compass and reevaluate the principles we once held in more peaceful times.

As researchers, we are committed to asking every necessary question. However, let us not forget that the most fundamental human rights are the right to life, liberty, and personal security. Regrettably, these three pillars have been stripped away from our fellow citizens, and it is our solemn duty, as a united nation, to do everything in our power to secure the safe return of those who have been taken hostage.

Even in this dire situation, the spirit of the agricultural community endures. Despite the absence of those farmers the wheat continues to grow. It is essential that we work together as a nation to bring our hostages back to their rightful place so that they can once again contribute to the harvest and the prosperity of our land.

There are 35 children and 18 elderly hostages in dire need of medical assistance. The youngest among them, Kafir, was abducted at just 9 months old, and today he turns ten months. The hostages, particularly the children and the elderly, are part of a vulnerable population, and their health is deteriorating rapidly. We urgently request your support in mobilizing life-saving medical aid from the Red Cross.

These abductees are still held by Hamas members who forcibly displaced them from their homes, perpetrated violence against their relatives, and subjected them to intolerable abuse.

Carmel, a dedicated student pursuing a master's degree in occupational therapy, has a background in assisting individuals with psychological and cognitive challenges to integrate into university studies. She has also been closely associated with our university and is known for her commitment to peace and her welcoming nature, offering support to individuals regardless of their circumstances.

I hope that all of us, who study and teach in Jerusalem, a city that embraces people of diverse backgrounds, including different sectors, races, religions, colors, and genders, will strive to follow the path that Carmel believes in. We should be able to distinguish between friend and foe, treating our faculty members, students, and colleagues with the respect they deserve. While fear is understandable, we must remain vigilant without undermining the delicate tapestry of harmony we have painstakingly woven here.

Carmel undoubtedly aspires to this vision. Her mother Kinneret, whose life was tragically cut short, would have shared this aspiration as well.

I implore you, please help us, the families of the hostages, to reduce the number of grieving families. Join us in calling upon the government, the international community, and anyone

who will listen to ensure the safe return of the hostages remains a priority, never fading from the agenda.

A month has passed, and your unwavering support remains palpable, providing solace each day. I yearn for all of us to return to a semblance of normalcy as soon as possible.

However, we must not lose sight of the 240 civilians in Gaza. We should not become complacent, abandon them, or disregard their plight. In a month, university studies are expected to commence. I sincerely hope that Carmel will be back among us by then. Until that moment, as you enter each classroom and notice an empty chair, please remember that Carmel, now held hostage in Gaza, could have been seated there. Recognize that the same chair could be empty for any one of us, our friends, or acquaintances. Let us never allow this reality to become routine.”