

An analysis of theological and strategic management perspectives of Moses as a leader

Prof. Mari Jansen van Rensburg *
Graduate School of Business Leadership,
University of South Africa,
PO Box 392, Unisa 0003,
South Africa
jvrenm@unisa.ac.za

and

Prof. Angelo Nicolaides
Graduate School of Business Leadership,
University of South Africa

“To learn who rules over you, find out who you can't criticize” (Voltaire)

Corresponding author*

Abstract

Many articles have been written concerning Moses and scholarship generally regards him as a divinely 'elected' leader of Judaism. The principle of parsimony has contributed a great deal towards united and simplified explanations of what kind of leader Moses was. For many biblical scholars, Moses possessed a wide array of skills and thus stands out as the foremost personality of the pre-Christian world. He headed a race comprising slaves and led them out of servitude in Egypt in what were exceedingly trying circumstances, to their promised land. However, if we apply the thinking of Plato, Schopenhauer or even Wittgenstein, we should apply a principle of specification and look at different types of discourse. This paper consequently approaches and examines the role of Moses as a leader from both theological and managerial perspectives. It is proposed that while Moses is considered to be a great leader of God's elect people, the Hebrews, his managerial skills informs many of the modern day management principles despite his actions being embedded in the theological and cultural world in which he operated.

Keywords: Moses, Exodus, Egypt, Promised Land, strategy, management

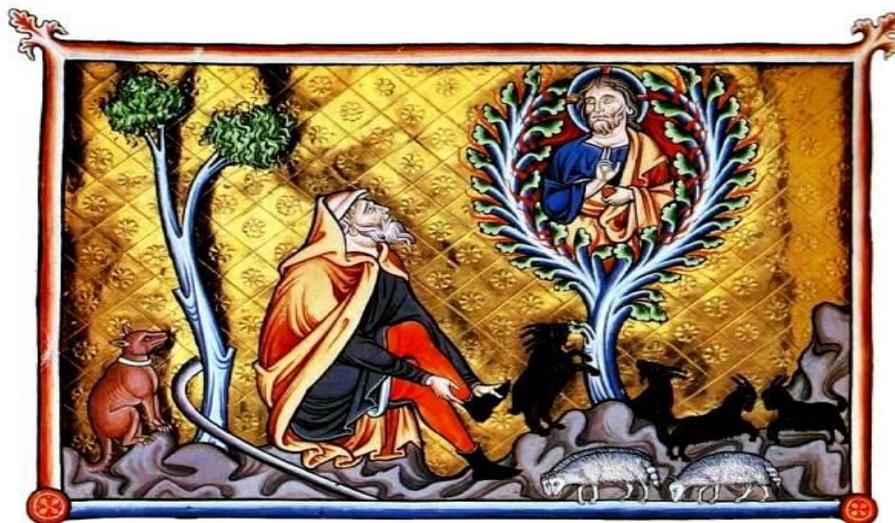


Moses and the Decalogue -Source: <http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/assets/img/moses-exodus/image-01-small.jpg>

Introduction

There is consensus that great leaders in history have a number of traits and intrinsic worth in common such as a keen managerial sense founded on ethical precepts and a need to do the 'right thing' and a future vision that is strategically orientated. Over the centuries a great deal has been made of *inter alia* the leadership style and principles of the erstwhile hero of the Old Testament period, Moses. As in the case of numerous Biblical heroes, many great leaders materialized in reaction to crises that they faced from time-to-time. There are of course many heroes who were also great leaders and such heroes include characters such as Abraham, Noah, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, David and later, in the New Testament period Paul and the other apostles amongst others. In the face of imminent danger and often death, they strove to realize their vision for the future and in doing so exhibited a very wide range of special qualities which often endeared them to the community in which they served. These are over and above their unique inherent characteristics. Conversely, it can be argued that having a vision on its own is often not enough to successfully overcome the immediate constraints and challenges. Hence, it is widely agreed that personal traits and skills differ between leaders and managers. It is often only the true great individuals who display both.

Moses' leadership of the Hebrews, is revealed in all its facets as the book of Deuteronomy which was purportedly written by him. In fact 167 chapters of the Pentateuch, also known as the *Torah*, deal mainly with the story of Moses life. "Everything the Torah tells us about Moses is a lesson in Jewish leadership...the circumstances of Moses' birth are a lesson in the selflessness demanded of the leader"(Chabad.org, 2015) and the sacrifices required by those closest to him. The Orthodox Jews refer to him as *Moshe Rabbenu*, *`EvedHaShem*, *AvihaNeviimzya'a*, and he is defined as "Our Leader Moshe", "Servant of God", and "Father of all the Prophets". He encounters God when the presence of the divine is manifested in fire at the burning bush. Inasmuch as the fire burned the bush, and signified the purity and holiness of God which comes to judge and destroy whatever is tainted (Young, 1967/8). Just as the fiery bush appears in the presence of Moses, so too was God in the presence of His elect people, ready to destroy evil and to save the faithful. It was at the burning bush that God gave Moses the revelation of His name as *Yahweh*. The Hebrews will through Moses as the instrument, know that *Yahweh* is their God, while the Egyptians will know that *Yahweh* has judged them (Young, 1967/8).



Moses encounters god at the Burning Bush-Source: www.womeninthebible.net

Since fire was symbolic of God's presence at the burning bush (Exodus 19:18), Moses is called into God's service as Jacob was called at Bethel. According to Orthodox Jews, Moses did not only receive the Torah from God, (the revealed written and oral word) but also the hidden truth of the Torah, and he is thus considered the greatest prophet ever (Jewfaq.org, 2015). We cannot however say with any level of great certainty that as is commonly believed, the entire Pentateuch was a literary composition of Moses. We can also not dismiss Moses as a real or mythological figure or even as a legend. Moses did, in all probability, lead the Hebrews for a period of forty years and his first dealing with the pharaoh was when he was 80 years of age, and he died at the age of 120. The enthralling narrative of the Exodus and the events leading to the conquest of the Promised Land by the Hebrews may however be tenuously embedded in historical events (Silberman and Finkelstein, 2001). There is also some controversy regarding the hero figure of Moses as a great leader of the Israelites in the Exodus events which cannot be fully verified (Dever, 2003). Nonetheless, it is highly probable that what we read of Moses in the Old Testament has veracity given that numerous non-biblical writings concerning the Hebrews, with strong references to the role of Moses, which appear from the commencement of the Hellenistic period, which lasted from approximately 323 BCE to 146 BCE (Safrai, 1976).

In addition, in various New Testament books, Moses is significantly identified as the 'giver of the Law' (Mark 7: 10; Romans 9: 15; 2 Corinthians 3: 13). He is also viewed as an exemplary faith-driven individual to whom Christians should also admire (Hebrews 3: 2; 11: 24). Paul refers to him as the 'prophet of the Messiah' in the book of Acts (3: 22).

Moses in Pharaoh's court

The Israelites settled in the Land of Goshen during the period of Joseph and Jacob. At this time a pharaoh ascended the throne in Egypt who beleaguered the Hebrews. It was at this juncture that Moses was born to Amram, son of Kohath the Levite, and his mother Yocheved. Moses had two siblings -one older sister, Miriam, and one older brother, Aaron. (Deuteronomy 34:10). According to the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe:

When Moses is born, the "house was filled with light" attesting to his future as the enlightener of humanity. But right away this light has to be hidden, for he, as all Hebrew newborn males, lives in perpetual fear of discovery by Pharaoh's baby killers. Then he is placed in the Nile, precariously protected only by a reed basket, sharing, if only in potential, the fate of his fellow babes cast into its waters. Here we have a further lesson in leadership: the leader cannot appear from "above," but must share the fate of his people. This was the lesson which G-d Himself conveyed by first appearing to Moses in a thornbush: "I am with them in their affliction" (Chabad.org).

After a few months the pharaoh feeling threatened by the hordes under his power, instructed his army to drown all male Hebrew children in the Nile River whereupon according to tradition, the mother of Moses placed him in a boat-shaped basket and concealed it amongst some bulrushes on the bank of the river. Moses was then discovered and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter who was bathing nearby (probably Queen Hatshepsut) (Exodus 2:3–10). The Old Testament teaches us that "Pharaoh's daughter" had slaves and attendants. According to LoMusio (1989), Hatshepsut was the most likely woman in the 18th Dynasty who could have enjoyed the title "Pharaoh's daughter," which was the designation given in Exodus to the person who saved Moses and later on adopted him. Robins (1993) casts light on how women of royalty were titled:

Women of royal birth (in the 18th Dynasty) can be identified by the use of the title 'king's (Pharaoh's) daughter', since there is no evidence in the 18th Dynasty of women who are known to have had non-royal parents being given this title. This rules out the possibility that this title was sometimes awarded to enhance the status of non-royal women.

Hatshepsut was the only child of the Queen consort, Ahmose, who survived past infancy, and her Pharaoh father, Thutmose I. Queen Ahmose provided Thutmose I with four children, three of whom died in their youth (LoMusio 1989). Exodus (2:3–10) describes how “Pharaoh’s daughter” instructed Miriam to take baby Moses to a nursemaid who as it turned out, happened to be Moses’ natural mother. She would have cared for him for a few years, probably 3-5 as per custom and “When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son” (Exodus 2:10) and so Moses ended up in the Egyptian Royal Court where he enjoyed many privileges and a good education.



Source: fineartamerica.com Ancient Egyptian Paintings –
The Finding of Moses by Pharaoh's Daughter by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema

The Adulthood of Moses

When he reached adulthood, Moses killed an Egyptian whom he found beating a Hebrew slave after which found it expedient to flee to the land of Midian for fear of persecution. It was there on Mount Horeb, that God revealed to Moses his name, *Yahweh*, and where God instructed him to return to Egypt and liberate his elect Hebrew people from their state of servitude and lead and guide them to the Promised Land of Canaan. Dever (2002) suggests that the Hebrews may have been a people of Canaanite origin and also alludes to the possibility that some of those

who accompanied Moses out of Egypt may well have been immigrants from Egypt. These sojourners became hilltop dwellers in Transjordan during the period 1250- 1200 BC and were led by a character who was probably the man we know as Moses. Moses has in any event, been securely located in ancient history and has been placed at various points within the New Kingdom, from Pharaoh Thutmose II (1493-1479 BCE) to Pharaoh Merneptah (1212-1202 BCE). Moses manifests in Egypt in about 1250 BCE which is the date accepted as that of the Exodus (Odelain and Séguineau, 1981). Various scholars have suggested that Moses led Israel out of bondage in Egypt either during the rule of Amenhotep II (1450-1420 BCE) or under Merneptah (1235 BCE). The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* refers to Moses as follows: "... leader, prophet, and lawgiver (first half of the 13th century BCE)". In the Islamic Holy *Qur'an* Moses is mentioned in great detail and his life is described and reported more than that of any other prophet and is referred to as both a prophet (*nabi*) as well as a messenger (*rasul*). It is also of note that there are many similarities between Moses and the Islamic prophet Mohammed in terms of leadership and deference to God. In fact the name Moses is stated 502 times in the *Qur'an* (Keeler, 2005) emphasizing his prominence in Islam.

The stories of Moses found in the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, contain an assortment of historical elements, later understandings and even legends. The line is indeed very fine so that in *William Neil's One Volume Bible Commentary* we read:

For we are faced in the book of Exodus, as in the book of Genesis, not with a factual historical record but with a narrative which is so entirely composed of a mixture of historical events, theological interpretation of these events and the legendary accretions that naturally accumulate around any dramatic occurrence, particularly one of such momentous significance (i.e., the Exodus), that it is no longer possible for us to disentangle them.

The Book of Exodus, in which Moses is the prominent figure, which is also the second book of the Old Testament, is probably the most important one in the Old Testament. Theologically speaking it is perhaps even one of the most important books in the Holy Bible in its entirety, since it provides proof that God had selected Israel to be His own and singled it out to be the means of blessing for the entire world (Neil, 1979: 67). Exodus is in many ways, for Judaism and the Old Testament, what the life, death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ are for Christians and the New Testament. Scholarship regards Moses as a divinely 'elected' leader of Judaism. For many biblical scholars, both past and present, Moses stands out as the foremost personality of the pre-Christian world (Halley, 1965: 120).

The story of Moses is related in the Book of Exodus, but in reality it begins in Genesis where we read of the story of the Patriarch Abraham. God forges a pact and covenant with Abraham that Moses is required to consolidate by creating a nation with laws and codes given to them by God himself on Mount Sinai. Even though writers are fond of compiling lists of virtues held in common by leaders, it is clear that leaders exhibit a wide range of qualities. Jewish sources teach us about the ideal leader. Scripture mentions several leaders who were chosen by others to lead their people, including Moses, Saul, Solomon and David, and from their characteristics we can undoubtedly deduce what traits are needed to be a worthy leader. Moses provides a unique model of leadership, with the characteristics that make a worthy leader. His endeavours bolster the maturity of a common administration for the people and the code of Law which he passes down provides the nation that is formed by him with a necessary organization required for survival. It is interesting to note however, that there are indeed negligible sources in terms of leadership books that tend to mention the failings of Moses such as the sin that precluded him

from entering the Promised Land. According to (Numbers 20:1–13), Moses supposed incorrectly, as it turned out, that *Yahweh* wished him to bring water from a rock in the same manner as it had previously been accomplished at Marah (Exodus 15:25) and also at Meribah (Numbers 20:1-13) and thus tried to repeat that prior practice by his own authority. In so doing he however deceived the people under his charge and provoked the ire of the Lord. This sin cost him dearly since his entry into the Promised Land was barred (Numbers 10:12). God legislated the death penalty for those guilty of disobeying certain types of laws (Leviticus 20). God then “killed” a guilt person in a way He deemed fit. In Exodus 4, Moses was afflicted because he was guilty of some sin, since disobedience is the only act God punishes with death (Bass, 2003).

Generally, Moses was a humble man: “The man Moses was very meek, more than all humanity that was on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3) and yet he is happy to confront the most powerful ruler on earth, the pharaoh himself, with an ultimatum to “Let my people go”. Shinan (1986) states that “one can find what-ever one likes in the majestic and complicated figure of Moses (or in the different Moseses that the Old Testament itself reflects)”. It is undoubtedly the case however, that Moses was a very special leader in many ways and was to all intents and purposes a novel variety of anti-hero and is thus considered to be quite unique when compared to the stereotypical tribal or national leaders that Israel had in its history. For one, he married Zipporah who was a Midianite woman (Exodus 21) who was the daughter of Jethro a priest of Midian. The Midianites like the Jews, were also descendants of Abraham through Keturah (Genesis 25:2). Yet, Zipporah as a foreigner is disparaged by Moses’ brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, in a situation where there was a challenge to Moses’ legitimacy and leadership which were brought into question (Numbers 12).

Moses also had a speech impediment and God accommodated this by providing Moses verbal support through his eloquent priest brother, Aaron (Exodus 4:16). He was further inimitable as a leader since he received the Ten Commandments from God directly on Mount Sinai (Numbers 10:11) and then passed down the Law. In the Pentateuch there are many references to Moses as the writer of the ‘Law of God’. A few *inter alia* are: “Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah” (Exodus 24:4), “Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah” (Numbers 33:2) and “Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests...” (Deuteronomy 31:9). In John 5:46-47, Jesus states succinctly: “For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” Perhaps Moses uniqueness was necessary since he was the one ordained by *Yahweh* to convey the Law to the people. God gave him god-like qualities and says to him “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet” (Exodus 7:1). Moses was also the only leader of the Holy Bible to see God in person (Deuteronomy 34:10). In Deuteronomy we read “There has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom *Yahweh* knew face to face” (Deuteronomy 34:10). However in a different biblical meeting, Moses is forbidden a viewing of God’s face, and only sees His back (Exodus 33:20–23). That meeting nonetheless leaves Moses glowing with the radiance of God: “When Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, his face was all aglow with radiance, and they were afraid to come near to him” (Exodus 34:30). This special event and his power to work miracles, distinguishes him as an envoy of the Israelites to God.

Pharaoh was reluctant to allow the Hebrews to leave Egypt and it was only after the miracles of the frightening plagues that approval for the Hebrews to leave was granted by him. Led by Moses the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea on dry land pursued by an Egyptian Army which perished when the wind drove the sea back (Exodus 14: 21, 27). The Hebrews said to be

600,000 men of military age and also the elderly, women and children, then wandered through the Sinai desert, and invaded Palestine. The historical facts are undoubtedly highly complicated, and to date no certainly has been established, since there is scant archaeological proof available. Nevertheless it is Moses who is distinguished in Judaism, Christianity and the Islamic *Qur'an* as the prophet who brought scripture and law to the Hebrews (Keeler, 2005). Moses is respected and indeed venerated today as the "lawgiver of Israel". He provided numerous sets of laws in four 'books'. The first is the Covenant code which is placed in Exodus 19-24 and comprises the terms of the covenant which God proposes to the Hebrews. Within the covenant we find the Decalogue (Ten Commandments of Exodus 20:1-17) and the Book of the Covenant comprising Exodus 20:22-23:19 (Hamilton, 2011). The Book of Leviticus is the second body of law while the Book of Numbers and the Book of Deuteronomy constitute other laws requiring action by the Hebrews. Many scholars are more than content to be able consider the leadership role of Moses and his critical role in Hebrew history as aspects that are indeed firmly grounded in Israel's community recollection. He is thus not disregarded as merely devout fiction character. Moses is generally accepted to the author of Genesis as well as the four books of Law and these jointly constitute the Hebrew *Torah* which is the primary and holiest section of the Jewish Bible (Cohen, 2003). Ironically, Moses is portrayed as somewhat of a lonely character and is not very amicable towards his community. He ultimately dies a solitary figure on a mountain on the outskirts of the Promised Land to which he has led his people (Loewenstamm, 1976:212-215). He is buried at an unknown site somewhere across the Jordan River in the region of Moab, which was hostile towards Israel (Numbers 20:6 -13; 27:12-14; Deuteronomy 32:50 - 52).

Moses the theological leader

The Holy Bible for the most part tends to depict people in various situations and does not *per se* seek to uncover the characters of individuals (Mamre, 1946). It is thus our task to try to unravel what people were like based on the evidence before us in terms of literary analysis of the Old Testament corpus. We may thus deduce that Moses was a person without any initial appeal as a leader and that he gradually became a compelling leader who was nominated by *Yahweh* to lead the Hebrews out of their bondage in Egypt.

At times Moses fulfilled a range of leadership roles ranging from *inter alia*, faithful shepherd, negotiator, intercessor, hero, tactical genius, strategist, militarist, judge, mentor, motivator, provider and guide. He co-ordinated the efforts of specialists and integrated knowledge for the benefit of the people, but his approach was also limited. He did to an extent mobilize the people and drove them towards a common objective. The harsh terrain of the wilderness in which he and the people spent many years undoubtedly further developed qualities of toughness in his nature that were in all probability not developed while he served in the grandeur of the palace of pharaoh. The environment called for creativity, innovation and speed of response if effectiveness was to be attained in what was a somewhat turbulent Levantine context.

Moses was authoritarian when he needed to be, decisive at times and also very supportive and compassionate towards his people. The definition of Moses as a leader in literature is that he is referred to as a person whose followers remained mostly loyal to him and did so willingly, out of an appreciation of both his power and his charismatic nature. Also important to note is that Moses as a leader, was not coerced to assume the role which further endeared him to his followers. Moses was selected to leave his flock of sheep and rather lead his people, and this was despite his highly restrictive speech impediment. It seems his capacity to be compassionate as was evidenced by how he treated his flocks of sheep was in a way the reason for his selection to lead the lost sheep of Israel. In Exodus *Rabbah* (1939) it states:

The Lord trieth the righteous. By what does He try him? By tending flocks. He tried David through sheep and found him to be a good shepherd, as it is said: He chose David also His servant and took him from the sheepfolds... Because he used to stop the bigger sheep from going out before the smaller ones, and bring smaller ones out first, so that they should graze upon the tender grass, and afterwards he allowed the old sheep to feed from the ordinary grass, and lastly he brought forth the young, lusty sheep to eat the tougher grass. Whereupon G-d said: "He who knows how to look after sheep, bestowing upon each the care it deserves, shall come and tend my people.

Moses was described as a very compassionate person and the word 'compassion' (Heb. *hemlah*) is defined in the Hebrew dictionary *Even Shoshan*, as a word which connotes a highly considerate and sensitive awareness towards people in distress and where there is a deep will to assuage it. Compassion also includes discernment of suffering, a sentiment to help, and acting to lessen pain or suffering where it is in evidence. God's compassion touched the heart of Moses and so, the latter's leadership style articulated the compassion of *Yahweh* who spoke to his prophet saying: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:7- 8). Moses thus became the appointed and favoured liberator of the people from their physical and spiritual bondage. He became a leader once he had an opportunity to practice the craftsmanship of being a leader in what were often perplexing situations (Allio, 2003). Moses has a sense of vocation bestowed on him when God announces, "I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8-9) "So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10).

3 Now Moshe was ro'eh (shepherding) the tzon of Yitro his khoten (father-in-law), the kohen Midyan; and he led the tzon to the backside of the midbar, and came to the Har HaElohim, even to Chorev.2 And the Malach Hashem appeared unto him in a flame of eish out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, hinei, the bush burned with eish, and the bush was not consumed.3 And Moshe thought, I will now turn aside, and see this mareh hagadol, why the bush is not burned up.4 And when Hashem saw that he turned aside to see, Elohim called out unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moshe, Moshe. And he said, Hineni.5 And He said, Draw not nearer here; put off thy na'alayim (sandals) from off thy raglayim, for hamakom whereon thou standest is admat kodesh.6 Moreover He said, I am Elohei Avicha, Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak, and Elohei Ya'akov. And Moshe hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon HaElohim.7 And Hashem said, I have surely seen the oni ami (affliction of My people) which are in Mitzrayim, and have heard their cry by reason of their nogesim (taskmasters); for I know their makhovim (sufferings);8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the yad Mitzrayim, and to bring them up out of that land unto an eretz tovah, a spacious eretz zavat cholov udevash; unto the place of the Kena'ani, and the Chitti, and the Emori, and the Perizzi, and the Chivi, and the Yevusi. 9 Now therefore, hinei, the cry of the Bnei Yisroel is come unto Me; and I have also seen the oppression

wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. (Shemot –Exodus, 3:1-9, Orthodox Jewish Bible (OJB)

Lichtenstein (2001) submits that Moses tried to involve the Hebrews in the development of their own redemption. He however failed in this task and thus developed a strategy where he took on greater responsibility for what was to happen concerning the redemption of the people. On the evidence of scholarly writings, Moses was to all intents and purposes a model of leader and is undoubtedly the most highly celebrated leader in Jewish history. In Exodus he saves a Hebrew from an Egyptian overseer who is whipping him to death (Exodus 2:11-12), and also takes a stand against one a Hebrew who is beating up his companions: "...so he said to the offender, 'Why do you strike your fellow?'" (Exodus 2:13). These actions attest to his strong moral character and his decisive action mentality. His strong sense of justice was displayed even at risk to himself. By identifying with Hebrew slaves he was placing himself in danger, since as a prince of Egypt he would be expected to treat Hebrews with far less respect. He also demonstrates a disinterest in personal power but was rather a servant-leader. Moses demonstrates compassion and a desire for justice in various events, such as in his conduct towards the daughters of the Midianite priest as mentioned in Exodus (2:16): "but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock". Moses went further than what one would have expected as we are told by Jethro's daughter: "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even drew water for us and watered the flock" (Exodus. 2:19).

He stood by his principles and made it his business to help others and did not include himself as one who was offended as for example in the book of Numbers "Truly, it is against the Lord that you and all your company have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?" (Numbers 16:11). He is however offended by, and critical of those seeking fault in him, and admonishes such individuals: "I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them" (Numbers 16:15).

Jethro gave Moses wise counsel as is evidenced in Exodus 18, and what Moses learned enabled him to focus on more important issues that were often critical. By delegating to others Moses was still the leader of the people but he would spend more time teaching vital spiritual principles to bolster his people and he was also able to implement a legislative leadership style (Exodus 18:19-20, 22). If he did something that some people disagreed with he did not attack them but rather sought to find solutions to please them. His character was such that he was also well aware of his physical impediments and limitations as stated in Exodus (4:10) "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue". He thus was not averse to the notion of sharing power as a team facilitator and player.

In Hebrews 11:28 we are told that it was through faith that Moses kept the Passover. He maintains the sprinkling of blood on the door lintels to protect the Hebrew firstborn from the approaching Angel of Death and this shows his acceptance of moral obligation to do what is right irrespective of possible negative repercussions to his self. He leads the Hebrews to be totally obedient and requires them to observe what they should even in a strange land, because it is the 'right thing' to do. Moses also displays his diverse skill sets. For example, he required certain skills to negotiate with Pharaoh and different skills to ultimately lead the Hebrews out of bondage and to sustain and grow their community under the Law (Zivotofsky, 1994). It is interesting to note that Moses' siblings Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12) and his cousin Korah (Numbers 16) were all somewhat covetous of Moses situation and standing and his relationship with his own wife and children do also not endear him as a family man. He clearly appears to

have placed his responsibility to the Hebrews in general, at the epicentre of his activities. He is tasked by proxy, to continue the covenant God has made with Abraham (Genesis 17:14) and tries his level best to do so in difficult circumstances.

Moses faces and deals with many and varied grievances such as "Were there no graves in Egypt that you took us to die in the desert?" (Exodus 14:11) and "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free" (Number 11:4-5). Most famously "Why did you take us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, for there is no food and no water, and our souls are disgusted with the insubstantial food?" (Numbers 21:5). Irrespective of the issues at hand, Moses comes up trumps as he intercedes for his people and he is even prepared to argue with God from time-to-time to seek forgiveness for their voluntary and involuntary transgressions. Moses persuades God not to punish the people for the Golden Calf incident and the rebellion of Korach (Exodus 32: 31-33; Numbers 16:21-22) and demonstrates to us the real compassion he had for the people as their servant-leader. The apostasy of the people just after Yahweh has issued the decree "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me" (Exodus 32), emphasizes to us the lowly depths to which the Hebrews had sunk in their act of creating a golden calf for them to idolize. It is a gargantuan task but Moses intercedes for them with God, to forgive their foolishness and errant behavior and is even prepared to suffer the consequences for their misdemeanors as an atoning action (Exodus 32:30–32). He also forgives others and does not seek to settle scores with his adversaries and is also a good listener. His guidance from God is respected and acted upon as was the case during the burning bush incident and also when he ascends Mount Sinai. He listens and receives revelation that shapes his existence and that of his followers. Moses seeks justice for the downtrodden and moral conduct drives his actions.

Moses is referred to as a servant of God numerous times in the Bible which in itself is lofty praise. When came of age, he immediately selected God and his own Hebrew people over the house of Pharaoh and all the wealth and prominence that he had as a prince of Egypt. His utter faith in God as the superior being showed his great leadership traits. In Hebrews 11:25 we are told he opted to rather agonize in affliction with the people of God, rather than continue to relish the pleasures of iniquity for a short time. His integrity, moral fortitude and ethical actions speak volumes for his great leadership qualities. His vision extended beyond the 'now' and had a holistic field. It was by total faith that he led the Hebrews through the Red Sea as by dry land (Hebrews 11:29).When God tells Moses to start moving, he does, as any good leader should.

Great leaders somehow never complete their work and so Moses anticipated his death and recognized the urgent need for continuity in what was in progress. He sought and then raised up a leader to succeed him who he personally identified as suitable with God's help. Moses says: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people ...heed such a prophet" (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). He selects and prepares Joshua "...son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses" (Deuteronomy 34:9).

Moses the strategic leader and manager

Notwithstanding many praises of Moses as a theological leader, leadership does not mean perfection. To gain a better understanding of Moses as a strategic leader and manager this section will review Moses' life and highlight how he was prepared to manage the Exodus. Moses' life is divided into three equal parts of forty years each. The first forty years set the foundation to equip him with the required background and education; the next forty year taught him humility in preparation to serve G-d and his people. Finally Moses was prepared to lead the Israelites from the land of Egypt to Canaan over the last forty years of his life.

Moses was born to a hostile world where babies like him were under a royal death sentence. However, his family entrusted his welfare and future to God. With God's will, Pharaoh's daughter found, cared for and raised Moses. In his early years, Moses' mother trained him in the ways of the 'God of the fathers' (Exodus 3:15) and he realized that the Hebrews were his fellow countrymen (Exodus 2:11). Being the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses was trained in the art of warfare, leading people and administering the empire. The book of Acts (7:22) proclaims that he was '*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*' Egypt was considered to be one of the most academic and scientific societies among ancient cultures. It is thus reasonable to assume that Moses was instructed in geography, history, grammar, writing, literature, philosophy, and music (Guzik, 2013).

Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. (Acts 7:23-25)

Despite his education and grooming, it seems if Moses passionately acted upon impulse, rather than considering his options carefully. This act, furthermore did not give him the credibility he expected among the people of Israel. "*Who made you a prince and a judge over us?*" (Exodus 2:14). In spite of Moses' rearing and the leadership qualities he displayed such as intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision, he was not ready to lead. Truly effective leaders are also distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skill (Goleman, 2003).

The next 40 years of preparations followed when Moses escaped to Midian. The best theme to ascribe to this period was humility. In Egypt Moses was part of the royal family, but in Midian Moses was a stranger (a 'nobody') and became a servant tending sheep, a husband and a father. During this time Moses learned the true meaning of serving, it is also here at the 'mount of God', he experienced the glory of the living God. During this period, Moses became less concerned with assets, accomplishments and relationships. Instead he shifted his focus to God and the well-being of his people. He also gained the courage to accept and overcome his own impediments and weaknesses (Exodus 4:10).

The culmination of this 80 year preparation finally placed Moses in a position to lead the children of Israel.

The exodus from Egypt to Canaan tells us much about Moses as a manager. Indeed, this journey is characterized by change, uncertainty, diversity and moral ambiguity. Ironically, these are the recurring themes that haunt today's leaders and managers too (Baron, 1999). Even though Moses was prepared, he still had to face the reality of the desert. "Getting the people out of slavery was one matter; getting the slavery out of the people would prove to be quite another". It should be noted that prior to the Exodus, Israel had never been a nation. Instead it was an ethnic minority in Egypt who, as enslaved people, were not permitted to have national institutions or organizations. "They had departed Egypt as a barely organized refugee mob (Exodus 12:34-39) who now had to be organized into a functioning nation" (Theology of Work Project, 2015).

To lead and manage this group was no easy task and soon Moses' father-in-law, Jethro warned Moses:

"What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone." (Exodus 18:17-18)

It was under Jethro's wise council that Moses created a hierarchy of magistrates and judges to assist in the task of administering justice. As a manager, Moses understood the power of delegation but also acknowledged that positions need to match abilities of incumbents. He thus gave leaders tasks related to their talents and personalities. Jethro taught Moses to appoint and mentor specially selected men to deal with certain issues and groups of people and where they could not deal with a given situation he would take over the matter and seek to resolve it. Zivotofsky (1994) asserts that Moses possessed skills which were in line with what the community required. This practice reported in Exodus forms the basics of modern day human resource management.

In contrast to Moses who was familiar with life in the desert (serving Jethro as a shepherd in the Sinai wilderness), the people of Israel were used to an agrarian life in the well-watered Nile delta. The desert was new and terrifying to them and as can be expected such anxiety created conflict (Wilson, 2015). Moses was blamed by the Israelites for the hardship they experienced, most notably thirst and starvation (Exodus 15:24; Exodus 16:2, 7-9, 12; Exodus 17:3; Numbers 11:1-6; Number 14:2, 27, 29). He also had to face rebellious followers (Numbers 16:11, 41; 17:5,10; 21:4-9) as outlined elsewhere.

Admirably, Moses had the wisdom to realize that the complaints were lodged against the Lord (Wilson, 2015).

"[The Lord] has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.'" (Exodus 16:7b-8)

He thus called to the Lord to guide and provide that what was required. Moses realized that G-d was the leader, not he. He did not take responsibility for the hardships of his followers nor did he try to solve crises by himself. He took the problem to G-d and waited for instructions (Exodus 17:4; Numbers 11:14-15). In G-d he trusted, and to G-d he gave all the glory.

The book of Numbers contributes significantly to our understanding of how Moses managed resources during the Exodus. As effective resource allocation depends on good data, Moses took censuses to quantify the human and natural resources available for the economic and governmental affairs, including military service (Numbers 1:2-3; 26:2-4), religious duties (Numbers 4:2-3, 22-23), taxation (Num. 3:40-48), and agriculture (Numbers 26:53-54) (cited by Theology of Work Project, 2015). Under G-d's direction Moses created a provisional government headed by tribal leaders (Numbers 1:4-16). He appointed a religious order, the Levites, and equipped them with resources to build the tabernacle of the covenant (Numbers 1:48-54). According to Numbers (2:1-9) Moses laid out camp housing for all the people, then regiments the men of fighting age into military echelons, and appointed commanders and officers. According to the Theology of Work Project (2015) "Moses' activities of organization,

leadership, governance, and resource development are closely paralleled in virtually every sector of society today—business, government, military, education, religion, nonprofits, neighborhood associations, even families. In this sense, Moses is the godfather of all managers, accountants, statisticians, economists, military officers, governors, judges, police, headmasters, community organizers, and myriad others.”

Moses furthermore realized the power of consultation and communication to avoid and resolve conflict. In this regard, he regularly sought advice and council from Jethro, Aaron and Jasua. He honored the leaders of the people and tried to act in concert with them (Wilson, 2015). The book of Exodus (cited by Wilson, 2015), describes how Moses interacts with the elders reporting God’s promises (Exodus 3:16, 18; 4:29); passing instructions through the elders concerning the coming Passover (Exodus 12:21); eating of the sacrifices with the elders and Jethro (Exodus 18:12); selecting capable men to serve as judges and officers (Exodus 18:21-26); and communicating the Lord’s words regarding the Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 19:7). Amidst many conflicts, Moses had no choice than to rely on collaboration and joint problem solving in the day-to-day execution of decision-making.

Moses likewise understood the value of trust in those he appointed as leaders and was not jealous about their proficiencies. When informed that two of the elders were prophesying in the encampment his response was very different to that of Joshua who wanted the prophesiers to cease their activity. Moses states in exemplary fashion:

"Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"
(Numbers 11:29)

He thus did not stand in the way of those that followed the LORD for self-gain or due to self-importance. Instead he demonstrates his willingness, as a good leader, to be a team player and is not threatened by the actions of others. Moses’ life informs us on the constructive experiences of a man who is an ethical leader and his actions validate the extent to which a leader can perform in what are often trying and highly perplexing situations (Hoffmeier, 1986).

But Moses was not perfect. Like any man, he had his flaws and his moments of weakness. These shortcomings are faithfully recorded by the Bible and highlighted elsewhere. Sadly, Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land due to his transgressions (Deut. 32:48-52; Num. 20:7-13).

Conclusion

There are a number of interesting aspects that can one deduce from Moses’ likely ethical decision-making style as a leader. From a normative ethical perspective, his concern was with the content of moral judgements and the promotion of the criteria for what is right or wrong. He followed a utilitarian approach in that his actions were right in proportion most of the time and he allowed his people to achieve their goals and ends. Moses’ ethical stance also provided him with a moral compass, indeed a framework that he utilized to navigate his way through very difficult issues. He also acted in a supererogational manner in that he was motivated to act above and beyond the call of duty most of the time- in this sense he thus fits into the Rule Ethics system of Immanuel Kant (Stratton-Lake, 1999). Moses did not choose to be a leader, rather he had this position imposed upon him by God’s grace. He was deemed worthy of the job and was chosen for it because of his noble traits, among them a rejection of wielding power and leadership.

Moses, as a leader, did also not come out against the minority who attacked him verbally, openly opposed him, and picked fault with him. If viewed from a Social Ethics Contract perspective, Moses recognized himself as part of a greater whole. Moses could equally be viewed as a manipulative leader – as exemplified by Machiavelli (Girodo, 1998) where ‘the end justifies the means’. In terms of this thinking he did whatever he believed he needed to do to be successful, as long as it was successful. There are also smatterings of Transforming leadership in his approach as he sought to satisfy higher motives and engaged with his appointed assistants more especially in the wilderness.

Moses’ had a huge capacity for mercy, evidenced in his treatment of the flocks, and this was to an extent was a determining factor in his being chosen to lead the people. Many scholars have recently evaluated mercy as an emotional factor in the theory of ethics, thus distinguishing clearly between the ethics of mercy and ethics of justice. A permeating approach in the theory of ethics stresses the prominence of developing emotional/social understanding, which leads to empathy and compassion which is what Moses shows us through his leadership style. His ethics essentially came from his God and religion as well as his conscience and intuition and the example provided by his father-in-law Jethro, As well as his siblings Aaron and Miriam and other good people, but especially from a desire to do the best for the Hebrews in each and every situation he faced with them. Moses made such an impact on Hebraic life that the evangelist Matthew portrays Jesus as the ‘second Moses’, who is the announcer of the New Law (Matthew 5–7). At the Transfiguration of Jesus, in Mark’s gospel, Moses is understood to be present and he validates Jesus’ claim as expressed by the voice from heaven (Mark 9: 7).

Moses neither hesitated in, nor compromised his God ordained undertaking and kept focused on what he needed to do and is a model of a dedicated leader whose gaze lingered on the reward of his people entering their Promised Land. He put in place systems that would be operational once he was no longer the leader of his people. His taking of the initiative and decisive actions proved his worth as a leader who was worthy of the job he had. He also made sure to use the gifts of others and created and mentored a team of like-minded assistants to help in the achievement of the goals he had set. He had a spirit of responsibility and interceded for his people with God with a sense of great humility.

References

Allio, R.J. (2003). **The Seven Faces of Leadership**, Xlibris Corporation.

Baron, D. (1999). *Moses on management: 50 leadership lessons from the greatest manager of all time*. Simon and Schuster.

Bass, A. (2003). **Why did God Want to Kill Moses**, Apologetics Press, Inc. <https://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1279> [Retrieved 25/5/2015]

Bromiley, G.W. (Gen. Ed.), "Moses" in **The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** (Fully Revised), Volume III, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI.

Chabad.Org (2015). Lubavitcher Rebbe, "Moses: The Birth of a Leader". http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1153/jewish/Moses-The-Birth-of-a-Leader.htm [retrieved 25/05/2015]

Cohen, J. (2003). **Moses: A Memoir**. Mahwah, Paulist Press, N.J.

Dever, W.G. (2003). **Who Were the Early Israelites?** William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI.

Dever, W. G. (2002). **What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?** William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI.

Encyclopaedia Judaica, (1971).Volume 12, Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem, "Moses", col. 371.

Exodus Rabbah 51:1–52:5. (10th Century), Reprinted in **Midrash Rabbah**: Exodus. 3, (1939).Translated by S. M. Lehrman, Soncino Press, London, 562–81

Garfinkel, S.(2004). 'The Man Moses the Leader Moses', in **Jewish Religious Leadership-Image and Reality** (Ed. Jack Wertheimer), Vol.1, JTS Press -Jewish Theological Seminary.

Girodo, M. (1998). 'Machiavellian, bureaucratic and transformational leadership styles in police managers: Preliminary findings of interpersonal ethics', **Perceptual & Motor Skills**, Vol. 86, 419-428.

Goleman, Daniel. (2003). 'What makes a leader.' **Organizational Influence Processes** (*Porter, LW, et al. Eds.*), New York, ME Sharpe: 229-241.

Guzik, D. (2013). 'Exodus 2 - Moses' Birth and Early Career.' <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/guzik/commentaries/0202.htm> [Retrieve 2015-07-29]

Halley, H.H. (1965). **Halley's Bible Handbook**, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan.

Hamilton, V. (2011).**Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary**, Baker Books, Grand Rapids.

Jewfaq.org. "Judaism 101: Moses, Aaron and Miriam". [Retrieved 2010-05-26].

Keeler, A. (2005). "Moses from a Muslim Perspective", in Solomon, Norman; Harries, Richard; Winter, Tim (eds.), **Abraham's children: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in conversation**, by T&T Clark Publishers, 55 – 66

Lichtenstein, M. (2001). **Emissary and Flock: Leadership and Crisis from the Burdens of Egypt to the Steppes of Moab** (Hebrew), *Alon She-but: Yeshiva tHarEtzion*.

Loewenstamm, S.E. (1976). "The Death of Moses," in G.W.E. Nickelsburg, Jr., (ed.), **Studies on the Testament of Abraham**, Scholars Press, Missoula, 185–217.

LoMusio, J. (1989).Moses, the Exodus and a Family Feud, **Archaeology and Biblical Research**, 2:80–93.

Mamre (1946). **Essays in Religion**, (trans. Greta Hort), Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 44-61.

Neil, W. (1976). **William Neil's One Volume Bible Commentary**, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., London, 67-141.

Odelain, O. & Séguineau, R. (1981). (Trans. M. J. O'Connell), **Dictionary of Proper Names and Places in the Bible**, 270.

Orthodox Jewish Bible (OJB) [retrieved 25 May 2015]
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=EXODUS+3%3A1-9&version=OJB>

Robins, G. (1993). **Women in Ancient Egypt**, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Safrai, S. (1976). **The Jewish People in the First Century**, M. Stern (Ed.), Fortress Press, Van Gorcum.

Shinan, A. (1986). "Moses Reflected in Two More Mirrors," **Bible Review**, 2, 1986, 17.

Silberman, N.A. & Finkelstein, I. (2001). **The Bible Unearthed**, Simon and Schuster, New York.

Stratton-Lake, P. (1999). **Recent Work on Kant's ethics**, Philosophical Books, Vol. 40, 209.

Theology of Work Project Inc. (2015). Introduction to Numbers. <http://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/numbers-and-work/> [Retrieved 2015-07-29]

The Holy Bible, New King James Version (1982). Nelson, Nashville.

Wilson, R.F. (2015). Moses the reluctant leader: Grumbling, Conflict, and Delegation (Exodus 15-18), http://www.jesuswalk.com/moses/4_grumbling.htm [Retrieved 2015-07-29]

Young, E.J. (1967-8). The Call of Moses – Part II, **Westminster Theological Journal**, 30, 1-23.

Zivotofsky, A.Z. (1994). The Leadership Qualities of Moses, **Judaism**, 43, 258-69.