**"But we must find the words, because aside from words, there is almost nothing."**

Erica Herszkowich

This epigraph came back to me during the journey back to Jerusalem from the south of Israel, where we witnessed the sinister effects of what happened on October 7. Over and over again, the words repeated in my mind like a litany, although I couldn't remember where I had taken them from.

Perhaps because silence stunned my inner self, filled with the images of the horror that erupted in Kfar Aza kibbutz.

Or maybe because the desolation of the Nova event, a festival supposed to celebrate life, left no space in memory.

Or perhaps due to the emotion that enveloped me when recalling the account of the director of Ofakim, who took charge of her educational community: Which of her students was dead? Who was kidnapped? Who had lost family members? And how to transform a story of death into one of heroism, life, and overcoming?

And suddenly, as the images began to settle, I remembered that the epigraph belongs to Linda Olsson's novel "Sonata for Miriam." It describes the grieving process of a father who lost his daughter. It is, indeed, a story of pain and depression. But it is also a tale of rebirth and a gradual return to the colors of life.

Perhaps we still lack the right words and the optimal distance to analyze the consequences of October 7 because we are in the midst of the grieving process.

But we will find the words. We will find paths that lead from pain to hope and rebirth. That has been the only option for the Jewish people: heirs and narrators of a story with highs and lows, with hills and deserts, with whites, blacks, many shades, and an abundance of versions but always, always, a story of life, music, flavors and overcoming.

To move in that direction, I think we must set some starting points, as a form of dialogical encounter between:

* Professional and personal perspectives. An objective analysis cannot be neutral. We are deeply involved personally and professionally.
* The local and the global. We belong to Jewish institutions that are part of community frameworks that are part of a global Jewish community, sharing dreams, and facing common problems. Isolating ourselves in the solitude of our communities impoverishes us.
* History and the present. Comparing the events of October 7th with parameters from other tragic moments in the history of the Jewish people seems, at least, risky.
* The common past and the shared destiny. The tragedies of our people cannot be the core of Jewish education. Our tragedies can not constitute the central part of our identity.
* The center and the periphery. Each of the world's Jewish communities is both the center and the periphery at the same time. We must create better ties for the Jewish social fabric to be stronger. This implies being able to talk to each other and respect differences. We should speak of Jewish identities, in the plural and not in the singular.
* Israel and the jewish communities around the world: What should be the link between Israel and the diaspora? And among the jewish communities themselves? We must revisit those links and nurture them to flourish, without certainties. Unilateralism impoverishes us. Diversity and breadth, on the contrary, strengthen us. Am Israel Chai.

Erica Herszkowich; General Director; Martin Buber School - Buenos Aires, Argentina