

## We Came to Create

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In times of crisis, members of the Jewish community often turn to Jewish education and Jewish educators for support. This is justified and important, and as Jewish educational leaders, we want to responsibly respond to the crisis that began on October 7.

As part of this effort, it is vital to be able to articulate what our communities need; specifically, to understand the difference between *hasbarah* / advocacy and education. I don't think definitions are needed (for this brief memo) but the distinction, especially now, is crucial. Both are needed, both are important—and it does a disservice to both when we do not distinguish between the two and are not clear about our approach, goals, and methods.

During my time in Israel immediately before Thanksgiving with the Areyvut Delegation it became clear to me, even as someone who has lived in Israel for four years, visits often, and is deeply engaged in the day-to-day life of the country, that I did not fully understand or appreciate what Israelis have been or are experiencing. For Israelis, October 7 was not a traumatic day in the past but rather a trauma that feels as though it is ongoing. Between concern for the hostages and an existential fear due to the nature of



the attack, the trauma is very much ongoing for many Israelis.

I think one educational goal that we must address has to do with why October 7 is different from other terrorist incidents as well as (as much as possible) potential causes of October 7, and its implications.

As I am writing this, the words of David Ben Gurion from 1937 echo in my mind:

“We are returning to Palestine, and we gladly and without qualification admit one very essential limit, and that limit is the right of the inhabitants of Palestine not to be injured. Nothing shall be taken away from them which they need for their existence and for their wellbeing. We came to add, not to take away. We came to create. We may and we will come, and we are entitled to come as long as the Jewish problem is not solved, as long as there is need for Jews to come to Palestine, and there is a place for them in Palestine without displacing others.” - David Ben Gurion, 1937

October 7 has led me to ask essential questions about Ben Gurion’s vision and the implementation of his vision. I believe Jewish education/Israel education needs to address:

- The possibility, challenges, and opportunities of co-existence both within Israel and between Israel and her neighbors;

- What happened in Israel over the year leading up to October 7—not as a cause, but as an important factor and context;
- The relationship between Jews in the Diaspora and Jews in Israel—what is constant, what has changed, and what might need to change.