

## **SUMMARY OF THE SECOND “STUDY DAY” SPONSORED BY THE ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF GROUP ANALYSIS**

The second of three “Study Days” sponsored by The Israel Institute of Group Analysis and dealing with the overall theme: “ **Belonging: Between Choice and inevitability**”, was held in Tel Aviv on February 25, 2010.

The British psychotherapist and group analyst **Dr. Farhad Dahlal** was the central speaker, and there were many opportunities for participants to respond to the subjects he presented.

In two comprehensive lectures **Dr. Dahlal** put forward his unique ideas, making reference to the works of **Foulkes**, the founding father of group analysis, and the sociologist **Norbet Elias**.

From Dahlal’s perspective, a sense of *difference/otherness* does not stem from some inherent in born factor, but rather is the outcome of a process of socialization that is both powerful and fluid and which serves to heighten the phenomenon of differentiation and separation. This process is at the center of the creation of feelings of “ **Us** ” and “**Them**”.

From his point of view each individual is born into an existing social order, which carries with it its own particular sense of belongingness. The relationship between “**I**” and “**We**”, affected as it is by social/historical influences and serving as the context in which the individual exists, is colored by many conflicts. These are conflicts between multiple belongings and loyalties to which the individual is connected by hidden and powerful ties. This complex reality is shared by patients and therapists alike.

**Dr. Dahlal** claims that the ability to break free from orthodox thought patterns and to identify the hidden tensions inherent within the relationships of the individual to him/herself and to others at any particular moment is a function of 1) critical thinking, 2) affective openness 3) attention to the ever-changing processes of becoming and 4) power structures and social hierarchies that woven into personal relationships and shape them from without and within .

A continuous conscious effort in enhancing the ability to “break free” from these inevitabilities expands the individual’s range of freedom and helps him/her struggle with the feeling of being trapped which is often concealed within the pressures and limitations that are part of human existence. The development of this kind of ability enables the individual to examine different kinds of belongings in a less defensive way and to find a dynamic and flexible balance between personal desires, obligations to others and group loyalties.

Many of the questions and thoughts generated by **Farhad Dahlal’s** thoughts were examined by participants during comprehensive and personal discussions in two separate settings specifically designed for this purpose. Study day planners hoped the settings and the time schedule of discussion would facilitate deeper thinking about the issues raised by

Dahlal and enrich participants' familiarity and understanding of the central themes of the "Study Day".

**Specifically,**

- 1. Small discussion groups of an hour and a half were led by members of the Israel Institute of Group Analysis after the first lecture.**
- 2. A plenary meeting was held after the second lecture, in which there was an open atmosphere that facilitated rich dialogue among all the participants, the small discussion group conductors and the lecturer.**

**In summary, it can be said that the discussions in the small groups and in the plenary meeting created an inviting opportunity to grapple with the original viewpoints that Farhad Dahlal presented in his lectures. They enabled us to examine his ideas and, among other things, to think about their ramifications and implications for the social and professional realities in Israel.**