



A Kibbutz Chronicle of Cooperation and Integration From Cradle To Adulthood

“Self-fulfillment is when your lifestyle and values become one.”

THE BIRTH

Mid-August 1965 marked a bit over 17 years to the state of Israel and a bit less to my Kibbutz.

But nobody cared about those facts in my Kibbutz because the fruit harvest season, which included 30 hectares of deciduous orchards spread on endless terraces on the hills surrounding the Kibbutz, was at its height.

There were peaches, plums, vines, and apples to pick, and everything had to be done on time and at the top quality to reach the best markets for the best price.

When I was born, the Kibbutz's economic stability depended entirely on agriculture for its livelihood, and the deciduous orchards were a crucial component for the Kibbutz families to survive with honor the coming year economically.

If each Kibbutz family managed its land and orchards separately, they would have less than 1 hectare.

Instead, the orchard's manager managed all the lands professionally and with the utmost responsibility, as the collective responsibility requires.

The manager was dedicated and focused on his job: irrigation, crop protection, and, at that time of the year, mainly harvesting, packaging, and selling the produce for the best price, which he executed with his devoted team.

The manager was imbued with a goal and motivation to ensure the best possible business results for the members of the Kibbutz and was not going to let any event stand in the way of achieving this goal.

The manager would let nothing get in his way to ensure the Kibbutz maximized its income from yearly work from every fruit and hectare.

The manager's wife knew him well enough to realize it was pointless to ask for his help now in any matter unrelated to orchards and harvesting.

Therefore, on August 13, when at noon time the pains of labor attacked her, she did not see it as anything special when she turned not to her husband but to another Kibbutz member to urgently drive her to the hospital.

No one spoke that day of Values, Cooperation, Community, etc.; it was just another ordinary day on the Kibbutz life when, at 15:40, I emerged into this world and the Kibbutz life.

What may look to an outsider as bizarre behavior was not uncommon or unaccepted in the Kibbutz society where I was born.

If anything, it expresses the complete integration in the Kibbutz between the individual and the collective, work and family life, where "Me" and "We" combine, e.g., my father works in the orchards taking care of the Kibbutz's livelihood while another member takes his wife to the hospital to deliver.

My father heard about my birth a couple of hours later, and since I was his first son after two daughters, he stormed into the Kibbutz community Friday (Shabbat) dinner and shouted - '*have a son!*'.

As presented in this story, the shared Kibbutz values include working the land (i.e., agriculture), social and economic cooperation, and human equality, which are interconnected and fully integrated into the Kibbutz particular lifestyle.

That is the lifestyle I was born into; for years, it was the only "normal" my friends and I could imagine.

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

When you think about a Kibbutz, you may think of the keywords Agriculture, Technology, and Economic Success.

If the Kibbutz were a vehicle, the above keywords would describe the vehicle's appearance from the outside. At the same time, the engine and the other critical parts for its operation remain hidden, although responsible for the vehicle's ability to move.

Here, I expose you to the Kibbutz's engine, which may surprise or even shock you.

CHILDREN, THE BEATING HEART OF THE KIBBUTZ

Two days after my birth, I made my first trip, which took me from the hospital on the outskirts of Jerusalem to the Kibbutz.

However, unlike most babies, this trip didn't end at my parents' house but at the Kibbutz's communal nursery, where I began my life in the Kibbutz and its education system.

In those days, the Kibbutz nursery was where all newborn babies of the Kibbutz spent their first years before moving on to kindergarten and school.



In the Kibbutz nursery: Nimrod (left) and Gilad in the hands of Tamar, a Kibbutz member responsible for taking care of part of the newborn babies.

The Kibbutz education system, i.e., the nursery, kindergarten, and school, was the center of the community. For children and babies, it was where they spent most of their time, including eating, sleeping, showering, playing, studying, etc., all living in complete equality.

This is not a mistake; from birth to age 18, the children slept separately from their parents, each age group in a separate house/building.

For my mother, it meant that night or day, summer or winter, every 4 hours, she had to walk to the nursery to feed me, other than 4 to 8 pm when she could take me out of the nursery for "family time".

By the time I celebrated 18, I could count three nights in total in which I had slept in my parents' house, which we had called "Room," for it was one small room with an even smaller bedroom.

24/7

The Kibbutz community values, such as farming, social and economic cooperation, and equality, were never meant for PR, marketing purposes, or as a slogan; they were full-heartedly practiced 24/7, 365 days a year by everyone and everywhere.

Practicing those values was accepted as a natural self-commitment of the members to the community and vice versa, not something to market or brag about.

Living this lifestyle, the Kibbutz members never perceived it as unique and, therefore, spoke little about it.

In contrast, since "technology" was not part of the Kibbutz lifestyle and success, it was unique whenever a new machine or technology arrived and attracted the community's attention.

As snow is integral to an Eskimo life, values such as equality and cooperation are to a Kibbutz member; you can't separate the two.

The Kibbutz and its social and economic success were never defined, determined, or doomed by its technologies, always by its members' vision and values!

As an Eskimo baby begins his life in the cold snow environment, I began mine in an environment of complete equality, where from birth to death, you are equal, which also means that all babies receive the same treatment, housing, food, education, healthcare, etc.

Values are not a long list of commitments on the office wall. Values are about what makes you, individual or group, who you are, makes you do things in one way and not another, and makes you dedicate or even sacrifice your life for a cause greater than yourself.

This is the chain of events in a community (or any organization) when initiated by vision and Values:

=> **A community is formed** based on an agreed shared vision and values

=> **Laws and rules** are agreed upon and practiced

=> **Order** is accepted, practiced, and increased

=> **Cooperation and Integration** are increased

=> **Prosperity and resilience** to adversities are increased.

=> **Updating** "Laws and rules", and then repeating => Order => Cooperation => Prosperity, etc.

COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION IN ADULTHOOD

The Kibbutz values, expressed in light of its vision, were present and expressed everywhere all the time and practiced by everyone.

To avoid a small elite group takeover, the Kibbutz was managed and run by all its members, ensuring its values and practices remained in the line of equality, individual freedom, liberalism, etc.

Running such an operation is demanding, and all Kibbutz members were expected to go over and beyond their usual work commitments.

Below is a partial list of the practices that helped maintain a high level of cooperation and integration in the Kibbutz while emphasizing its fundamental values.

Following are a few examples of everyday activities that I practiced as a Kibbutz member; some are still practiced.

While increasing cooperation and integration within the Kibbutz, those activities and practices were mainly done at the expense of the members' free time, typically in the evenings, with no

direct financial benefit to those doing more for the community other than the self-feeling of fulfillment and occasionally respect and appreciation by the community members.

VOLUNTEERING (in addition to work)

- To help the workers of a particular economic branch to complete their work on time, e.g., help the orchard team during the fruit harvest season.
- To participate in one of the many committees that run and manage the various aspects of the Kibbutz (finance, society, health, education, sports, etc.).
- To help other communities and organizations, e.g., young Kibbutzs.
- To plan and execute social events and holidays.
- To manage and participate in the weekly Kibbutz members' assembly meeting.

COMMUNITY SHIFTS / "TURNES" (in addition to work)

- Night guarding (on the Kibbutz and children).
- Serving food in the dining room, holidays, and events.
- Working in the agricultural branches on holidays and weekends, e.g., milking the cows and feeding the animals.
- Preparation and execution of social events and holidays

WORK

- Each member has a position in their workplace, but it is possible and acceptable to change the manager every 3 to 5 years.
- Occupational flexibility allows members to replace working places easily.
- All members receive the same economic benefits regardless of their position, workplace, age, gender, experience, working hours, etc.
- Member are expected to ensure their job is done properly (which often requires extra hours – again, without financial compensation).

This attitude pushes the Kibbutz members to do what they love and are passionate about.

While most people may assume that economic and social equality (i.e., getting the same benefits even when you do less or nothing) may lead to laziness, reality proves that most people want to work and feel needed and essential (social pressure is also impactful). Hence, when provided the opportunity to do what they love and are passionate about, they would do well beyond duty, including participating in many after-work-hour activities for the community's well-being.

FOLLOW PRINCIPLES

While the Kibbutz values have hardly changed over decades, how those values are practiced and expressed has changed significantly.

Furthermore, there are hundreds of Kibbutz, each with a somewhat different emphasis on its values and a unique way of practicing them.

The goal of my column is to present how a rural community that is fully immersed in its values practices those through social and economic cooperation that are interconnected and integrated.

I don't believe that a utopian perfect society or community exists anywhere. However, within its own imperfection, the Kibbutz, as a rural community that emerged triumph from poverty to prosperity, provides a unique historical opportunity to view the impact of applying the principles for a thriving rural community, i.e., shared vision and values, cooperation, order, and integration.

During its golden age, the Kibbutz's social, economic, educational, health, security, and other parts of life were fully integrated.

Not surprisingly, with economic prosperity, the ties between the Kibbutz members and its various parts dwindle, causing its society to care less about vision and values, weakening its backbone and ultimately bringing an economic and social decline.

We must always remember the link between social strength and economic prosperity.

Each Kibbutz is an existing living proof of how shared vision and values, when executed through broad and deep cooperation and integration of systems, can do magic, even turning within 17 years - impoverished holocaust survivors, as those who established my Kibbutz into a prosperous community, like the one into which I was born into.

For the thousands of impoverished rural communities who wish to see prosperity coming soon, it is imperative to emphasize that economic prosperity is the outcome of social success.

Any community, and more so a rural one, will see increased economic prosperity as the level of social and economic cooperation and integration increases.

Rural communities steered by vision and values and operated by cooperation, interconnectivity, and integration proved to be a recipe for success and what made Israel synonymous with agricultural success, progress, and prosperity.

While there is no need to follow the same vision and values of the Kibbutz, following the principles that led to its success is a highly recommended and proven approach.

Did you notice that although this column is about the economic prosperity of rural communities, we spoke none about technologies, agrochemicals, crops, varieties, and growing methods?

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Here are four ways you can work with me to help your rural communities step forward to shift from poverty into ongoing prosperity:

* **Consultancy** on rural communities' lifestyles, e.g., Kibbutz and Moshav.

* **Local & national programs related to export** - by using [Dream Valley's](#) operational concepts of a global vertical value and supply chain. Dream Valley chain connects input suppliers with farmers in developing economies and farmers with consumers in premium markets.

* **Crop protection: [Biofeed](#)**, an eco-friendly **zero-spray control and protocol** solution, is most suitable for developing countries.

* **IBMA Conference - To learn, share, and practice** novel business models: the [IBMA 2024 conference](#) theme is "*Reshaping Agribusiness Models for Building Prosperous Rural Communities.*" Register now.

TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

- **VISION AND VALUES** are meant to be practiced, not kept for a wall poster.
- **THE BEST AND EASIEST** way to practice Vision and Value is by turning them into part of life.
- **IMMERSE YOURSELF** in your values to achieve the best results.
- **LEARN** from others' failures and successes stories, then adjust to your situation.

More on the October 7th genocide in South Israel:

[Humanity is one organism](#)

[Videos - The October 7 genocide](#)

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**** Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected ****

See you soon,

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P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[When and Where Should We Plant Values?](#)"

P.P.S.

[Dream Valley](#) is a field-proven disruptive business model based on the successful Israeli Model.

To learn more and become a Dream Valley partner, contact me at nisraely@biofeed.co.il, +972-542523425 (WhatsApp/Text)

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***Change Begins With A Decision
That The Existing Reality Is A Choice
and Not A Decree of Fate***