On the Origin of Administrative and Management Sciences: A Further Study of Jethro

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Abstract

In 2006, we published an article titled "Jethro as the Patriarch of Administration and Management: An Analysis of his Works;" subsequently, we received numerous reactions some of which were laudatory and informative while others challenged our scholarship by demanding further inquiry. However, what had the most profound impact on us was its being utilized as a recommended text in a tertiary institution in the United States of America (US). Following this welcome development, we received an avalanche of feedbacks asking: "where is Midian?" "What society produced the learning and experience that informed such knowledgeable, concise and timeless counsel?" "Jethro was not Jewish and the interface with Moses predates Christianity; so, of what religion was he priest?" Thereafter, the publication of another article that also reviewed the works of Jethro from another perspective and the reactions it also generated gave us the desired impetus to search further. This paper is therefore a response to the intellectual challenge posed by the questions; it searches the pages of the Bible and extra-biblical literatures, scans the history of civilizations in antiquity, burrows into the background of Jethro and concludes that he is the most revered prophet of Druze religion and that the taproot of administrative and management sciences is imbedded in Babylon, which, at a point in history, was ruled by Medians and Persians.

Key Words: Satrap, Hisher, Hidden Prophet, Revealed Prophet, Book of Jasher

Introduction

The general perception in humanity of the origin of administrative and management sciences consigns it to the works of classical organizational theorists such as Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, Luther Urlick, Robert Owen, Max Weber etc who are known by various appellations that ascribe originality of thought to them. Following deep contemplations on the counsels of Reuel Jethro, a Cushite (also referred to as a Kenite shepherd) priest of Midian, to Moses, his son-in-law, we published an article, which called for Jethro to be declared the Patriarch of administrative and management sciences; the article was titled "Jethro as the Patriarch of Administration and Management: An Analysis of his Works." Interestingly, Washington College, Washington DC USA listed it as recommended text for Bus 302: Organizational Behavior under Professor Michael Harvey for Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters; learningace and Wikipedia also listed it under Fayolism. These listings generated an avalanche of feedbacks from numerous scholars and readers who asked: "Where is Midian?" "What society produced the learning and experience that resulted in such concise and instructive averments by Jethro?" "Jethro was not Jewish and the Jethro-Moses interface predates Christianity; so of what priesthood was he?"

The rather humbling yet challenging reactions as above inspired further study into the background of Jethro in search for answers regarding what civilization gave

birth to his intellect and the conversance with organizational matters to the point of presenting a postulate that arguably informed the classical theories of administration and management science. The search for the location of Midian took us to the Babylonian civilization. We shall, therefore, present a brief on the Babylonian civilization and the gifts it bequeathed to humanity; also, we shall investigate the priesthood of Jethro and offer a conclusion that, hopefully, would answer the questions that motivated this intellectual enterprise.

Babylonian Civilization and Its Gifts to Humanity

Babylonia is an ancient empire of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates Rivers; its capital, Babylon (BBL), was celebrated as the seat of wealth, luxury and, as a natural consequence, vice. Babylonia was a world power and the centre of human civilization from 2100 BC until 538 BC when it surrendered to the army of the Medes and Persians in the MENE, MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN episode. (Daniel, 5:25) Given, the proximity between Egypt and the abode of Jethro, we asked: is Midian a nomenclatural ancestor or part of the geographical area now known as the Middle East? Our informed guess took us to the Babylonian Civilization, which produced such legendary names as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar, both kings of Babylon; we noted that it was Babylonia that produced the legal mind that coded Hammurabi's Code. While the name Nebuchadnezzar and the drama of his legendary disfavour and resultant banishment to the jungle for seven years constitute a major reference point whenever and wherever Babylon is mentioned, in the modern era, the Babylonian Civilization is associated with numerous contributions to the growth of human civilization. We shall, therefore, discuss the contributions of Nimrod, Hammurabi and Darius who were kings of Babylon and the spread of the Hindu-Arabic Numerals by Arab scholars in the following pages to place the contributions of Babylon to human civilization in perspective.

Nimrod's Tower of Babel

Nimrod was a descendant (great-grand-son) of Noah, the ark builder, through Cush and Ham; Genesis (10:8-12) says he became "a mighty one in the earth…and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" where, Genesis (11:2&4) furthers, "they dwelt [and commenced building] a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven;" this is captured in the anecdote of Tower of Babel. The question is: is the Babelian anecdote in reference to a physical structure or a metaphor in classical biblical obscurantism? We note that the Tower project sufficiently threatened the supremacy of the Creator who, in a survivalist and defensive act, inflicted human brain with the scourge of linguistic pluralism thus ending the era of a monolingual human society. To say that this singular act introduced deep-rooted source of perennial conflict in humanity is to state the obvious and this has generated heated debate on the persona of man's Creator. (Osai, 2006) Certainly, the

city and tower project required operational efficiency and seasoned organizational methods to achieve and the Babelians would have achieved it and more but for the negative intervention of the Creator.

Organizational Structure of Darius

Daniel (5:30) informs that when King Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, was slain following the "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" episode (Daniel, 5:25), the Babylonian kingdom was divided between the Medes and Persians; that same day, Darius, son of Xerxes, a Mede whose territory comprised of 127 provinces that spread from India to Cush" and beyond, ascended the throne. (*Awake*, 1990:20) To run the Babylonian kingdom, Darius "set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty satraps and over these three presidents of whom Daniel was first that the satraps might give accounts unto them so that the king might not suffer loss." (Daniel, 6:1-2) We note that appointing 120 satraps was an act of decentralization/deconcentration and delegation of authority with the implicit decisional latitude; further, appointing three presidents and making the satraps accountable to them was an act of setting up a basic organizational structure for efficiency. Webster (2004:1118) defines satrap as "a governor of a province in ancient Persia;" it was over the 120 satraps that Darius placed three presidents in what, in effect, is a three-tier administrative structure in modern terms. Again, Daniel (6:2/3) offers that "over [the] three presidents…Daniel was first;… [he] was preferred above the presidents and princes;" that Daniel was first amongst the presidents is, perhaps, the origin of the concept of *primus inter par* of parliamentarianism.

Hammurabi: Legal Luminary Par Excellence

A bas-relief sculpture in a marble frieze found in the chambers of the US Supreme Court featured Hammurabi and such other figures as Moses, Draco, Confucius, Muhammad and Napoleon. In the 18th Century BC, Hammurabi, the king of Babylon, fashioned a compendium of 282 laws that set standards of conduct and justice for his empire in ancient Mesopotamia. Etched on an imposing seven-and-a-half-foot diorite pillar, the command covered everything from property rights and criminal behaviour to slavery and divorce, and promised brutal punishments for all who disobeyed. These famous laws, which predate the Mosaic penal Code, helped shape Babylonian life in Hammurabi's time. However, the influence of the Code echoed throughout the ancient world for over one millennium.

An analysis of Hammurabi's Code shows that irrespective of the class-based and gender-based discriminatory essence of the laws and the unique and shire brutality of its grisly penalties aimed at deterrence, it established (1) minimum wage for various categories of workers (2) the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and (3) legal

protocol that allows witnesses; these elements apply in contemporary adjudication system globally.

Minimum wage

Evans (2013) writes that Hammurabi's Code was surprisingly ahead of its time regarding laws addressing subjects such as divorce, property rights and the prohibition of incest. However, the most progressive of all was a clause directing an early type of minimum wage. The Code specified occupations and dictated and prescribed their pay: field labourers and herdsmen were guaranteed a wage of "eight gur of corn per year," and ox drivers and sailors received six gur while doctors were entitled to five shekels for healing a freeborn man but only three shekels for a freed slave and two for a slave.

The Legal Concept of "Innocent until Proven Guilty"

A fundamental precept of the system of adjudication that predominates across the world today is the assumption of innocence until proven otherwise by a court of competent jurisdiction. Though Hammurabi's Code acquired notoriety as a result of its catalogue of barbaric punishments, it also set several valuable legal precedents that have survived to this day. The Code is considered among the earliest legal documents to put forth a doctrine of "innocent until proven guilty." Matter-of-factly, the Code places the burden of proof on the accuser in extreme fashion when it says that "if any one bring an accusation of any crime before the elders, and does not prove [it], he shall, if it be a capital offense charged, be put to death."

The Legal Protocol of Providing Witness

The Code is also credited with the modernity of judicial procedures amongst which pertains to the legal protocol that allows two parties in a dispute to bring their case before a judge and provide evidence and witnesses to back up their claims.

Critique of Hammurabi's Code

Historians argue that the Hammurabi Code may not be the oldest written law on record; that it is predated by at least two other ancient codes of conduct from the Middle East. It is on record that Ur-Nammu, the Sumerian ruler of the city of Ur, codified the laws for his kingdom in the 21st Century B.C.; history books also hold that the Sumerian Code of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin was drawn up nearly two centuries before the reign of Hammurabi. The striking similarity between the two codes on one hand and that of Hammurabi in terms of the commands in their style and content on the other hand, suggest that they may have influenced one another or perhaps even derived from a similar source.

Another point is that Hammurabi's Code is one of the most famous examples of the ancient precept of "*lex talionis*" or law of retribution, a form of retaliatory justice

akin to the Mosaic penal posture of "an eye for an eye;" the Code prescribed unique and grisly death penalties for capital crimes while discriminatory laws were the norm of the society. Justice was dispensed from the perspective of the social class resulting from which there were separate punishment for people of different class and different gender. Therefore, the severity of criminal penalties often depended on the identity or social status of both the lawbreaker and the victim. For instance, while one law commanded if a man knocks out the teeth of a man of equal social status, his teeth shall be extracted, committing the same crime against a member of a lower class was punished with only a fine.

Other status-based penalties were even more significant: if a man killed a pregnant "maid-servant," he was punished with a monetary fine, but if he killed a "free-born" pregnant woman, his own daughter would be killed as retribution. The Code also listed different punishments for men and women with regard to marital infidelity: men were allowed to have extramarital affairs with maid-servants and slaves, but women of easy virtue were bound and tossed into the Euphrates.

Hindu-Arabic Numerals

Historians trace modern numerals in most languages to the Brahmi numerals, which were in use around the middle of the 3rd Century BC; however, the place-value system developed later. In his seminal text of 499, Aryabhata devised a positional number system without zero digit and used the word "kha" for the zero position. Evidence suggests that a dot had been used in earlier Indian manuscripts to denote an empty place in positional notation. The same documents sometimes also used a dot to denote an unknown where we might use x. Later, Indian mathematicians had names for zero in positional numbers yet had no symbol for it. In Bakhshali manuscript, a text of uncertain date, possibly a copy of a text composed as early as 2nd Century BC, there is evidence of the use of zero glyph. The oldest known text to use zero is the Jain text from India entitled the *Lokavighaga* (458AD). Ifrah (2000) writes that a sentence in the text that translates thus: "five voids, then two and seven, the sky, one and three and the form" was the expression of the number 13107200000; adding that this was the earliest place-value decimal number with the concept of zero. Note that the numbers are read backwards in the Arabic tradition of writing and reading.

The use of zero in positional systems was the final step to the system of numerals in contemporary usage. Kaplan (2002) offers that, irrespective of the Indian origin of the system, its full classification emerged by the 8th to 9th Centuries and is first described in Al-Khwarizmi's *On the Calculation with Hindu Numerals* (ca 825) and Al-Kindi's *On the Use of the Indian Numerals* (ca. 830) hence the contemporary usage of the nomenclature Hindu-Arabic numerals. In the last few centuries, the European variant of what is generally known as Arabic numbers spread to the West; and steadily grew to be the most commonly used numeral system in the world.

The Priesthood of Jethro

According to oral teaching of Druze religion, certain souls in antiquity came to earth (some say to Egypt in particular) and they agreed to reincarnate until all humanity attained Gnosis, or Divine Knowledge of God. According to their tradition, Jethro was one of these souls, and he initiated Moses into the Druze tradition, which reveres Jethro as one of their greatest Prophets. They further believe that in every generation a prophet appears who is recognized by the people but the, in fact, receives his inspiration from a hidden prophet who communicates with God. The Druze also believe that there had been a series of "true prophets" whose identity was masked behind that of the "revealed prophets" and through whom they imparted a partial revelation. In accordance with this belief, they claim that Jethro was the "true" concealed prophet behind Moses, the revealed prophet.

In our search, we stumbled on the Book of Jasher, which is mentioned in the Book of Joshua and 2nd Book of Samuel. Referring to the battle to capture Canaan, Joshua (10:13) asks thus: "is it not written in the Book of Jasher?" Again, it is proclaimed: "behold, it is written in the Book of Jasher [regarding] teach[ing] the children of Judah the use of the bow." (II Samuel, 1:18) Obviously an extra-biblical literature, the Book of Jasher gives a lucid account of the Jethro-Moses interface in the epic liberation of the children of Israel from Egypt with special reference to the Mosaic Laws and organizational structure and methods: "Moses departed from the wilderness of Zin to meet [Jethro] his father-in-law at the foot of Mount Hebron;" (Jasher, 14:3; Alcuinus, 1934:23) "it came to pass when the forty days were fulfilled, wherein Jethro communed with Moses that all the statutes and ordinances to be observed, were written in the book of remembrance." (Jasher, 17:13; Alcuinus, 1934:28) In its account of the same event, Exodus (31:18) states that "he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." The first striking thing here is the issue of the locale of the communing: was it Mount Hebron or Mount Sinai? Not dwelling so much on that, a contemplative mind would decipher the presence of three parties in the account in Exodus: (1) "he" who gave unto (2) Moses the statutes written with the finger of (3) God. The Jasher account is unequivocal as to the source of the statutes: it came from Jethro following the fulfillment of the period of communing; in stating "when the forty days were fulfilled," Jasher is specific as to the period of communing and with the word "fulfilled" the contemplative mind is left no choice than to conclude that the said period was ordained.

Further curiosity would lead to the question: who ordained the forty days and what is it with the figure forty in this process of liberation?: Moses was forty years old when he went to Midian where he spent forty years before returning to Egypt to confront Pharaoh; then he led the children of Israel for forty years before he died. "A

fool at forty," the aphorism goes "is a fool forever." Again, another aphorism says that "life begins at forty." We note that Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights preparatory for Calvary; it is natural, therefore, to assume that there must be something mystical about forty. So, that Moses spent forty days with Jethro fits into type; while this intellectual line of pursuit is outside the purview of this effort, the point remains that it is a phenomenon that requires investigating.

In another irrefutable tell-tale of Jethro's role, Jasher (17:15) informs that the Israelites, in a bout of Semitic ethnocentrism, protested being made to "walk after the laws and customs of Jethro, the Midianite." We note that Exodus did not specifically say "God gave unto Moses;" rather, it said "he gave unto Moses;" this non-specificity as to who gave Moses the statutes exposes it to scrutiny in the face of the account in the Book of Jasher. Again, Exodus says "written with the finger of God" and we believe that God does not have fingers and Moses was the receiver so could not have written it. Therefore, we ask: is "the finger of God" not a metaphor for the hand of the "hidden prophet"? If answered in the affirmative, it would mean that the statutes were inspired by God but written by Jethro and handed to Moses; this snuggly fits into the Druze tradition of hidden (inspired) prophet (Jethro) and the revealed prophet (Moses). Note that the dramatization of the writing on the stone tables at Mount Sinai in the epic movie, *Ten Commandments* starring the legendary Charlton Heston, is only a reflection of Hollywood's penchant for melodramatic rendition of stories for box office gains.

That the Bible made reference twice to the Book of Jasher means that it is authentic; in a highly instructive deposition and one that provides plausible answers to the questions and speculations above, Jasher (17:21-23; Alcuinus, 1934:28/29) offers thus:

> Moses, after he sent away the messengers, spake unto Joshua, Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders: Behold, thus it behoveth us to say unto the people: we have been with the Lord in the mount, we have ate and drank in his presence, and the words which he hath spoken unto us, they are those which we now deliver unto you. And the saying of Moses was pleasing unto Joshua and unto the seventy elders but unto Nadab and Abihu it was not pleasing. And Nadab and Abihu were cut off from the assembly and they hastened into the camp of the children of Israel.

The discontent of Nadab and Abihu with the proposed misrepresentation as above and their being "cut off from the assembly" culminated in rebellion and the eventual slaying of "Nadab and Abihu…with three thousand of the people." (Jasher 18:6; Alcuinus, 1934:30)

From the above, we can venture and answer thus: Jethro, the inspired (concealed) Prophet, handed the statutes to Moses, the revealed prophet, who presented it to the children of Israel as coming from the Lord; note that Moses used the word Lord not God. Was Jethro inspired by God? We say yes: he drew from knowledge and experiences of the Babylonian civilization of Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius (son of King Xerxes of Median) Hammurabi etc; knowhow that includes comparatively advanced technological processes and organizational methods that enabled the Babelians attempt to "build…a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven" (Genesis, 11:4) and evolve a penal code (Hammurabi's Code) that prescribed a system of adjudication with numerous elements that are relevant in contemporary justice delivery system. Like *Ted the Mechanic* (Deep Purple), we have carefully avoided making any value judgment on religious issues; we leave the reader to make up hisher (his/her) mind on the questions raised herein.

Conclusion

From our presentation, we learn that Jethro was a Cushite, which makes him a descendant of Noah through Ham; the organizational knowhow that was characteristic of Babylonian Empire of Nimrod, Darius etc. epoch reflected on Jethro's classical counsel to Moses. Osai et al (2009) offer that Babylon nurtured the advice of Jethro to Moses regarding an organizational hierarchy, system and mechanism that have proven to be the theoretical foundations of the works of Frederick Taylor, Abraham Maslow, Max Weber, Henri Fayol and other classical and neoclassical theorists of administration and management. Writing on the history of adjudication Ariaga and Ukposi (2015:25) hold that "Jethro's counsel is not limited to administration; it prescribed an appellate system of adjudication as obtains contemporarily in justice delivery globally."

On Babel, it took the scientifically and technologically advanced process and an optimally functional organizational system, evolved under the rule of Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius etc, to achieve the monumental feat of attempting to build a structure that sufficiently threatened the supremacy of the Creator in Babel. The three-tier organizational structure set up by Darius and making Daniel first among the three presidents are akin to (1) federal system of government in contemporary world and addresses accountability and efficiency and (2) the concept of *primus inter par* that finds expression in parliamentary system, respectively. The fact that numerous elements of the Hammurabi Code are in use in modern system of adjudication indicate the uncanny foresightedness of the protagonist. Obviously, Babylon is the origin of administrative and management sciences and the hierarchy of adjudication system.

Additionally, the full classification of Hindu-Arabic numerals is credited to the works of Babylonians, Al-Khwarizmi (ca 825) and Al-Kindi (ca. 830), hence the contemporary usage of the nomenclature. Also, Steve Jobs, the US brain behind

computer explosion and internet connectivity, was sired by a Syrian student who could not deal with the responsibility of raising a child hence the child was given for adoption. Modern day Syria is part of what was known as the Babylonian Empire; so, Steve Jobs was a Babylonian by blood. It can therefore be argued that beyond its exploits in antiquity, Babylon also made an invaluable contribution towards computer explosion and internet connectivity in the world.

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