**A New Jewish World – and the Role of Education**

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My solidarity trip to Israel after the October the 7th Invasion and Massacre (with the incredible assistance of UnitEd, Pincus Fund, WZO and Ministry of the Diaspora) exposed to me to an Israel I had never seen. My Israel was a place of a strong and resolute government. A place of joy and vibrancy. A place that, whilst always complex, was a refuge and oasis for Jewish life.

The Israel that greeted me was one writhing with trauma. A place where the government is growing increasingly isolated from the people they serve, and civil society is responding and intervening remarkably to governmental shortcomings. I saw an Israel grappling with displaced communities (some of whom, in their hundreds, were in our hotel in Jerusalem), grieving families, anxious citizens and a nation consumed by war and loss. I also saw an Israel that has to contend with terrorists in Gaza and key-board fanatics and antisemites rearing their heads around the globe.

Although that is what I saw, I understood something different. I understood that beneath the frailty was a nation grappling with identity. A nation that was trying to reformulate itself and its ideologies. A nation that is forced to confront itself after having been violently confronted by its enemies. Israel and the Jewish people are, in fact, starting to chart their next great chapter. A nation grappling with issues that, when resolved, will push us only higher. Issues of Jewish identity vs Israeli identity. Issues of Jewish peoplehood and the interconnectedness of Jews around the world – are the diaspora Jews and Israeli Jews really disconnected ? This war has proven that our distance is only geographical, and that anti-Zionism is antisemitism. Perhaps the war has pushed us all from the extremes to somewhere in the centre ? Perhaps the war will make us talk to each other instead of hate each other like many did on October the 6th.

I also understood that education is the key to resolving this complex web of thoughts. It is in our classrooms and homes that Jewish values, Jewish identity and Jewish unity are taught and modelled. Education is more than academics and more than University entrance exams and degrees. It is about inculcating values. As a global Jewish people, in Israel and Diaspora, and as Jewish educators we have the responsibility and power to unite with the singular goal of instilling proud Jewish identity through the medium of Jewish knowledge and dialogue.

It is a valid question to ask, what occurs when an event so catastrophic and co cataclysmic occurs to one of the smallest countries and one of the smallest people on earth ? One would assume that it spells doom or certain collapse. That is the expected outcome – but not when dealing with the State of Israel of the Jewish people. A history of abuse, tyranny, expulsion and genocide have bred an equal and opposite measure of resilience, fortitude and strength. The Jewish will to survive and fight for our values has become a defining characteristic of our statistically insignificant nation. We will rise again. Bruised and battered, carrying our losses, but with a renewed commitment to bearing the torch of Jewish pride for generations to come.