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HOW CAN THE BIBLICAL EXODUS STORY HELP TRANSFORM FARMERS FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY?

"Leadership requires understanding the limitations of the involved parties."

MY FRIEND, BE HAPPY AND DO GOOD; HAPPY EASTER AND HAPPY RAMADAN!

This week Jews celebrated Passover, which marks over 3000 years to the story of the Israelites' exodus, going from slavery and poverty to freedom in the Promised Land.

The Exodus story may sound like a Cinderella story of people that overnight turned from enslaved people to a nation fighting for its freedom.

But the details of the biblical story also tell us the story of two unique leaders and one group of people/tribes before they melted and formed into a nation.

Those people, the Israelites, were scared, lacked confidence and faith, and, above all, resisted any unknown change to the extent that they preferred slavery if the alternative was unsecured.

Here I look at the Exodus story from three points of view, with a modern business perspective, looking to learn from the act and process of transforming enslaved people into free people to the current global challenge; farmers' poverty.

THE ISRAELITES

The Exodus story begins when the Israelites have been enslaved in Egypt for hundreds of years.

They suffer and complain, knowing things can be better, but at the same time, they have already gotten used to the slavery/poverty situation and do not fight it. As enslaved people, they fear losing the little they have. They fear change.

At this historical point, the slavery-attitude of the Israelites disabled them from leading themselves to freedom; for this, they would need "external" help, or they will remain enslaved people.

Any change is painful for the slave Israelites. They are so poor that in the choice between immediate rewards (e.g., a meal) and the eternal future of freedom, they choose, without hesitation, the "safety" of the immediate reward.

Only after witnessing **many** miracles (e.g., plagues) performed by God and Moses (God's messenger) the Israelites, who were passive most of the time, are "motivated" and "convinced" to act and flee Egypt and subsequently quit being slaves.

The Israelites are so unexcited to flee Egypt that one may think they do it fearing that if they don't, God may harm them as he did to the Egyptians.

Even after fleeing Egypt, the Israelites keep behaving like slaves with a "tunnel vision" to the next meal and looking for safety.

They don't miss an opportunity to complain to God, blame Moses, and often lose faith, e.g., when seeing Pharaoh's army, when crossing the Red Sea, when there is short of food and water, and while waiting for Moses to climb down from the mountain where he gets the Ten Commandments.

MOSES

As an outsider, Moses grew up in the royal court disconnected from his (poor/slave) Israelite roots, hence, having a different perspective on slavery.

The enslaved Israelites were accustomed to the abuse and mistreatment by Pharaoh. At the same time, Moses's different point of view enabled him to capture such behavior as unacceptable, pushing him to act to stop it.

But Moses doesn't want to be a leader of the Israelites or anyone else. When God asks him to lead, he gives God many excuses why he can't.

Instead of ordering him (as he sure could), God convinces Moses to take the job by promising him a complete "package" of backup and support.

Moses's "package" includes God as his manager, speechwriter, performer of miracles (plagues and magic), and provider of detailed instructions, and Aaron as his spokesman and PR manager.

If Moses was an entrepreneur creating an organization/business (e.g., a nation), then with God's support "package," you can say that the most powerful mentor and VC back him up.

Finally, with the "support package," Moses is ready to transform the Israelites' state of mind from enslaved people to free people. He is prepared to make history.

GOD

If it wasn't clear until now, let's make it clear, in the Exodus story, God is THE LEADER, executing a macro and micro-management style.

He knows what he wants (Vision) and will not let anyone ruin his plan (Mission) to bring back the enslaved Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land (Goal).

But WHY does God behave this way?

The Exodus story begins when God hears the suffering of the Israelites, which reminds him of a **promise** he once made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (who later changed his name to Israel) to give their descendants the Land of Israel, called The Promised Land.

If God promised, then God will stand up to his promise. As THE LEADER, it is of utmost importance for God to set an example; a leader must stand up to his promise, even if he is the only one who knows it.

To stand up to his promise, God is ready to go above and beyond his "usual" acts, even if the Israelites' slaves **don't want** to take any action to become free (and will not help), Moses **doesn't want** to lead, and Pharaoh is **not ready** to set his slaves free.

God doesn't care that returning to the Promised Land is not in the plans of the enslaved Israelites, Moses, and Pharaoh; he promised and will deliver.

To complete the task, God is ready to talk and listen to Moses and accept that the Israelites' slaves have plenty of limitations.

Most importantly, God accepted that he (and Moses) would have to do the job for the Israelites, for they have no will to risk or change, even not for the opportunity to become free in the Promised Land.

In the Exodus story, we see how critical it is for a leader to understand the state of mind of the people he is "managing," mainly if they are enslaved/poor.

Thanks to this unique understanding, the "taking care" managing and leadership style set proper expectations.

God "takes no risks" and leaves no place to chance; instead, he does everything to secure the enslaved people's safe escape and passage from Egypt to The Promised Land.

God reveals the option of taking the Israelites the "short way" (*"the way of the Philistines because it is near,"* Exodus 13) but then cancels that option knowing that *"If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt."*

The alternative is 40 years journey in the desert where God continuously guides the Israelites with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Meanwhile, many of those (the enslaved generation) who grew up as enslaved people die, and a new generation of young freeborn people take their place.

As to Moses, God was not looking for a volunteer to lead the Israelites; He chose Moses and then revealed it to him.

However, like a good mentor, God supports Moses every step of the way so he can perform impeccably.

However, when Moses **once** doubted God, God didn't forgive him and, as punishment, didn't let him enter The Promise Land.

NOTES

* As a leader, consider the option you may work all your life for something greater than yourself, never to enjoy seeing it turn into reality. Will you still do it?

* Remember, the Exodus of the Israelites was possible thanks to God's understanding that you can't expect much from enslaved people.

* The Israelites' Exodus story teaches us about God and Moses's leadership style. It is critical to note that none tried to empower the enslaved people.

Instead, they **protected** them, cared for their needs (like a mother to her baby), guided them, and told them what to do.

They patiently waited for the new freeborn generation to empower themselves and take the lead before they entered The Promised Land.

What is your take from this to nowadays?

Where should we apply each of the distinctive types of leadership?

“MODERN” SLAVERY

"Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected" is a statement I have at the end of every column, including this one.

Slavery, like the one described in the biblical story of Exodus, characterized by the denial of personal freedom of choice by those owned by others, is against the law in all countries.

However, there is more than one way to deny freedom of choice.

For example, farmers who live in poverty with less than 1.9\$ per day, how much freedom of choice do you think they have?

"Modern slavery" is often characterized by income level that leaves many people no choice but to keep doing what they do, with no freedom of choice, hence categorized as slavery de facto.

Hundreds of millions of farmers and their families live in extreme poverty, with an income lower than 1.9 \$/day.

We can learn from the biblical Exodus story that people under such extreme conditions need external help to escape their state, in this case, from poverty to prosperity.

LEADERSHIP

Ask yourself why God chooses Moses and not one of the Israelites' slaves to be their leader.

Because Moses grew up free with the state of mind of a free man, from experience, he could easily and vividly imagine future life in freedom, something none of the enslaved people could imagine, not even in their dreams.

While Moses was chosen to lead the Israelites thanks to his ability to **imagine** a different future, the behind the scene genuine mentor-leader **was always God**, who understood the situation and acted with a sense of urgency to complete his mission.

After the Exodus, God continued to protect and nurture the Israelites during the 40 years of traveling in the desert.

At last, God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; he can step back as the protector, nurturer, and daily leader.

After 40 years, there is no more need for the leading pillars of cloud and fire; those disappear, never to return.

Progressive leadership should consider its goals and the limitations of those it leads. And vice versa, be ready to step back and let its people “grow” as soon as they are ready.

EXODUS; FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY

Our current global most extraordinary mission is to transfer hundreds of millions of farmers from poverty to prosperity (UN SDG #1).

Though this change doesn't include moving from one place to another, as the Israelites' slaves moved, it requires a challenging shift in farmers' state of mind and mentality.

GOD'S BLUEPRINT

For many years God did not reveal himself or perform magic as he did with Moses and the Israelites in the Exodus stories.

However, God left us a “blueprint” of how we should deal with Grand National challenges, like transforming millions of farmers from poverty to prosperity.

Thanks to the Exodus “blueprint,” we now have

- (i) a leadership role model to follow,
- (ii) an understanding of the challenges we will face when faith declines, and
- (iii) a time scale of how long the process from poverty to prosperity can take if led by excellent leader/s.

THE IBMA CONFERENCE

IBMA became the home for progressive leaders who, like in the Exodus story, have a life mission, goals, and targets and can envision a prosperous future for poor farmers. Such leaders understand that transformation is a POSSIBLE and manageable process.

MY PART

I grew up as a professional farmer in a prosperous agricultural environment that began from nothing only a few years earlier. In recent years I gained a deep understanding of small-hold farming in developing economies and poor farmers' thinking.

Understanding the “inner worlds” of professional and small-hold farmers provides an advantage I intend to use.

What is the purpose?

To have a young generation of farmers growing into freedom thanks to mental and economic prosperity.

How?

By serving, mentoring, leading by example, designing the three pillars to thriving agro sector, increasing agro-production, agro quality, exports, etc.

In short, by showing the road to the "Promised Land" to leaders ready to lead their farmers from poverty to prosperity.

This journey contains building tailor-made dedicated three pillars:

Ecosystems.

Business Models.

Technologies and Services.

Contact me if this resonance with your goals and missions and you want to be remembered as the one who transformed the agro sector from poverty to prosperity.

TAKEAWAYS

- **FROM SLAVERY** to freedom or from poverty to prosperity, it is a process that requires dedicated leadership and understanding of the process to be conducted.

- **LEADING POOR** small-hold farmers from poverty to prosperity requires a particular type of leadership.
- **BEFORE** beginning the transfer process from poverty to prosperity, one should have a clear view of the road, challenges, and solutions.

* If you enjoyed the column, share it with friends/colleagues and share your insights with me.

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

See you soon,

Nimrod



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P.S.

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[Why Did The Rwandan Government Offer Full Funding To IBMA 2024 Before IBMA 2023 Ended?](#)"

Link to [recent columns.](#)

P.P.S.

[Dream Valley](#) is a field-proven disruptive business model based on the successful Israeli model. Contact me if you view yourself as a potential investor, business partner, or client. [Email](#), +972-542523425 (WhatsApp/Text)

P.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, **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***