

C.A.L.L.

CORE BELIEFS for INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

Intentional Communities Desk
as Study Group

Compiled from Issues of
CALL – 2012-2014

Introduction.....	1
Faith.....	4
Human Nature and Free Will.....	10
Thoughts on Community.....	14
<i>Shlichut</i> – The Idea of “Mission”.....	18
<i>Tikkun Olam</i> – Mending, Repairing..... and Transforming the World	21

Compiled by Michael Livni
July 2019 – Tamuz 5779

Communities At Large Letter



CORE BELIEFS for INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

The Intentional Communities Desk
of the Kibbutz Movement As Study Group
(Formerly the International Communes Desk)

Introduction.

During the years 2012-2014, the Intentional Communities Desk held a series of discussions on core aspects of intentional community. Broadly defined, intentional communities are communities formed on a voluntary basis by individuals with shared values and ideals.

These discussions appeared in the issues of *CALL - Communities at Large Letter* as articles during the years 2012–2014, issues 34-38. We have seen it fit to republish these articles as an educational resource for our readers. The booklet will also be on-line at www.communa.org.il.

Five meetings of the Desk were devoted to this project - each meeting had a particular focus. The foci were: Faith, Human Nature and Free Will, Community and the Human as a Communal Being, *Shlichut* - The idea of "Mission" and "Tikkun Olam": Intentional Community for World Mending and Transformation. Their order in this booklet has been slightly altered from the order of their original publication. This booklet is representative - not definitive.

Faith.

First and foremost, the ongoing personal decision to live in intentional community is a matter of individual faith. The belief that there is a purpose to our existence over and above satisfying our individual material and psychological needs as well as those of our immediate family is a matter of faith. It cannot be proved or disproved. Our discussion on this question utilized the writings of two philosophers as well as two poets.

Paul Tillich (1880-1965) was a German Protestant theologian who fled to the United States upon the advent of Hitler.

A.D. Gordon (1856-1922) was the philosopher and mythic personality whose ideas had a seminal influence on the founding generation of the kibbutz movement.

The excerpt from "Laugh, Laugh at the Dreams" is by the poet, Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875-1943). "You and I will Change the World" was a hit song in Israel written by Arik Einstein (1939-2013)

Human Nature and Free Will.

The discussion on human nature and culture centred on the question of the innate limits to the cultures that humans can form as a biological species. What are the constraints to which we are subject? Are we "free" to determine our own way of life, our own fate? Cultural anthropologist Alexander Alland (1931-2016) discusses the plasticity of human cultures as consequent to the unique biology of the human animal.

Traditional Judaism recognized the dilemma between Determinism and Free Will early on: "All is foreseen but free will is given..." (Avot 3:15).

Thoughts on Community.

The discussion on intentional community leads to the question of community in the modern world as well as prerequisites for intentional community. These questions arise against the backdrop of the breakdown of traditional societies and the onset of modernity world-wide, which began in the 18th Century. It continues to this day. It includes the transition from extended families in rural settings to nuclear families in urban aggregates. Here the study group discussed the thoughts of Rene Dubos (1901-1982), French-American biologist and philosopher, as well as criteria for "true community" posited in 1919 by Martin Buber (1878-1965). Uriel Tal (1926-1984) discussed the Biblical roots of intentional community in Judaism.

"Shlichut" - The Idea of Mission.

The idea of intentional community, in itself, is not enough.

Its realization depends on individuals who take upon themselves the challenge of actualization. Those who talk the talk must also be prepared to walk the walk. They hear/feel from within a "call" and act. The English term, "a calling" is a derivative of this idea. The study group related to this idea within the context of modern Jewish history while being fully cognizant of the fact that this idea can express itself in different ways, positive and negative, at different times and among different peoples.

The Book of Genesis, 12: 1-4, presents the prototype - the Call which led the Biblical figure of Abraham to "go forth" to the Promised Land.

Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922), "The Dream and its Fulfilment" was the defining figure in the revival of Hebrew as a living language and he describes the events and the progression of thoughts which triggered his "call".

Hannah Senesh (1921-1944), "A Voice Called and I Went..." wrote her legendary poem as a young woman before she undertook the mission behind enemy lines where she was captured and executed. Her words gave poetic expression to the deeds of a generation of Zionist pioneers who founded the most significant intentional movement of the 20th century - the kibbutz movement.

"Tikkun Olam" - Mending and Transforming the World.

The final session of the study group dealt with the role of intentional community in furthering "Tikkun Olam" - mending and transformation against the backdrop of the challenges of both social and environmental justice. The discussion emphasized the necessity of both theory and action in intentional community (and not only in intentional community). Tikkun Olam necessitates social and environmental responsibility in the here and now (mending, repairing) as well as furthering visions of social and environmental justice (transformation) for future sustainability and quality of life for all on Spaceship Earth.

Michael Livni
Kibbutz Lotan
July 2019 - Tamuz 5779

ON FAITH - CALL 36 - Summer 2013

From the International Communes Desk (ICD) Study Group

In "Thoughts on Community" (below) we present an excerpt from Martin Buber's essay, "True Community". Buber claimed that the existence of true community depends on land in common, work in common, way of life in common and belief in common - faith in common ideas and ideals. In his book, **I and Thou**, Buber expanded on this idea of common ideas and ideals as commitment to infinite purpose, commitment to an "Eternal Thou". This brings us to the question of Faith and intentional community.

Can there be intentional community without faith? Can there be intentional community without the personal commitment of the individual to invest part of his/her life energy in the realization of ideals in his/her personal life? Can there be intentional community without a group of people sharing over-arching ideals. Ultimately, in the real world, the question arises: In order to be viable does intentional community as a way of life require a **movement of such communities** in order to be viable and impact on society? We leave this last question for a future issue of CALL.

In this issue we bring excerpts which deal with the question of faith. The German-American protestant theologian, Paul Tillich (1886- 1965), in his book, **The Dynamics of Faith** (1957), delves into the question of what true faith means. Tillich contrasts true faith with idolatrous faith such as faith in "the Nation" or "success" .

The kibbutz movement could not have emerged as a seminal influence on the emerging state of Israel without groups of individuals prepared to dedicate themselves to ideas and ideals - what the philosopher, A. D. Gordon termed "Life Eternal." Gordon's concept of integrating "life of the hour" with "life eternal" provides an understanding of the mind-set of the first generation of the kibbutz pioneers (*chalutzim*). The current crisis in the kibbutz movement can be interpreted as a crisis of faith. (See also: "100 Years of Kibbutz: Now What and for What? ", CALL #33, Winter 2010/2011).

The state of Israel could not have emerged without a humanistic belief in the individual - and his/her ability to realize a distant dream. Two poems, "I Believe" by Shaul Tchernichovsky and "You and I" by Arik Einstein - almost 100 years between them - express that spirit.

Excerpts from:

Chapter 1, WHAT FAITH IS.

Paul Tillich, THE DYNAMICS OF FAITH, Harper Torch Books, 1958

FAITH AS ULTIMATE CONCERN

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamic of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern. Man, like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his very existence, such as food and shelter. But man, in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns - cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy. If of him who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name. If a



Paul Tillich (1886-1985)

national group makes the life and growth of the nation its ultimate concern, it demands that all other concerns, economic well-being, health and life, aesthetic and cognitive truth, justice and humanity, be sacrificed. The extreme nationalisms of our century are laboratories for the study of what ultimate concern means in all aspects of human existence, including the smallest concern of one's daily life. Everything is centered in the only god, the nation - a god who certainly proves to be a demon, but who shows clearly the unconditional character of an ultimate concern.

But it is not only the unconditional demand made by that which is one's ultimate concern, it is also the promise of ultimate fulfillment which is accepted in the act of faith. The content of this promise is not necessarily defined. It can be expressed in indefinite symbols or in concrete symbols which cannot be taken literally, like the "greatness" of one's nation in which one participates even if one has died for it, or the conquest of mankind by the "saving race," etc. In each of these cases it is "ultimate fulfillment" that is promised, and it is exclusion from such fulfillment which is threatened if the unconditional demand is not obeyed.

An example - and more than an example - is the faith manifest in the religion of the Old Testament. It also has the character of ultimate concern in demand, threat and promise. The content of this concern is not the nation - although Jewish nationalism has sometimes tried to distort it into that - but the content is the God of justice, who, because he represents justice for everybody and every nation, is called the universal God, the God of the universe. He is the ultimate concern of every pious Jew, and

therefore in his name the great commandment is given: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deut. 6: 5). This is what ultimate concern means and from these words "ultimate concern" is derived. They state unambiguously the character of genuine faith, the demand of total surrender to the subject of ultimate concern. The Old Testament is full of commands which make the nature of this surrender concrete, and it is full of promises and threats in relation to it. Here also are the promises of symbolic indefiniteness, although they center around fulfillment of the national and individual life, and the threat is the exclusion from such fulfillment through national extinction and individual catastrophe. Faith, for the men of the Old Testament, is the state of being ultimately and unconditionally concerned about Jahweh and about what he represents in demand, threat and promise.

Another example - almost a counter-example, yet nevertheless equally revealing - is the ultimate concern with "success" and with social standing and economic power. It is the god of many people in the highly competitive Western culture and it does what every ultimate concern must do: demand unconditional surrender to its laws even if the price is the sacrifice of genuine human relations, personal conviction, and creative *eros*. Its threat is social and economic defeat, and its promise - indefinite as all such promises - the fulfillment of one's being. ...

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned. The content matters infinitely for the life of the believer, but it does not matter for formal definitions of faith... (From pp. 1-4)

...In the act of faith that which is the source of this act is present beyond the cleavage of subject and object. It is present as both and beyond both.

This character of faith gives an additional criterion for distinguishing true and false ultimacy. The finite which claims infinity without having it (as, e.g., a nation or success) is not able to transcend the subject-object scheme. It remains an object which the believer looks at as a subject. He can approach it with ordinary knowledge and subject it to ordinary handling. There are, of course, many degrees in the endless realm of false ultimacies. The nation is nearer to true ultimacy than is success. Nationalistic ecstasy can produce a state in which the subject is almost swallowed by the object. But after a period the subject emerges again disappointed radically and totally, and by looking at the nation in a skeptical and calculating way does injustice even to its justified claims. The more idolatrous a faith the less it is able to overcome the cleavage between subject and object. For that is the difference between true and idolatrous faith. In true faith the ultimate concern is a concern about the truly ultimate; while in idolatrous faith preliminary, finite realities are elevated to the rank of ultimacy. The inescapable consequence of idolatrous faith is "existential

disappointment," a disappointment which penetrates into the very existence of man!
(From pp. 11-12)

*

A.D. Gordon (1856 - 1922)

The Here and Now Which is "Life Eternal"- Not a Sacrifice, (1911)

Insofar as I have not yet experienced a change in my purpose for living, there is no reason for me to seek a new life, for I will not find it. A new life is first and foremost a new purpose for living. This idea is very simple and yet despite this it is no wonder that many people do not understand it and consider it to be a strange idea. They say that it is up to the individual who works to clarify for himself what it is that he wants - if he wants to work and live by/for himself, or if he wants to work and live so that others may live; that is to say for the general good and for the good of future generations. These types of questions distract the mind of man from the essence of it all - from life of the hour, which contains life eternal for insofar as life of the hour is itself real life, it contains life eternal. **

The individual who seeks a new life for himself does not seek it the heavens or in the air but rather in that same life which he is trying to renew by way of the work he does, by the conditions under which he lives and by the struggle he undertakes to remove obstacles from his path.

There are those who think that one who seeks to live for the sake of life eternal has no need for life of the hour. In their opinion, one who seeks to live for the sake of life eternal is looked upon as a "sacrificial lamb"***, the atonement for the Jewish People. He sacrifices his life in appears to be heroic, yet in truth it is passive. It exists by force of a decision made in the past, but true strength is constant activism.



A. D. Gordon (1856-1922)

Few are those who actually seek out new life, more than a few are "sacrificial offerings", and many more seek a new life in thought only.* New life requires ongoing activism, for passivity will not bring the renaissance of a people. One who wishes to live a life for the sake of the eternal is neither a sacrificial lamb, nor an atonement for the Jewish people. Neither does he sacrifice his own life of the hour, for life of the hour in the here and now which has a purpose is, in fact, life eternal.

There are two paths before us in the Land of Israel: the path of life in Exile with Exilic wisdom, with its Exilic feeling and rationale and with the force of Exilic actions as

distinct from the path of renaissance which we wish to follow. Let each one choose whichever he will choose, but let him be aware what he has chosen, and let him know that whoever has chosen the path of renaissance will not follow the path of Exile. Exile is always Exile, and in the Land of Israel there is no less Exile than anywhere else. The price for choosing renaissance is giving up the way of life in Exile and in truth, this is not a heavy price to pay. One must not think that he who desires the life of the future must deprive himself of life in the here and now.

One who desires life must seek life, but he must seek it in a different manner. He must seek a different life, that is to say, a life with/for another purpose. The lover is satisfied with a piece of dry bread and a humble tent together with his beloved more so than with a life of delights in the palace of a king without her, for only life in proximity to his beloved is for him real life. He who loves also seeks luxury and abundance in life, but only while close to his beloved and anything which distances him from his beloved distances him from his life. And so it is with spiritual love. One who desires a life impressed with the stamp of the renaissance chooses that life whether it is a good life or a humble life and spurns life which is not impressed with the stamp of the renaissance, which is thus neither life eternal nor life of the hour in the here and now.

*Translator's Note:

The Hebrew terms, "Chayei Sha-ah" (חיי שעה) and "Chayei Olam" (חיי עולם) have been translated as "life of the hour" and "life eternal" respectively. A rendering of "life in the here and now" and "life everlasting" or "life forever" is also possible. In the Hebrew, these terms also imply the contrast and the tension between the finite and the infinite. The concept of "Chayei Olam" is also cognate with the term "Tikkun Olam" (תיקון עולם), to mend, to transform, to perfect the world. In Jewish tradition this is the Divine purpose of human existence.

**emphasis in the original.

***"sacrificial lamb": A metaphorical reference to a person or animal sacrificed (killed or discounted in some way) for the common good. The term is derived from the Biblical tradition where a lamb is brought to the temple to atone for certain sins. (Leviticus 5: 5-6. The concept is also associated with the binding of Isaac - Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, at God's behest (Genesis 22.)



Shaul Tchernichovsky, 1875 - 1943

Laugh, Laugh - I Believe
(1894, Odessa)

Laugh, laugh at all my dreams!
What I dream shall yet come true!
Laugh at my belief in man;
At my belief in you.

Freedom still my soul demands
Unbartered for a calf of gold.*
For still I do believe in man
And in his spirit, strong and bold.

And in the future I still believe
Though it be distant, come it will
When nations shall each other bless,
And peace at last the earth shall fill.

At the foot of Mt. Sinai, in the absence of
Moses, the Israelites are prepared to
worship a golden calf - symbolic of the
material and idolatry,
(Translated from the Hebrew)

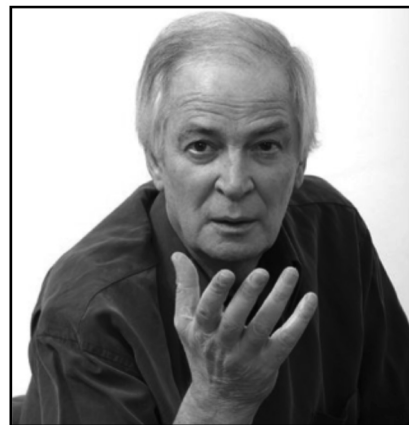
*"calf of gold" refers to the story of
the golden calf, Exodus 32: 1-6.

You and I

You and I we'll change the world
You and I - and all will follow
Others have said it before me
But it doesn't matter
You and I, we'll change the world!

You and I we'll try from the beginning
It'll be tough on us, it doesn't matter
It not so terrible!
Others have said it before me
But it doesn't matter
You and I, we'll change the world!

You and I we'll change the world
You and I - and all will follow
Others have said it before me
But it doesn't matter
You and I, we'll change the world!



Arik Einstein, 1939 - 2013

Compiled by Michael Livni,
Kibbutz Lotan

From the International Communes Desk (ICD) Study Group

ON "HUMAN NATURE"

CALL 34 - Winter 2011/12

During the past year the ICD decided that a portion of our bi-monthly meetings would focus on studying core questions facing intentional community as it interfaces with the normative culture of Western society. We have done so utilizing both general sources as well as the perspective of the Jewish heritage.

A core thesis relating to community is raised by skeptics - life in community, they say, is not in accordance with human nature. But what is "human nature"? What are the limitations imposed upon us by our innate nature? Is our species, Homo Sapiens, individualistic and competitive by nature? Are we inevitably fated to struggle in a "survival of the fittest"? The question is posed against the backdrop of neo-Liberalism and social Darwinism current in much of contemporary Western society.

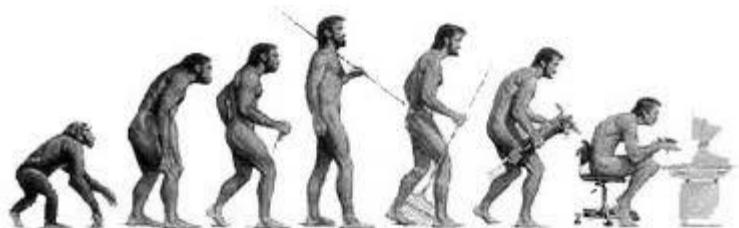
For this issue of *CALL*, we have selected an excerpt from the social anthropologist, Alexander Alland. In his book, *THE HUMAN IMPERATIVE*, (Columbia University Press, 1972) Alland responded to a series of books that viewed the human animal as subject to the behavioral limitations of other animals. In particular, Alland related to books by Konrad Lorenz, *ON AGGRESSION*; Robert Ardrey, *THE TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVE*; and Desmond Morris, *THE NAKED APE*.

THE HUMAN IMPERATIVE - Chapter 1 -Introduction

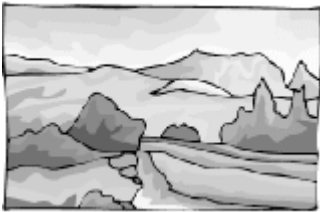
'THIS BOOK IS A DEFENSE of man against strict biological determinism. A defense against those who like Konrad Lorenz, Robert Ardrey, and Desmond Morris would oversimplify man's place in nature and reduce human behavior to the level of instincts. The book is also a defense of anthropology against the claim that it is anti-Darwinian and unscientific.

Lorenz and Ardrey have created a pseudo-conflict: science vs. romantic metaphysics. They

suggest that biologists see man as subject to laws of behavior, while social scientists see man as the subject of special creation and therefore immune to biological rules. This is not and has never been the case. The question is put too simplistically and the battle lines have been falsely drawn.



I am a Darwinian. The theory of evolution is the central focus of my thinking and research concerning human origins and behavior. I am also an anthropologist. My field is the science of man. This science, at least in the United States, has always maintained a dual focus: that of biology and of social science. Anthropologists have consistently held the point of view that, although man is a unique species, he can be understood only within the context of nature. This involves the study of human origins from primate ancestors, the emergence of man as a unique, culture-bearing species, and an understanding of the varied patterns of behavior which have been documented by ethnologists (those who study living societies around the world) throughout the past hundred years or so of modern anthropology.



Few would deny that something like drives exists in man. What is usually argued is what drives are specific to man. Hunger, thirst, sex, and the need for sleep appear to be acceptable to everyone. More in doubt are drives for power, territory, aggression, and creativity.

Here I should like to introduce a distinction between a drive, which is deterministic only in a very loose sense, and capacity for behavior, which is even less deterministic. I would say that humans are born with capacities for aggression, territoriality, creativity, as well as many other types of behavior. The occurrence or nonoccurrence of such behavior in any individual or in any group, however, will depend upon a combination of hereditary factors and learning. The form that such behavior would take will also be patterned by the culture in which an individual is socialized.



If human beings in general have a capacity for aggressive behavior, they also have a capacity for tightrope walking and juggling. (How good a circus performer one might become is probably a function of inborn ability, motivation, and the unfolding of ability through arduous training.) If this is the case, I think one can see how vapid the concept of aggression becomes when an anthropologist attempts to say something important about the social behavior of a specific group. Nothing is automatic about such behavior. In fact, the only evidences of specific automatic behavior in man are simple reflexes such as the knee jerk; the more complex response of an infant to pressure on the cheek, which causes it to turn toward the stimulus and begin sucking; and the (perhaps instinctual) fear of falling which a baby expresses.

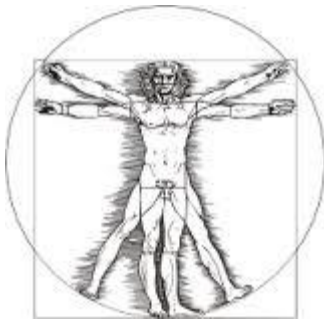
Anthropologists realized long ago that purely biological explanations of human behavior are inadequate. Our behavior is based on customs which develop in the context of specific social and environmental conditions. While they do reflect the fact that man like all other animals must adjust to the environment to survive,

attempts to link human behavioral systems to simple geographic or genetic factors have always failed. This is because man's major behavioral adaptation is culture. Culture is learned and shared. It is rooted in biology. But although this is true (the capacity for culture is part of a normal human's brain structure), culture frees man to an unprecedented degree from strictly biological controls over the development and maintenance of behavioral systems. Culture is biologically adaptive. That is, human populations imbedded, like all animal populations, in specific environments adjust to these environments largely through culture.

Man is born with a capacity to learn culture, not with culture. This does not mean that all human behavior is freed of biological programming. Individuals are born different. The outcome of heredity and experience will lead to differences in temperament and ability which make it possible for the human group to function as a social entity.



The human being has been shaped by evolution. His size, the fact that he walks on two feet, his relative lack of body hair, and the fact that he can and does talk are all products of the evolutionary process. What man does and also what he believes are also products of evolution. But those elements which depend upon culture are not inherited biologically. In part, man adapts biologically to his environment in a non-biological way - through culture.



Since man is one of the most widely distributed of species occupying a vast array of environments ranging from deserts to swampland, from plains to mountains, from inland to the sea, and because his social and technological environment varies as widely, we should not be surprised to find a range of behavioral variation adjusted to specific environments...

...Humans, as members of social groups, may exhibit behaviors which parallel instinctual behaviors in lower animals but which have their origin in culture. Variations, cultural or biological, are all subject to selection through the action of the environment. If a variation (physical or behavioral, genetic or learned) has an advantage over other existing forms in a specific environment, it can be selected for in that environment...

...culture, which is a product of man's biological past, and which is man's major way of adapting, is not dependent upon genetic variation for change. Aggressive or passive behavior (and combinations of these) are both possibilities within the behavioral capacities of man. What kind of behavioral system emerges must conform to man's biological capacities, but since these are wide, the capacities alone tell us little about real systems undergoing the selective process.



Certain conditions should produce parallels between behaviors such as territoriality in lower animals which are genetic in origin and culturally produced behaviors in man. In both cases the environment has favored behavior of a certain type, but in the first case the emergent form is directly under the control of biological mechanisms. In the latter case the adaptive behavior is selected from a wide range of possible behaviors none of which are specifically controlled by the genetic system.

Thus I am not surprised when I find territorial behavior in many human groups. Nor am I surprised to find aggressive behavior affecting various levels of that complex whole which makes up human social life. It is no surprise either that the anthropological record contains many cases of opposite types of behavior. No one type reflects the "real" innate nature of man. Human nature is largely open, and it is this very openness that gives the human species its great advantage in the biological world.'



Alland's operative conclusion is that our brain constitutes the biological endowment that enables us to determine cultural norms. We are endowed with FREE WILL. The mainstream of the Jewish heritage presupposes Alland's point of view. Here are two examples.

Deuteronomy, Chapter 30:

15] See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16] For I command you this day, to love the DIVINE your God, to walk in Its ways, and to keep Its commandments, Its laws, and Its rules, that you may thrive and increase, and



that the DIVINE your God may bless you in the land which you are about to invade and occupy... 19] I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life - if you and your offspring would live...

Ethics of the Fathers (Pirkei Avot) - 3:19

"Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given; and the world is judged with goodness, and all is according to the majority of deeds."

The choice is ours. We have the ability to intervene in what appears to be fate.

In our next issue we will examine the concept of community as a basic framework for human existence, from both a universal and Jewish point of view.

Compiled by Michael Livni

From the International Communes Desk (ICD) Study Group

THOUGHTS ON COMMUNITY CALL 35 - Fall 2012

Excerpts from Rene Dubos, **A GOD WITHIN**, Scribners , 1972 (pp. 281 -290).
(Rene Dubos, French born American microbiologist, humanist and environmentalist. Author of the maxim: "Think Globally, Act Locally.")

"Correcting the damage done to nature by industrialization is probably within our powers, but to formulate new positive values for modern life will be much more difficult...

...In practice, the futures that we invent are viable only if they are compatible with the constraints imposed by our evolutionary past. This does not mean that the most desirable future is one which would take us back to the pre-technological womb. But it does mean that the unchangeable laws governing human nature and external nature must be kept in mind whenever plans are made to change conditions of human life. To discover these fundamental laws, we need to recapture the direct experience of reality out of which early man created concepts which remain basic to our own life today...



Rene Dubos (1901-1982)

...Our efforts have been focused not on reality but on the damage done to nature...I shall not consider these problems of the external environment but shall instead emphasize...the practical importance of some internal attributes which the human species acquired during the Stone Age and which still operate in our lives today. This emphasis is justified by the fact that the deterioration of the psychological environment is as dangerous as environmental pollution but less well understood...

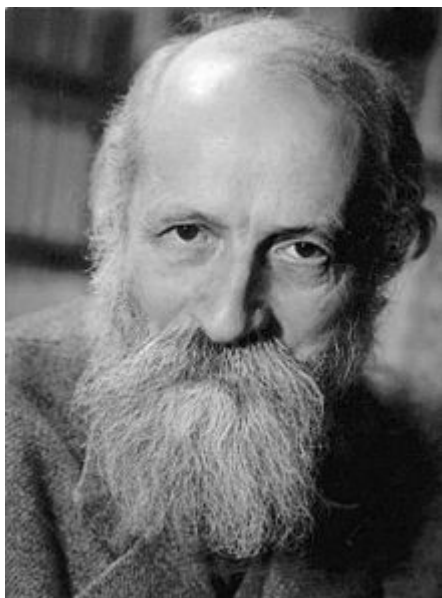
...Modern cities are unfavorable to human relationships probably because they are almost incompatible in their present form with needs created during social evolution. Early man probably lived in bands of a fairly uniform size... Ten male

hunters associated with forty women, old people and children probably constituted a camp of reasonable size...In most cases, however, the hunting band and the camp were part of a larger breeding unit of several hundred person living within a distance that permitted ready communication...social anthropologists use the magic numbers fifty to five hundred to define the range of group size most common to the hunter-gatherer way of life.

The practice of agriculture naturally resulted in much larger human settlements. But even though cities have existed for thousands of years, most human beings during prehistory and the greater part of history have lived in groups of relatively small size - whether as nomadic tribes or village dwellers. In **The World We Have Lost**, the English writer, Peter Laslett, has shown that the villages of some five hundred inhabitants constituted the fundamental demographic unit of England until the Industrial Revolution...

...Because he evolved as a social animal, man has a biological need to be part of a group and even perhaps to be identified with a place. He is likely to suffer from loneliness not only when he does not belong but also when the society of the place in which he functions is too large for his comprehension...

PRECONDITIONS FOR TRUE COMMUNITY



Martin Buber (1878-1965)

Excerpt from: Martin Buber, **TRUE COMMUNITY** (*Gemeinschaft*, 1919)*

Martin Buber, German-Jewish philosopher, utopian socialist author of "I and Thou" an examination of the human inter-relationships. He believed that flashes of true human interpersonal relationships necessitate community groups with shared ideals.

He likened true community to a bicycle wheel.

The members constitute the rim but what holds them together are the spokes extending to the hub which represents their shared infinite ideals.

(The Community of LAND, WORK, WAY of LIFE, BELIEF)

... Even if the modern state will be socialist, it will be unable to fulfill the yearning for fellowship. The state cannot give the individual the elemental feeling of togetherness which s/he seeks from fellowship. For the state is not and is not intended to be a fellowship. No large aggregate of people can be termed "true community" unless it is composed of small, vital social units of experiential togetherness. The relationships between the "true communities" must be as direct and vital as are the relationships between members of the individual "true community".

When the real-life relationships between people within their natural social units are fragmented** then the larger social unit can only pretend to relate to the desire for fellowship and partnership.

It is necessary to renew the real-life bonds between individuals. The revival of the primary community necessitates revival of local community, work community, fellowship and the religious congregation. All of these, whether they have withered or become part of a state-like machine, whether they exist in partial concealment or if they are tolerated by or ignored by the state - of these must become the home for beings of the spirit whose life on earth will be fulfilled in the community's precincts. The public life must become an expression of partnership in community. Only thus can we revive the primary community stemming from land and labor in common as well as togetherness in way of life and belief. These four bases of relationship parallel the above four types of fellowship.

Only the community (and not the state) can constitute the responsible bearer of land held in common (even if the formal ownership of the land is in the hands of the state.) Only the work-fellowship, (not the state) can be the suitable framework for collective production. Only the social fellowship - not the state - can generate a new way of life. Only in religious fellowship (as distinct from the formal church) can a new belief flourish...

*Translated into English from the Hebrew version in: Avraham Shapira, Ed., "Chavruta", **Nativot B'Utopia**, Sifriat Ofakim, Am Oved, 1983, p. 165 ff.

** Buber refers to the mechanical separation of the spheres of work, family, worship, and politics within modern society

The excerpt from Uriel Tal was utilized in the ICD study group but did not appear in CALL

Uriel Tal, (1926-1984) from STRUCTURES OF FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNITY IN JUDAISM

In Conservative Judaism, Vol.28, No.2, -Winter 1974, pp. 3-12

...it is through anthropological structures, developed amidst diverse historical situations, that the intentionalist character of the Torah and consequently of Jewish tradition, has been realized. The earthliness of the Torah indicates that man is able to unfold in community both his essence, his metaphysical status as a being "created in His image," and his existence, his natural status as a rational creature.

The framework in which this process of growth, of unfolding, takes place is the one we called "fellowship and community," starting as man as a partner in God's covenant, proceeding through the family, the community, the congregation, the people or ethnic group or perhaps nation, and culminating in the world community...

The covenant with God binds Israel, as the Jewish people, to the task of being a holy nation, separate and distinct. This separateness obliges them to fulfill the divine commandments. These commandments, however, are related not to heaven only, but to earth, to the world and its community, to every part of reality, physical as well as spiritual, to the world as creation. The very purpose of Israel's separateness, therefore, is to live in the world, bestowing form, order and meaning upon it. In order to be faithful to his calling, the Jew has to work in and through society, in and through his own community as well as through the world's community.

The Community

The community is the medium for the actualization of the covenant. It is the nucleus of Jewish social cohesion, the indispensable structure that enables man to survive so that he can serve God. Without this necessary condition, without surviving in his own, unique community, the Jew cannot fulfill the commandments in respect to the relations between man and God, nor those between man and man.

Structures of Fellowship and Community in Judaism

It is the particularistic community which enables man to practice universalistic ideas such as justice or the pursuit of peace. Maimonides said in his *Introduction to the Mishnah*: "...A man will not search for truth nor seek to do what is good when he goes off into exile or is hungry or is fleeing from his enemies..." Because of this vital function, the community is often called *kehilla kedosha*, holy community. Indeed the adjective "holy" is applied mainly to communal institutions, rarely to persons...

Compiled by Michael Livni

From the International Communes Desk (ICD) Study Group

SHLICHUT - "Being sent on a Mission"

CALL 37 - Winter 2013/14

On October 15, 2013 the International Communes Desk (ICD) studied some sources behind the idea of *Shlichut*. The concept of *shlichut* was central in motivating the kibbutz movement's founding generation. It was also a major factor in the utopian communes which sprang up in 19th century America. The many manifestations of communes and communal movements at this time demonstrate that "hearing the call" as an imperative to participate in "mission" is very much with us today.

The essence of the imperative nature of *shlichut* is that it propels to action - one does not only "talk the talk"- one's personal life is moved to "walk the walk".

The idea of *shlichut* is intimately connected with the concept of *Tikkun Olam* - the infinite process of repairing and transforming our world, "Spaceship Earth", into a better and sustainable home for all its inhabitants. *Tikkun Olam* will be the focus of a future discussion to be held by the ICD.

The ICD examined three excerpts from Hebrew sources, one from the Bible and two from the modern movement for Jewish renewal, the Zionist movement. Readers are invited to contribute examples from sources originating in their cultures.

The archetypical *shlichut* of the biblical Abraham, whether history or myth, generated a central strand in the history of Western civilization. Within the context of the Zionist movement, Eliezer Ben Yehuda and Hannah Senesh relate how the imperative nature of *shlichut* impacted on their personal lives.

Genesis 12: 1-4

1. The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him...

Did God in fact speak to Abraham and make the promise reported (in Genesis 12: 1-3)? To biblical man and to believers today the matter was and is clear: God did speak, and his relationship to Abraham's children and to the land of Canaan was secured by his promise. Many interpreters, however, would understand God's challenge as something Abraham believed he had heard and that consequently he acted in accordance with this belief.

from *The TORAH: A Modern Commentary*, W. Gunther Plaut, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981, pp 91,93.

Excerpted from Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922)
The Dream and its Realization (1918)
Translation: Ori Saltes

In 1880, when I was a student in the Russian college in the city of Dvinsk, and the Russians were battling the Turks for the freedom of Bulgarians, and all the Russian newspapers were unanimously praising the holy war that Russia was fighting for the liberation of the Bulgarian nation from the Turkish yoke and for the restoration of its ancient glory - it was then that the heavens seemed to open, and a bright light, a pure and glowing light shone before my eyes, and a great inner voice cried in my ears: *The revival of Israel in the Land of the Fathers!*

And by that voice, which from that moment on rang ceaselessly in my ears day and night, all my thoughts and all the schemes I had made for my future life were shaken. As dreams fade away at the morning light, my visions of devoting my life to the



Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922)

Russian people's struggle for freedom and to the advancement of all mankind, like most of my comrades in the middle and upper schools in Russia then, faded away, and after an inward struggle in my soul, the new idea got the upper hand and a new phrase took over my thoughts: *Israel in it's own land...*

...As my political feelings burgeoned, I felt more and more what a language means to a nation... Just as the Jews cannot be a living nation without returning to the land of their fathers, so they cannot be a

living nation without returning to the language of the fathers. They must use it not only in books and in matters of holiness and wisdom alone... but rather by speaking it,

great and small, women and children, youths and maidens, in all the matters of daily life, at all hours of the day and night, like all the nations, each nation in its own language.

That was the greatest, the most crucial moment in my life. Now I had found what I needed to do, right away. I saw that one of the two things without which the Jews could not be a nation, the land and the language, the return to the land was not in our own hands but rather dependent upon those ruling it at the present. However, the return to the language of the fathers was in our own hands, and no one could stop us from doing it if only we wanted to...

A Voice Called and I Went Hannah Senesh (1921-1944)

The Voice of Prophecy in the Literature of the Israeli Pioneering movement by Yariv Ben-Aharon

On the way...

A voice called and I went,
I went, for the voice called.
I went so as not to fall.
But on the crossroads

I shut my ears in the cold whiteness
And I cried,
For something I had lost
[Caesarea, 1942]

One year and a half before her death, Hannah Senesh gave expression to the voice that propelled her from home and friends in her native Hungary to a quest for a Jewish identity through a life of pioneering in Eretz Israel.

What is this voice that called Hannah Senesh? From where did it originate and evolve into her fateful summons? Her poem informs us that the voice beckoned her to go, in order that she should not "fall". To go that way, she had to shut her ears "in the cold whiteness" with that same wax with which Odysseus plugged his ears against the seductive voices tempting him on his journey home.



Hannah Senesh (1921-1944)

Tikkun Olam

WHAT IS "TIKKUN OLAM"? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? CALL 38 - Summer 2014

The literal translation of the Hebrew term "Tikkun Olam" is: "To mend, repair and transform the world". As such, the term embodies two different but potentially complementary ideas.

Whether mending a torn shirt or repairing a mechanical defect in your car, repairing and/or mending attempts to return something to its original functional state. Within the context of a social situation, it implies social responsibility within a given social and economic reality which commits one to good works, acts of lovingkindness and charity. In Hebrew, a language thrifty in words, "Tikkun" also means amending rules and regulations in response to changing reality.

On the other hand, the concept of "Tikkun Olam" as used in Jewish daily prayer means **transformation**.

"We therefore hope soon to behold the glory of your Divine Might. Then will false gods be felled and vanish and the world will be perfected under Your unchallenged rule".

The vision of transformation seeks a more just, a more perfect world - social and environmental justice. Social justice means quality of life for all. "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue" (Deut. 16: 20). Environmental justice demands that we be stewards of Divine Creation and not just exploiters of Spaceship Earth's limited resources. "The Divine took the human and placed him in the garden of Eden to till it and tend it." (Gen. 2: 15).

The heritage of Israel recognizes both the importance of mending and repairing in the here and now as well as the divine imperative of ongoing transformation. In the Bible, the priest and the king embody the here and now. The prophet calls for transformation. The legitimacy of the creative tension between the here and now and the transformation to a more just future constituted a defining feature of society in ancient Israel. The Bible introduced this ideal into the heritage of Western civilization. The idea of transformation was enabled by the Bible's recognition of free will - the responsibility of the individual and the community to choose between good and evil.

COMMUNITY AND PURPOSE IN LIFE.

All traditional societies assumed that humans live in the context of community - extended families, clans, peoples. The Biblical tradition added the dimension of purpose to community. The people became the assistants of the Divine in striving for ongoing

transformation as an infinite process to further Tikkun Olam - social and environmental justice.

With the onset of modernity, traditional community began to disintegrate. The process is still very much with us today. Most of us are not born into community. We are born into a framework of nuclear family, sometimes only partial nuclear family. An important aspect of the modern movement for Jewish national renewal, the Zionist movement, was the call for a return to purposive Jewish community. The best known expression of this aspect of Zionism was the kibbutz.

Within the context of modernity, the decision to participate in community meant the conscious decision of the individual to do so - in particular if the community is an intentional community. The individual has to decide if he/she wants a life of meaning and that such a life is best realized in a community of like-minded others. This was the essential personal decision in personal Tikkun, personal self-transformation, for those who sought to participate in Jewish renewal. The Labor Zionist philosopher, A.D. Gordon, 1856-1922, put it thus:

"Insofar as I have not yet experienced a change in my purpose for living there is no reason for me to seek a new life, as I will not find it. A new life is first and foremost a new purpose for living..."

Gordon's view was a balanced one. He rejected those who would sacrifice their personal self-fulfillment in work and love ("Life of the Hour") for the sake of an ideal ("Life Eternal"). He believed that the purpose for living had to permeate self-fulfillment in the here and now in order to realize a link to Life Eternal.

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY, PEACE AND TIKKUN OLAM.

National and international movements of intentional community begin with individuals who seek a life of purpose. Tikkun Olam is a message of peace and sustainability for all.

"Rabbi Shimon said: The world stands on three things - on the Law, on the Truth and on Peace. (Talmud, Avot 1:18)

The intentional community becomes the unit for "being the change" (Gandhi) which seeks to realize "in micro" a vision for society "in macro". The striving for Tikkun Olam is a universal message for all peoples. Each people, in cooperation with other peoples must seek social and environmental justice in its allotted portion of Divine Creation through the lens of its unique culture. Only thus can universal sustainability and peace be realized.

In the words of the prophet:

"...all the peoples walk each in the name of its gods" to the goal - "Nation shall not take up sword against nation, they shall never again know war." (Micah 4:5)

Compiled by Michael Livni

CORE BELIEFS for INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

**Intentional Communities Desk
Yad Tabenkin, Ramat Efal
ISRAEL 52960**

**Coordinator of the Desk:
Anton Marks
anton@mishol.org**

**Booklet Editor
Dr. Michael Livni
mmlivni@gmail.com**

**Intentional
Communities Desk**



Yad Tabenkin

