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African Leadership Recruitment in the Image and Likeness of Madiba Nelson Mandela

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Unless it shall come to pass that philosophers are kings or those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with sufficient measure of genuine philosophy ... there will be no cessation of ills for the state nor ... for the human race; neither can the commonwealth, which we have now sketched in theory, ever till see the light of the day. (Plato, 473).

Abstract

Good leadership and governance are key to sustainable human institutions. In Africa, Nelson Mandela stood out as an African icon and an international leader amidst the challenges of the South African environment. The disconnection between the rulers and the ruled suggests that African nations can develop only when the leadership question is rightly settled. Drawing lessons from the Madiba Nelson Mandela conundrum, we argue the thesis that, without comprehension, mental magnitude, spiritual depth, selflessness and incorruptibility which are the core indigenous African leadership qualities that defined the Mandela persona, our long walk to democratic consolidation will ever remain a distant dream. I argue further that, there is need for a revolution in the aims and methods of power engineering to promote the socio-economic and political desires of man. I argue the conclusion that, African leaders should domesticate the capacity and ability to appreciate and grasp the salient details as well as the practical and temporal implications of a given problem or situation; to lead and live by the personal example set by the Madiba Nelson Mandela, one leader crafted of gold and delivered to Africa for leadership lessons

Key Words: Madiba, Nelson Mandela, Leadership Recruitment, Leadership Lessons, African Politics, South-Africa, Apartheid

The Mandela Leadership Portrait

Thinking of Leadership in Africa brings to mind the shepherd analogy which here serves as a crucial requirement of a leadership philosophy that has aided other contemporary peoples of the

world and indigenous peoples of Africa to become great. The shepherd is a leader who does not put self-interest above sheep interest, does not rest until the sheep is provided for – not just for the immediate needs, but ensuring the needs of the future are guaranteed also – consequently the shepherd envisions the unknown tomorrow and plans for it. The shepherd is the protector of the sheep and exemplifies the virtues of righteousness requisite of followership. In this regard, the shepherd as leader leads by example and does not have to ask for respect before getting it. Using the African democratic average, Bewaji draws the examples from Tanzania and Libya, and we may add South Africa to make a point. While acknowledging the giant strides of these and a few other African countries, the recent profound changes in North Africa and the fragmented political space in Libya and Egypt in particular, it is not far from the truth to say that Africa countries are surely governed less by a people oriented philosophy of development. In many African states, the democratic culture of inclusive participation, constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights and accountability; the trampoline of democratic consolidation quickly became cumbersome with tyranny of the minority becoming the order of the day.

A global reflection reveals to us some points of consequence here. Why, if we may wonder, were the countries of the Pacific rim – at the head of which you find a Japan that was badly battered in the Second World War – able to rise from oblivion within a spate of four decades to dominate the world technologically and financially, or why USA has been able to blend hetero-ethnicities into a vibrant polity even with the usual unresolved issues of racism, racial profiling, and implications of the American Presidential Elections under president George W. Bush in the state of Florida, among others, are still festering. Why are Russians a proud people, in spite of the collapse of the Soviet Union? Many scholars would easily indicate in concession (concurring with the views here proffered) that it was not the color of the skin, nor the intellectual superiority of the population, nor the climatic generosity of the environment that made the difference. Many will easily indicate and concede that the difference is in the content of the character, knowledge and wisdom of leadership. Plato's assertion that unless philosophers are kings or those who are now called kings and potentates be imbued with sufficient measure of genuine philosophy as a condition for the cessation of ills of the state speaks to us that leadership must be characterized adequately to so act as leaders to facilitate open dialogue within the polity, and about the meaning of justice, the possibility of a just politics, and the nature of the best human life. The argued point here is that, what entitles one man or a group of men to lead and requires others to follow or to obey is simply the fact that the one is a philosopher(s), a person thought and reason, and the others ordinary persons, common people who, presumably are bundles of appetitive desires. This leadership philosophy entails self-knowledge that takes cognizance of a holistic exposition of the concept of leadership which flows from knowledge to wisdom, grounded in epistemic, metaphysical and moral content.

This is the leadership style that helped Madiba Mandela in oiling South Africa's young democratic institution to flower when he took over as the first black president in 1994 serving only one term. This model of leadership facilitates behavior and challenges leaders and followers to actively co-construct or co-reconstruct their knowledge about successfully working together to reasonably gratify their politically important desires. For Mandela, truth stands out as the alloy that binds social progress. Such was his grounding and guiding philosophy of life that oiled his entire long walk to freedom. In his very words, "honour belongs to those who never forsake the truth even when things seem dark and grim, who try over and over again, (and) who are never discouraged by insults, humiliation and even defeat". Although he was imprisoned for 27 years, he

accomplished the feat of becoming the first black president of South Africa on May 10, 1994 with style and grace as a worldwide “model of leadership” and the world’s most revered leader even after death. In the *Long Walk to Freedom*, it is said of him that,

“Mandela grew up listening to his father’s stories of heroic battles and heroic Xhosa warriors, and his mother would enchant hi with Xhosa legends and fables. These tales stimulated his childish imagination, and usually contained some moral lessons such as “virtue and generosity will be rewarded in ways that one cannot know” (Mandela, 1994, p. 10)

For Mandela therefore, the glory of the Xhosa history, his early childhood training and formal Christian education fired his leadership spirit. In his autobiography, he states, “on the day of the inauguration (as president) I was overwhelmed with a sense of history ... I defined myself through my Father ... I maintain that nurture, rather than nature, is the primary molder of personality.” (Mandela, 1994, p. 541). Understandably, those to whom leadership will devolve (albeit hereditary) are carefully selected, groomed and instructed in the ways of the culture of their societies in wait for the esteemed positions they are prepared to assume. In fact, it was the responsibility of all the leaders of thought in societies to properly bring up those who would lead. It was in adherence to this practice that Mandela was instructed into the *ethos* and *mores* of the Xhosa indigenous society and carefully nurtured, and elevated to take leadership position in the South African society. It is instructive to note that, this traditional leadership culture gave birth to the great civilizations which tamed the Nile, created the Great Desert Art and engineered their economies through groundnut pyramids in Kano, developed the cocoa industry in the west, prospered the Tiv of central Nigeria with yam bans and energized the nation with coal and palm produce in Eastern Nigeria. Unfortunately though, these giant strides died with the colonization and enslavement of Africa, creating a leadership vacuum which all forms of charlatans now fill by default.

The Mandela Leadership Model.

a) Mental Magnitude

When reason is dethroned from the affairs of the being of man, emotions, mediocrity and unimportant desires reign. This inevitably breeds corruption of the mind which in turn leads to greed, bribery, abuse and executive lawlessness among other social vices. This suggestion argues the point that, those who aspire to leadership in any society must be those who are ruled by reason rather than appetite. They should “possess comprehension and mental magnitude” (Awolowo, 1968, p. 158). This leadership quality is found in abundance in the person and character of Mandela as ably captured by the Nigerian Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka when he says of Mandela that he is the very expression of “humanistic will and political vision ... a symbol of culture and dialogue backed by an unparalleled generosity of spirit”. This humane human quality of life freed the Madiba from the tyranny of the flesh and the unexamined life and so from negative emotions of anger, hate, fear, envy, selfishness and greed, and from indulgence in wrong types of food and drink and in ostentatious consumption as well as excessive or immoral craving for sex. In the Nobel Laureate’s 1988 collection of poems, the Mandela’s Earth, Soyinka wrote: *Your bounty threatens me, Mandela, that taut Drumskin of your heart on which our millions Dance. I fear we latch, fat leeches On your veins... What will be felt of you Mandela?* He became more like an Icon and globally recognized symbol of his country’s freedom. This condition achieved for the Madiba tranquility of the mind and enlarged his conception of what is possible, enriched his intellectual

imagination and diminished the dogmatic assurance which may have closed his mind against the dialectical power of history. As it turned out to be, the lessons of history capacitated Mandela to envision a better South Africa that he helped to render great for the general common good of South Africans. This vision was informed by the realities of the historical antecedents of the Orange State and the potentialities and possibilities that the endowments of nature and human resources can transform for posterity.

b) Spiritual Depth

Spiritual depth is a necessary qualification of being human that depicts the Madiba's style of leadership. This is a theory of the meaning and value of human existence. Here used, it serves to underscore the metaphysics of politics. It is the copula conjoining the leader to the led. Used in association with mental magnitude, this leadership quality commands love and the pursuit of the good. In his *The people's Republic*, Awolowo states these principles as love of God and love of one's neighbor presumably alluding to the Biblical injunction in Matthew, 19:16-24 and 22: 36-40. In itself, spiritual depth involves the notion of God from whom love ultimately emanates. This religious love in conjunction with mental magnitude acts as a spark that insures the leader against greed and naked selfishness and corruption. This leadership quality promotes honesty, transparency and fairness in government business. Inside Mandela's heart, this necessary qualification of leadership ruled his person so passionately that the Madiba performed the "miracle" of the improbable democratic transition in South Africa's version of the parting of the Red Sea to set his people free. His long walk to freedom, his power of forgiveness and Pan-African solidarity all add to quintessential personality as a secular prophet, an African Moses leading his people to the promise land from the oppression of white pharaohs. It is no wonder then that the revered Kenyan Scholar, Ali Mazrui once noted, " if in the last half of the twentieth century truly there was one single statesman in the world who came closest to being *morally number one* among leaders of the human race, Nelson Mandela was probably such a person." In a review of Lodge's work, Rob Skinner wrote that Mandela used his moral capital as tactics to inspire an ideal of citizenship rather than to hold sway through popular adoration; and that his position as "democratic hero" –both within South Africa and worldwide–rested upon the extent to which his personal experiences had become part of the public history. (Skinner, 2013, p. 250)

c) Self-Knowledge

Socrates is quoted to have said that, he who knows not, and knows not that he knows not is a fool. On the other hand he who knows not, and knows that he knows not, is a wise man. Leadership qualities demands of the leader as much as the led a character of self-examination for the purposes of bridging leadership gaps and so arrogate to the leadership or the led omniscience. The argued point here is that, leadership is serious business and thus requires more than mere passivity. It requires critical thinking, rationally compelling positions, rationally convincing policies and rationally persuasive actions. This means that the leader must have conceptual and concrete thinking skills, he must be able to focus on issues of importance, curious and inquisitive, and must possess confidence in seeking knowledge of the unknown. Like Socrates, Mandela sees self-knowledge as a necessary quality of human existence and appropriates self-knowledge as a liberating tool for his people. The charismatic leader of the African National Congress (ANC) used this quality of leadership to build and maintain a devoted following in South Africa. In Mandela's heart therefore, leadership is a sacred trust. It is like the priesthood in civilized, humane religions which no one gets into it lightly or unadvisedly. It demands tranquility of mind and discipline of body and will far beyond the ordinary citizen. For the Madiba, knowledge is information in its

altruistic use. Wisdom on the other hand is the integration of knowledge and values to produce wise action. Wisdom for Mandela is thus the power that enables him to use knowledge in governance and management of human beings for the common good. This quality of life may have informed the thoughts of Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian former United Nations (UN) Secretary General and Nobel Peace Laureate to write that, “to this day, Madiba remains probably the single most admired, most respected international figure in the entire world”. (Annan, 2013, Internet source). In contrast to the other African leaders living and dead, the Madiba correctly understands that, he had a date with history, and so he had the power to choose his own part to alter the course of history, to forge a united South Africa and to teach the world that it is possible to return love for hate. This singular act stood him out as the quintessential distillation of the finest of human values; a tower of inspiration, with solomonic wisdom of a sage and creative statesmanship that remains a model in the annals of exemplary leadership.

(d) Incorruptibility and Selflessness.

Democracy signposts human development and the good life that promotes political good, economic independence and virtuous life far removed from the gargantuan paradise of charlatany that characterize the African political and social life. Consequently, it is immediately urgent to understand that leadership needs transparent dedication to the cause of society. This is why in civilized societies one cannot indicate that there are no distinctions between private and public lives of leaders. The “official secrets act” in many third world countries are outdated, counterproductive and antithetical to the interest of the people whose interest is being protected. Leaders must not only be dedicated to the cause of human development, they must transparently act in such manners that will release the fibers of human existence; truth, justice, concern for others and reset them to form the pillars of a New Nigeria in contemporary world. Professor C.S. Momoh. (1993, p. 157) calls this political behavior the Philosophy of Moralism; a doctrine that puts the other before or alongside the self. It holds that honesty, service and concern for the interest of the others ought to be the basis and measure of all actions and policies. Thus, a leader without knowledge and wisdom is like a man going down the dark alley blindfolded, he knows not where he comes from and where he goes to. Here argued, the question of enforcement of morality comes to mind. This is the point at which the principle of self-preservation comes to mind. I am here inclined to adopt the position of professor C.S Momoh on this issue that,

the present oath by our public officers during swearing ceremonies is a passive one. What we need is an active oath. An active oath is one followed by an invocation, spelling out what should befall the oath taker if he willfully and deliberately enriches himself, friends or relations by exploiting or abusing his office. (1993, p. 74)

The Madiba lived this quality of life in health and in sickness, in richness and in poverty, in power and out of power. Even though the Madiba and his people found themselves in the cauldron of extreme hate, he preached tolerance, moderation in ideas and actions and in the promotion of peace in the then apartheid enclave and by extension the larger community. Mandela’s leadership style teaches us that we need committed, patriotic, selfless and disciplined leaders who have self-control and have only one goal: that of benefiting the people they govern. He served his people without drawing personal benefits from the state. Rather, he gave his all in the service of his people. In a voiceover of the film, *Mandela: Son of Africa, Father of a Nation*, Mandela is reported to have

said the last word in the film, “Death is something inevitable. When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people in his country he can rest in peace. I believe I have made that effort and that is therefore why I will sleep in for the eternity”. (Johnson, 2013, p. 47) These poetic words of the iconic leader validate today’s reality for he has indeed fulfilled his duty to spread a message of justice for not only his people, but also for all citizens of the world. Like Jesus Christ and Socrates, he offered his most precious possession, his life, in the pursuit of the good of the majority. His sublime features, chivalry, genial frame, quixotic-temper; dignified deportment and inspiring noble exudation, was such which cuts an almost perfect symmetry with Brutus, in Mark Anthony’s description of him as “the greatest Roman of the all, of whom the element is so made, that nature might stand up and say this was the man” (Kola Johnson, 2013, p. 47). In the Mandela *personae*, is a distinguished caste of leader who truly represents a leadership figure that can stand tall as a leader worthy of emulation. This charismatic leadership statue made Barack Obama equate his (Mandela’s moral character with that of Mahatma Gandhi of India at death. In Obama’s words, “so long as I live, I will do whatever I can to learn from him” (Amalu, 2013, p. v)

Leadership Lessons for Africa

Leadership is a function of knowledge and wisdom. It flows from knowledge to wisdom grounded in epistemic, metaphysical and moral content. It has less to do with tyranny of the flesh; negative emotions of anger, hate, fear, envy, selfishness and untruth. These virtues which oiled the heart of Mandela to engage in the long walk to liberate his people have remained scarce commodities in African leadership culture. In all democracies, knowledge informs a visionary and listening leadership. Abubakar Atiku's public confession and desire speaks the mind of the Madiba thus:

When a leader listens, and he is committed, the rest will follow and the leadership does not have to say something several times before he is believed ... a country is developed by people, and the people need someone to organize them, to train them, and to motivate them... if the leader is honest and even-handed, in his dealings with people, the people believe him or her. But when the head is rotten, the rest of the body tends to rot as well... (Makinde, 2007, p. 365)

Mandela sought to promote consensus rather than conflict. For him reason and fairness informed the outcomes of disputes. F.W. de Klerk says this much when he vouched of Mandela, *He was a good listener and he was an analytical thinker*. Consolidation of the gains of multi-racial democracy in South Africa as opposed to dictatorship entails mental magnitude, knowledge of the people, system as well as comprehension and the rule of law. For Mandela, Leadership must move away from arbitrariness and impunity that are the hallmark of military regimes. Democracy must not merely be rhetorical; we must practice it and entrench it in all our institutions, especially those institutions that form the bedrock of democratic systems. Leaders must in all their actions demonstrate to their followers that they care for the overall health of the country. Good leadership, he says, must not only bring hope, it must fulfill the hope otherwise they become fraudsters. We may only add here two important leadership characteristics as a solution to leadership crisis in Africa, namely, self-knowledge (of what/where the leader is going), and ability and capacity to rationally persuade and convince others to go with him/her. Leadership as it were, is not just about the individual, but also about the totality of the persons entrusted with the task of steering the ship of the State with a clear vision and mission, and of taking the citizens to the expected destination.

Professor Humphrey Assisi Asobie is definitely right in asserting that, the predicament of contemporary Africa is best conceived not in terms of marginalization, but in terms of the lack of democracy; the people's rule, sovereignty. The task of solving the many problems of Africa, according to him, belongs to the people, organized as social forces and social movements. It does not belong to the state, which is dominated by the elite, and which also constitutes a critical part of the problem.

Leadership therefore needs a clean break away from the wasted and inglorious past and the wasting present generation of African leaders who, like the Arab chieftains on their silken Byzantine divans could not forget the desires and hoarded riches far beyond any possible physical need. In our distressed Nigeria today, the new rich fly from Lagos or Abuja to London by private Jets, to live and shop in Belgravia, a wealthy neighborhood of London, wear “bespoke suits” and play polo with princes and spending around 41.41bn Naira (£159m) on champagne totaling 752,879 bottles in 2011 alone. (Adebajo 2013) This scenario is akin to having access to basic services from a point of view of dead people. It portrays the loquacious government officials as engaging in dialogue with corpses in a mortuary; a government system that disregards the poor, while simultaneously, exposes a rotten system that rewards unscrupulous politicians. Like Mandela, our leaders should seek to help the poor and the vulnerable in the society. At the 1995 UN’s Fiftieth anniversary in New York in October, Mandela charged on the world body;

what challenges us, who define us as statespersons, is the clarion call to dare to think that what we are about is the people -the proverbial man and woman in the street. These, the poor, the hungry, the victims of petty tyrants, the objectives of policy, demand change. (Guardian, 2013, p. 16)

Africans must stand up and be counted as intellectual clinics for the de-entrapment of the mind, culture and values, to effect a cultural renaissance and revolution. This is the sure road to its economic or political development in Africa; a cultural resistance, or cultural renaissance. For any quantum change requires new ideas to generate new perceptions of reality. This is the thinking of Ake as quoted by Rugumamu (1999, p. 18) on the question of sustainable development in Africa. He argues that, instead of screaming and raving about economic and social marginalization, Africa should try and evolve an indigenous economic and development agenda that expresses the aspirations of its people and one that can therefore elicit their support. To this, African democracies are better informed in their engagement with their people with the knowledge that the world would certainly be a better place when political leaders are ready and willing to learn, listen, and virtuously lead by examples.

This much, the revered Aristotle says is the correct functional role of wisdom which acts as social practice (or praxis) that adds to human flourishing rather than only enhancing knowledge or thinking. African leaders must ask for and use wisdom to satisfy the politically important needs and desires of the people on whose behalf they hold power in trust. They must like Mandela, act with courage, principle, sacrifice, forgiveness, love and reconciliation and non-vengeance. A combination of these human virtues are needed in our leaders and the led to foster better understanding between religious sects, ethnic polarities, and political ideologues to allow them fight a common enemy which is *Kakistocracy*; a government by the unfit-to-rule; worst group of people in the society which manifests in the forms of moral decadence, exaggerated materialism,

greed, corruption and all other forms of evil. The lessons of Mandela's leadership style cannot be more than the lived life of the man himself. Hear him speak when he was sentenced to life in prison in 1964:

During my life time, I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society. It is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. (The Nation, Dec. 10, 2013, p. 6)

For Mandela, personal sacrifice, selflessness and service to humanity are the building blocks of a strong nation. He lived it and successfully resisted the pressure on him to sit tight and continue in office as the first black president of South Africa and handed over power to the young Thabo Mbeki thus setting an example for other African nations that, the older generation must give way to the younger and allow their nations to move forward. Mandela here was a selfless, humane and humanistic human being thus becoming an elder statesman who etched his name in gold. His quintessential essence no doubt finds meaning in the words of the English Romantic Poet, Percy Shelly who forcefully wrote: *The One remains; the many change and pass*. Mandela, in this context, can be said to be the *One* - a great and good man; humble, compassionate and a man for all colours, races, creeds, nationalities, religions and classes.

The will to sacrifice for the greater glory of a nation is what counts as lessons from the Madiba Mandela whose magnetic presence in our minds is up in tears with his bones. He refused to reduce leadership to political messianism in favour of his belief that, it is not how long power is exercised but how it is creatively and humanely used to uplift peoples and societies for the better. When he was awaiting to be sentenced, he was informed that the judge would ask him whether he had any reason to advance why the death sentence should not be passed, Mandela responded that he was "prepared to die for his beliefs and knew that his death will be an inspiration to his people in their struggle, and that, "there is no easy walk to freedom. We have to pass through the shadow of death again and again before we reach the mountaintops of our desires." (Nuttall 2013, p. 158)

Learning from Mandela leadership style further reminds us that, the task of remaking the African continent and its democracy for the benefit of the majority of its people is not in air-conditioned offices, not in the long stretched limousines, the private jets, or the pent houses on foreign beaches that house the property acquired with resources appropriated by a few Africans in privileged positions from the peoples' common wealth. It lies in the collective knowledge and wisdom of both the leaders and the led to put right the blunders we have inherited from the decadent political culture of the past generation of African leaders. It lies in creating a kind of leadership rationally designed to bring about a better continent, seeking always, to achieve what is of value in life. The art of governance thus descends from theory to practice, to articulating problems of living, and purpose that critically assesses situation, possible actions and policies from the standpoint of their capacity, if implemented, to promote wiser ways of living. The lesson drawn from this iconic leader is to create a tradition of patriotic leadership and raise a crop of African leaders bound by a common ethos as was the case of Mandela's South Africa. Unlike a typical African politician who thinks of the next election, Mandela, the statesman, thought of the next generation that will instantiate a regime of responsible leadership that will transform Africa and build up those who will take our exertions for a better society to higher levels.

Leadership recruitment process in Africa should therefore emphasise more the idea of servant leader than master leader. The idea of a leader as a messiah who is extraordinarily endowed to transform his society is fallacious to say the least. More so, those on whose shoulders leadership rests should jettison the concept of leadership indispensability and process the younger generation to whom they can gracefully and willingly hand over power to when they mature.

The Madiba Nelson Mandela model of leadership involves the identification of leadership questions, working together to define what the group wants, exploring possibilities for the future and actively creating new behaviours. It requires knowledge of the power of history and philosophy. Here, the leadership and followership engage each other in a dialogue and use what they have heard, seen and felt to co-create new ways of working together that help them achieve their shared goals while creating deeper social bonds and satisfaction. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mandela was crafted for Africa by God to function like a gadfly, to spread the good infection of knowledge, virtue and wisdom.

Today, most African countries have been emptied of men of thoughts, stature and deep knowledge thus living its helpless and hapless population in the world of mental pygmies; a continent which greedy men have seized the reins of power and so, suffocated it with a decadent leadership without the wise use of knowledge. Wisdom is a very practical body of knowledge that has an incredibly useful contribution to help the understanding and improvement of the quality of the leader's policy thrust. This in our estimation is what comes to us as Madibaism; a leadership philosophy grounded on deep knowledge and wisdom, anchored by men and women of stature, virtue and humane spirit as was lived by the Madiba Nelson Mandela who thought of man/woman without colour, race, and embraced coexistence in all forms including banishing inequality and unconditional and redemptive forgiveness. As a leadership philosophy, this approach helped Mandela in his long walk to freedom; he paid the supreme price so that others might be free. This leadership philosophy has helped South Africa. It also has the capacity of helping both leaders and followers to take 'better' and wiser decisions, lead 'better' lives and experience wiser leadership, particularly in areas that involve explicit ethics and value-related issues. This leadership model can set itself on the road to fulfilling the politically important desires of humanity. This was the leadership philosophy lived by the Madiba, Nelson Mandela, in contrast to Africa's other post-independence founding fathers such as Nigeria's Tafawa Balewa, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, Senegal's Leopold Senghor and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere. He bowed out gracefully at the end of his first presidential term in 1999 setting a standard for future African leaders aspiring to greatness

Mandela's elegant humanism, deep conviction for good governance, patriotic spirit and dogged belief in the power of redemptive forgiveness has opened spaces in the hearts of many men and women of good will and found functional existential accommodation in many others. As a father – figure personality, Mandela bore the light of redemption with an intensity that scared darkness, and a courage that conquered political blackmail and intimidation without submission. Thus, the passions that animate the person and character of Mandela, the ideas and individuals that inhabit the mental recesses of this enigmatic figure makes him a clean enough leader to dine with other informed leaders of the world. We may like Martin Luther King say of Mandela that, the moral arc of the universe is bending towards justice in his homage.

Madibaism and the power of Inclusive Leadership

...a negotiated solution was what South Africa needed, and that, that could not take place without the release of Mandela and all other political prisoners.”
(Schechter, 2013: 214)

Effective and functional leadership is a product of *collective leadership*; for to make a fist you need many fingers as to build a nation, you need a united reasoned action from many other people. For Mandela, leadership is being first among equals. His cardinal belief is that, the needs of his people are as important as his and that his spirit is restless until his people are free. This was the Mandela spirit that fueled the long walk to the freedom of his people. Some have argued that the fall of Apartheid regime in South Africa was instrumented by de Klerk. Others have even attributed the making of Mandela, the man of destiny to F. W. de Klerk. Both are untrue. de Klerk himself had vouched,

“I was not aware of what was happening behind the scenes until I became the leader of my party exactly one year before I made the speech of the second February, 1990” ... I have come to the conclusion that, the tentative negotiations which took place behind the scenes were worthwhile. That a negotiated solution is what South Africa needed, and that that could not take place without the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.”

Clearly, the making of Mandela cannot be located in the emergence of de Klerk either through leadership tutelage or even in recognition of Mandela’s leadership qualities. de Klerk’s emergence was more circumstantial; from the gradual collapse of South African’s economy and international isolation. The Republic of South Africa under his leadership was under intense pressure from overseas by threats of escalating bank withdrawers and sanctions. Danny Schechter reports the confessions of former banker and activist Terry Crawford-Brown who worked with Archbishop Desmond Tutu that, de Klerk and company were being squeezed and pushed into the corner to abandon apartheid in favour of a multi-racial democracy. In his very words,

“he (de Klerk) was trying to distance himself from P.W. Botha, but the first couple of weeks after he came to office were amongst the bloodiest we faced in 1989, which is what led to the march for peace, led by the Archbishop. I think that de Klerk thought that Nelson Mandela would be a six-month wonder. He would then remove the most offensive aspect of apartheid, install a puppet, but then resurrect the essentials of apartheid” (2013, p. 215)”

Far from the actions and/or inactions of the god-fathers of apartheid, Mandela had long prepared himself for the great moment in the history of his people. He had, as a young South African, read the writings of Trinidad’s George Padmore and Ghana’s Kwame Nkruma and through the inspiration of the Gandhian tactics of passive resistance played a leadership role in the defiance campaign of 1952 before initiating the “armed struggle” that led to his life sentence in 1964.

He had through his leadership tutelage come to the conclusion that inclusive leadership is what defines a democracy. Leadership is about reaching out to other like-minded individuals and groups.

For Mandela, there is value in building and working together in alliances across racial and religious lines; Indians, whites and Africans. He also realizes the power of Language which he effectively used to demobilize prison wardens, secure their friendship, ensure his survival and win over the people who feared him. It is on record that Mandela was so successful that, at one point, one of the prison chiefs asked him, “Mr. Mandela, may I have my prison back?” (Schechter, 2013, p161). For Mandela, the old Sufi tale involving four travellers - a Turk, a Persian, an Arab and a Greek- who had an argument as to how to spend the last coin left with them is instructive. According to the tale, the Turk asserted “I would purchase a *uzum* with the coin”, the Persian retorted, I want *angur*. The Arab wanted *inab*, while the Greek insisted on purchasing *stafil*. A multi linguist overheard them and intervened claiming that if he was given the coin he would purchase what will meet the preference of each of the fellow travellers. The multi-linguist went and bought a bunch of grapes. The Persian jump at the bunch saying it is my *angur*, it is my *uzum* says the Turk. It is my *inab* said the Arab, it is my *stafil* remarked the Greek. The four soon realised (thanks to the wisdom of the multi-linguist) that they all had the same preference expressed in different tongues. The four shared the grapes, and were pleased with one another ever after.

One lesson that the Mandela conundrum teaches us is flexibility and inclusiveness. The movement that started as nonviolent turned violent and then changed to community advocacy to educating comrades in prison. From diplomacy to militancy to armed struggle to reaching out to friends and foes, to United Nations and the South Africans and people of the whole world to support the struggle. A leader must know what strategy to use when, how and where (whether it is diplomacy or militancy). Mandela pressured his enemies by every means possible. Mandela, it must be said of him is a risk taker who learnt heroism generosity, principles of leadership and humility; visionary leadership qualities that were planted in his heart by the king of Thembuland. Leadership in this case was not without long periods of tutelage. He was identified and schooled in the traditions of his people and carefully tutored and nurtured to assume leadership. What this means is that, sustainability of governance entails a carefully developed leadership recruitment process to ensure that leadership is imbued with humility, knowledge and wisdom.very early in life, Mandela learned that Blacks do not have to always obey whites, he witnessed and learned unselfish devotion to good cause added to his work ethic, diligence, and he learned to accept all Blacks, not just those of his clan. As a teenager attending Wesleyan College, he learned about the responsibility of being a leader, and for the first time he experienced the responsibility and the burden of leadership, he learned moral reasoning, and to take a stand for justice and truth, he learned to be fair, he learned not to bend, but to stand fast, whatever the cost (Mandela, 1994). He also learned that he would not win every fight with authority. He learned diligence and self-discipline to build on one’s endowment. Finally, he learned that men who took great risks often suffer great consequences. In his heart therefore, Black African thought activated the seed that was long planted in him which eventually began to grow (Mandela, 1994). Mandela’s notions of leadership were profoundly influenced by observing the leadership qualities of the local sages. He wrote, “I watched and learned from the tribal meetings that were regularly held at the great place. As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the *Great Place (Mqhekezweni)* ... Mandela, (1994, p. 2) states further that, “we had remained firm, and we won. This was one of my battles with authority, and I felt a sense of power that comes from being right and justice on one’s side” (Mandela 1994, p. 40). For Mandela therefore, Leadership principles entail that,

- i) The foundation of self-government is that, all men are free to voice their opinions and are equal in their value as citizens.
- ii) When criticized, listen, do not defend oneself, and show no emotions
- iii) Unanimity might be an agreement to disagree, to wait for a more propitious time to propose a solution. For Mandela therefore, democracy means that all men are to be heard. And a decision is taken together as a people. A minority is not to be crushed by a majority. No conclusion is forced on people who disagree.
- iv) A leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind.
- v) Endeavour to listen to what each and every person in a discussion has to say before venturing one's opinion (Mandela, 2013, pp. 18-19)

These leadership qualities positioned Mandela in the context of a “grand democratic legacy” stretching back to Socrates. Moving from the universalist Greek philosopher ... as a secular prophet, an African Moses leading his people to the promised land from the oppression of white Pharaohs” (Adebajo, 2013 Internet source). This radical communitarian leadership model fired Mandela's thought to declare to his fellow African leaders at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in 1998 that, “Africa has a right and a duty to intervene to root out tyranny... [W]e must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when behind those sovereign boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny.” (Adebajo, 2013, Internet source)

Conclusion

A new generation of leadership that is required for the twenty-first century Africa is one that is democratic, people oriented, visionary in the sense of being conscious of what direction to follow and what goals to seek as well as capable of inspiring and mobilizing citizens to cooperatively instigate their development. Such is democratic consolidation *sui generis*. After all, Politics is concerned with herds rather than with individuals, and the passions which are important in politics are therefore, those which the various members of a given herd can feel alike.

While cooperation within the human community is never perfect, with some members who have fallen below or risen above acceptable standards, and while within the same political clime there are criminal, idiots, prophets and discoverers, a knowledgeable and wise leader will learn to tolerate the eccentricity of those who rise above the average, and to treat with a minimum of ferocity those who fall below it. These are the lessons we must learn from the Madiba, lessons of humility, tolerance, virtuous life, courage, quintessential discipline and self-denial which placed him in the context of a “grand democratic legacy stretching back to Socrates”.

Mandela, it could be said is one leader “who walked in faith and hope, who lived in midst of arrows and of death but on whom the world has no hold” (Obama, 2013, P. 52). The good, the bad and the ugly both celebrate this iconic political figure, a true aristocrat. This rightly puts him in the category of Pan African Poets like W.E.B. Du Bois, George Padmore, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Patrice Lumumba. This man who brought the entire wide world at his feet (with 91 current heads of government, 10 former heads of states, 86 heads of delegation, and 75 eminent persons in attendance at his funeral) is no doubt *a giant of history* and the *last great liberator of*

the 20th century. (Obama, 2013, P. 52). African leaders must not only take leadership lessons from one of history's most iconic political figure like Mandela, they must ponder on his luminous legacy and borrow a leaf from this colossus whose inspirational knowledge taught him to know when to lead, when to follow, and when to get out of the way of power.

Our crisis torn continent that is engulfed in crisis and all manner of criminalities is today in want of strategic thinking, and only the power redemptive forgiveness and reconciliation hold more promise than the decidedly less charitable route of returning fire for fire. Mandela in his life time belonged in the popular imagination to the category of exceptional leaders who genuinely aimed to move the political system beyond the rationality of his time. Apart from Mandela's main task of working to avoid a civil war between black and white, he focused on reconciliation and unity of a South Africa that was divided by racial hatred. He succeeded in this regard substantially though, he failed to address such problems as the extensive racial and economic inequality as well as the problem of land (re)distribution and the question of how to compensate local farmers. It is believed that the greatest weakness of Madiba Mandela was his reliance on a conservative economic agenda that accounts for much of the social, economic and political problems of a South Africa that has more than half the population still living below the national poverty line.

It must be said on the last line that, none of the post-independent "founding fathers" of Africa ever got close to setting a standard for future African leaders aspiring to greatness. The likes of Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe and J.S. Tarka, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, Senegal's Léopold Senghor, and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, may have been great leaders, but Mandela was greater than them all; he bowed out gracefully at the end of his first presidential term in 1999 setting a standard for future African leaders aspiring to greatness. It may after all not be an exaggeration for African leaders to converge in a vision of the Madiba Mandela as a benchmark against which political leadership will be measured in Africa.

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