



WHERE SHOULD WE AIM IN OUR WORK WITH SMALLHOLDERS?

“We are born equal into inequality. It is then our choice to increase or decrease the inequality.”

Please tell me which of the following life paths is closer to **what you wish for yourself** -

WISH A

My life ambition and success sign - I have enough food for my next meal. My life dream is to live a modest life, which among others mean, living in a small hut with no running water, no electricity, and no access road.



WISH B

My life ambition and my sign of being successful - I did something significant for myself and others that positively impacted the lives of many. I dream of securing a life of comfort for my family and me, with good health, food quality, education, personal security, and economic prosperity.

Which of the “life path” would you choose for yourself? Keep this thought in mind, for I will ask you about it soon.

May I guess you didn't choose Option A?

Would you wish Option A for anyone?

OUR GOALS WITH SMALLHOLDERS

97% of farmers are smallholders/non-professionals, which unfortunately constitute most of the poor and hungry people in the world.

Hence, the recurrent question is,

"What should we strive for in our work with smallholders?"

Today, this question has not one but many answers. Hereunder are some of the common approaches provided by scholars:

- * Smallholders are fine as they are. No change is required (see the Figure below mentioning GIZ).
- * Help smallholders to escape poverty, i.e., earn over \$1.9 per day (SDG 1, No Poverty).
- * Help smallholders grow their own food, so they don't starve and can eat healthily (SDG 2, Zero Hunger).
- * Turn smallholders into advanced professional farmers, like their counterparts in the global north.
- * Turn smallholders into businesspeople (see Mr. Adesina's statement below).
- * Create national wealth with the help of smallholders (see Mr. Adesina's statement below).

Which of the above goals is the most proper to guide us?



Mr. Akinwumi Adesina, the President of the African Bank, aims to turn agriculture into agro-business and a wealth creation sector. Question - Do you agree that agriculture is NOT a way of life?

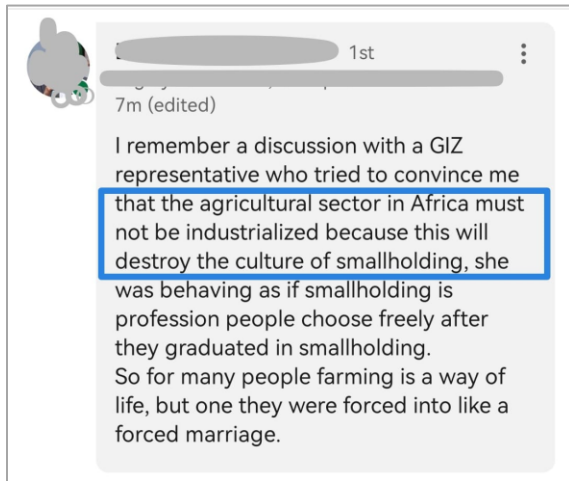
Did you notice "a missing voice" from our discussions?

I mean, our discussions about THE GOALS is very "academic," "professional," and "scientific."

We conduct those discussions in conference and universities' air-conditioned halls, on TV interviews, and over zoom meetings, where we talk **about** farmers as if they have no say or opinion on the matter.

We are so arrogant that we forgot to add the farmers themselves to those discussions.

Why don't we ask farmers what they think and mainly want for their future?



OUTLINES OF DESIRED GOALS

Sometimes it is helpful to learn from others what they did in similar cases as the one before us;

What should we strive for in our work with smallholders?

Hundreds and even thousands of years ago, spiritual leaders were grappling with rules to guide us on how to treat and relate to others.

Could ancient rules that are good for everybody guide us on how to treat and relate to smallholders?

The three ancient rules:

(1) The Positive approach: "*Love thy neighbor as thyself.*" (Leviticus, chapter 19, verse 18.)

(2) The Negative approach: "*What is hateful to you, do not do to your friend.*" (Babylon, Tract Shabbat. Jewish tradition)

(3) The Neutral approach: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" (USA Declaration of Independence)

Could there be a more significant difference between the answers our ancient fathers gave to those provided by nowadays scholars?

Our fathers' rules are **not** scientific, academic, professional, numerical, or bound by law.

Instead, they aim at people's self-values, judgment, and hearts, expecting the individual to understand and then decide how to act out of self-motivation without an external force forcing them.

The underlying message of our fathers is, “*We are all people; others are not different from you. Whatever is good for you is good for others, and if it is not good for you, it is probably not good for the others.*”

Sections 1-2 ask us to search within ourselves for answers.

However, section 3 is the most demanding and difficult to follow; it expects us to accept that others have the right to Happiness. For this, we need to understand what Happiness is for **them** so we will not hold them from pursuing Happiness.

For each of us, Happiness is different. How do smallholders view Happiness?

How could we know?

There is a way to know what Happiness is for smallholders, and that is by using an old technique called – Talking, in other words, having a personal conversation.

SMALLHOLDERS

Let’s be truthful for a moment and use our ancient fathers’ way, i.e., sections 1-3, to measure ourselves on how well we treat smallholders;

(1) Do we love them as we love ourselves and wish them the same, i.e., *Wish B*, as we wish for ourselves? Or do we, deep inside, feel okay with smallholders “living a simple life,” as *Wish A* presents?

(2) Are we careful not to do to smallholders what we wish others not to do to us?

(3) Do we care about smallholders’ Happiness? Do we even bother asking them what they want and what Happiness is for them?

Did you answer with a big YES to all three questions, maybe two or even one YES? Or was it none, a round zero?

My personal experience with smallholders is that we, the global society, particularly the leadership, fall short on sections 1 to 3.

What score of performance and success will you give our leadership and **yourself** on sections 1 to 3? (I know, it is the hardest thing to rate yourself).

THE MORAL COMPASS WITHIN YOU

Nowadays, many believe that we can fix everything through stringent regulation.

While our ancient fathers' system of dealing with "the others" is left outside the fence of law, the "big bad wolves" always find loopholes in the fence, entering the hen house and feasting on the chickens.

For the big agro companies, often the laws are the way to show how good and contributing they are, acting as farmers' protectors' "saints." Hey, they even made the legislature enact laws that fit their business needs.

In the old times, there were also laws, as we have today. Our ancestors knew that too often, the law is the villain's refuge, so they asked us to be our own judges. This way, if we act wrongly, we quickly know who the villain is.

The USA Declaration of Independence takes this a step forward when stating that the people should **replace** their leaders if those do not keep their "*unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*"

Did you notice that each of my columns ends with this statement, "*Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected?*"

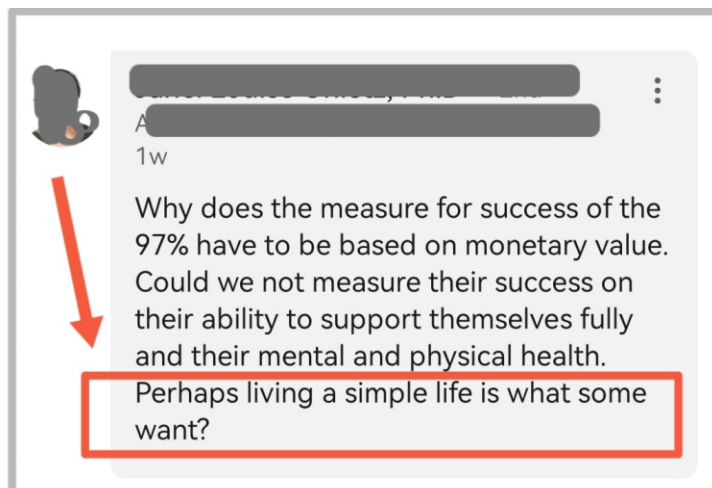
That is to emphasize that you can't live in poverty, e.g., on less than 1.9 \$/day, and experience "Freedom" fully.

Hence, economic prosperity is not a luxury; it is what we wish for ourselves, a condition for freedom, and ultimately an "*unalienable Right.*"

If so, why don't we wish economic prosperity to all, including smallholders?

Who is responsible for not achieving that prosperity until now?

And on top of all, what can we do to change smallholders' situation from A to B?



But wait, some may claim that farmers want to live a "*simple life*" and the little money they have is sufficient to "*pursue Happiness.*"

For many years I didn't have the answer to that question. Then, I asked smallholders, straightforwardly, about their Happiness, or as I call it, their "Dreams."

Farmers are so unaccustomed to such questions that sometimes I had to help them dig deep within themselves to reach for their "Dreams."

When it happens, and [farmers share their dreams](#) with me, it always comes with a substantial budget demand, something people in poverty can never pursue.

MY WISH

Remember the question at the beginning of the column ("*What do you wish for yourself?*") and the two options that followed?

Here is what I wish myself; to fulfill my dreams.

Now watch out because I ask an almost identical question as before, only this time it referred to smallholders - *What should we strive for in our work with smallholders?*

Reflect on this column from its start to this point.

Remember the answers above, provided by experts and scholars?

Do you remember how different our answers were when referring to ourselves vs. smallholders?

We then have seen three rules/tools provided to us by our ancient fathers, which support our decisions making process of treating others and what we should expect from them.

The answer to our question, "*What should we strive for in our work with smallholders?*" begins by understanding that smallholders/farmers are people like you and me.

Like all people, smallholders have "*unalienable Rights,*" including Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

And if you are not sure if you are doing the right thing, read again sections 1-2 and remember the underlying message of our fathers is -

"We are all people; others are not different from you. Whatever is good for you is good for others, and if it is not good for you, it is probably not good for the others."

SOLID FOUNDATIONS

It is easy to talk about doing and acting good, but how do we ensure we practice in our daily life what we preach?

I found that what works best for me is transforming my work activity into the vehicle of doing and acting good. This way, I can dedicate most of my time to what I value.

As a former farmer, what touches my soul and I wish to serve to improve is our **Farmers' livelihood**, the **Environment's health**, and serving **Consumers with the best produce**.

To help me reach my goal, I founded Biofeed, a powerhouse for zero sprays crop protection solutions.

But that was not sufficient, so I established the Dream Valley platform, which reaches out to smallholders and supports them every inch of the way, from the field to the supermarket shelf, to serve their excellent zero-spray produce at the best global markets.

Dream Valley is designed on solid foundations of a sustainable, innovative business model, where smallholders are business partners in the value chain.

Finally, smallholders are not transparent; everyone sees them and knows their part and contribution.

Like other companies, Dream Valley is obligated to follow the law. But we count on our **inner campus** to guide us on our business path, following our self-values and judgment, in light of the above sections 1-3.

I want to share this with you so you to join this coming peaceful revolution. Please, choose your way and path to join me.

[Dream Valley](#) and the [IBMA conference](#) bring an attitude to the business world where *Love thy neighbor as thyself* and thinking of the other is not an added part to the business model but practically part of it, which lay at its foundation.

We can't solve old problems using the old tools that caused them. When dealing today with smallholders, some of whom are in extreme poverty, we must use a novel generation of business models.

TAKEAWAYS

- **OUR GOAL** while working with and for smallholders should be to achieve what we wish for ourselves and our children.
- **A NEW GENERATION** of novel business models, where thinking of others is at its foundation, will bring the anticipated change to smallholders and the world.

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

See you soon,

Nimrod



Text me: +972-54-2523425 (WhatsApp), or [e-mail nisraely@biofeed.co.il](mailto:nisraely@biofeed.co.il)

P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[Why Is There Hunger, and What Is The Surprising Solution?](#)"

Link to [recent columns](#).

P.P.S.

Please look at the video series "[The Agricultural Gap](#)." I explain the historical roots of the agricultural gap between African and Western countries with short videos.

I see this video series as "uncompleted," as I am waiting to gain more confidence before completing the chapters with The Solution, as I perceive it.

If you like it, don't forget to **share** it with those who need to see it and **Subscribe**.

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