Organisational renewal and nomadic leadership

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Many organisations today put a great deal of energy into permanently redesigning their primary processes and support systems. They certainly have plenty of reasons for this: differentiation and fragmentation in the market; employees' greater need for their own personal responsibility, development and autonomy; European and global competition; e-commerce and e-business. All these changes mean that many organisations are currently engaged in a process of transformation. A transition phase in which patterns related to a functional-hierarchical method of working must be abandoned in favour of an organisational environment characterised by distributed power relations. Activities are decreasingly managed from one single power centre, but are initiated at arbitrary times and in many different places. What kind of leadership is needed if these processes are still to be interrelated in a co-ordinated way and supported by a social dynamic which is sustained by the involvement, co-responsibility and inspiration of the employees?

This article describes such leadership as nomadic leadership. A management style that rests on a well-balanced personality with visionary power, versatility, the ability to create space for followers' initiatives, and creativity in designing new norms and values. The story of the Hebrews' Exodus from Egyptian slavery with Moses in the role of nomadic leader serves as an example.

The Issue

Under pressure from radical changes in the environment (technological developments, globalisation of markets, drastic shortening of the life cycle of products), many organisations have recently started to look for new forms of organisation. The general trend is to locate powers lower down in the organisations, and to design primary processes in a more market-oriented and streamlined manner. A change which has been described as moving away from organisations with simple tasks and complex administrative systems and moving towards organisations with complex tasks and simple administrative systems.

Many organisations are currently going through a transition phase. While the management are indeed calling much more for self-organising capacity of individuals and teams, at the same time they are still trying to stay firmly in

control. Organising in a different way involves not only introducing different methods of working and administration, but also developing different social relations (attitudes, communication patterns, dialogues, norms, values) between the parties who are united within an organisation, (Van Beinum, 1993). This also often entails radical intervention in industrial relations and vested interests associated with these.

For many organisations perhaps the most alarming consideration is that whatever new forms are devised, the decisive factor will be whether or not they will win the support of those concerned with their implementation. Now in fact this was also the case with the older forms, but these still mainly involved impersonal organisation, to use Weber's apposite formulation (Weber, 1947). The emphasis was on functions, and behaviour was a derivative of these. The function as the structuring principle is now making way for forms of organising that are based on social practices: personal integrity, teams and dialogue (Ramondt, 1999). These qualities constitute the embedment of a society that is increasingly modelling itself on the possibilities of information and communication technology.

The real difficulty in developing new forms will be to prevent a relapse into the maladies of the personal style of organising (old-boy network, charismatic leadership, incompetence, legal inequality); by contrast, structures must be designed which are both person-oriented and transparent.

Nor is the process of transformation without implications for the role of management. Amid all the efforts focused on developing new forms of organisation, attention to new forms of leadership seems to be somewhat neglected. A solution is sometimes sought in the restoration of a role that has been dismantled. This manifests in the call for visionary leadership (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989). However, it fails to emphasise sufficiently that the search for new forms of leadership will mainly have to focus on giving direction to the transformation process. That involves much more than describing and following the example of exceptional personalities, however gifted they may be in rousing their followers. In this article the leadership role within the present transformation process is termed *nomadic leadership*.

Nomadic leadership focuses on freeing energy that is attached to familiar patterns and directing the unleashed qualities towards an open future. It is not a role above or alongside followers, but a leadership in the midst of a multitude which is learning, by trial and error, to face an unknown future. A role that focuses on attachment and detachment, and expects the other members of that multitude to accept their own responsibility for realising an organised environment centred on creativity and improvisational ability. The story of the Exodus from Egypt and the role that Moses played in this is a classic example of nomadic leadership. Moses never felt that that he was above anyone else and found it difficult to accept that he might be the one who could unleash the fettered energy to set out on a hazardous quest for an unknown future. The story is illustrative of the vicissitudes of a process of transformation. It offers starting points for reflection on the course that must be set by a multitude who are leaving behind the certainties of function-based operation within clearly defined structures and have no certainty about the operating forms that will arise (Kroft, 1999).

The Exodus concerns the idea that if one wishes to reach a Promised Land - in today's terms, the Promised Land of creative, flexible, market-oriented organisations - a new arrangement is needed between leaders and followers. Both parties must be able to break free of their past, must be equal to the existential hardships of a journey through the wilderness of uncertainties, and must be capable of adopting new rules which protect them from reverting to self-interested behaviour. All those involved are emphatically seen as responsible for giving substance to the improvement of the organisational conditions.

Sedentary and Nomadic Societies

The story of the Exodus from Egypt is about a people of nomadic origin who have ended up in slavery and after many years succeed in liberating themselves. It is not a process that can be taken for granted. Life in exile has resulted in the erosion of the organisational ties that are needed if one is to experience one's own identity and give it substance. The awareness of that

identity has disappeared. People no longer see beyond the shadow of the slavery role.

The central role in the Exodus is played by Moses' leadership. He developed the visionary power to free the people from their attachment to an abhorrent but nonetheless familiar environment. At the same time he taught the people to become familiar with the hard laws of an uncertain but free society. The Exodus tells the story of the choice between two sharply contrasting societies or forms of organisation: the sedentary and the nomadic. The one is an organised environment with certainty but very little freedom. The other, the nomadic, is an environment with serious uncertainties but with space for freedom and inspiration.

Egypt offers a model for the sedentary society. It is one of the oldest and most highly developed cultures known to us. Egypt was (and is) a gift of the Nile, which constituted a tremendous burden on the people. In order to use the yearly floods to create fertility, an extensive system of locks and dams was constructed. This hydraulic system demanded enormous organisational and administrative efforts from every generation in Egypt. These efforts were based on a collective work duty for all, including the associated slavery and overseers with whips. The society was organised in a highly disciplined way, with precisely stated duties and rights for everyone, and little space for personal initiative.

The social organisation was derived from the authority and position of the pharaoh. He was in charge of caring for everyone, and exercised absolute control over land ownership and management. Everyone fulfilled the function assigned to him by the system: the apex of the ancient Egyptian state was at the top of the pyramid. Because of this collective duty, even the pharaoh had no personal freedom: within the scope of perpetuating the status quo, he was himself constantly engaged in ritualised actions. After all, if it is vitally important that customs and traditions do not change, then the royal traditions must not change either. The statues near the royal tombs portray the seated figure in such a way that it expresses an almost 'eternal sitting'. The

psychology of the Egyptians was oriented on stability, warding off unrest, maintaining what existed, denying the individual and individual initiative.

The wilderness represents the contrasting reality: the nomadic society. Beyond the reach of the Egyptian pharaohs, numerous families and tribes lived in a nomadic alliance. Communities that had not tied themselves to one fixed piece of land, who travelled around, going to battle and defending themselves. Depending on the circumstances, they were herders or warriors. The nomadic lifestyle is characterised by a number of principles.

Absence of strong institutions
Nomadic societies are not based on a central authority or a strong government. In principle, decisions are made on the basis of consultation among the elders, who use their knowledge of the environment in reaching decisions about the next steps to take. Leadership can change with circumstances: in times of war there is a different kind of leadership than in times of peace. There is no thinking in terms of dynasties; leadership arises not on the basis of inheritance but on the basis of personal leadership.

Prevention of uncontrolled growth
If a nomadic people becomes too large and has too much livestock, this ultimately results in a lack of resources for everyone. Over-grazing is a threat to life. The origin of the great migrations lay in the fact that a nomadic tribe in Central Asia had grown too sharply during a period of prosperity. A tribe of this kind felt the need for imperialism when a rather less prosperous period meant that it was no longer possible to maintain the herds. Aggression, then, as a consequence of prosperity. Abundance creates dictators: in regions of guaranteed abundance, people and animals mark out their territories and defend themselves with aggressive behaviour. In barren regions, where nature is not abundant but there is sufficient space to live, people make do with what is available. The struggle for life occurs mainly in rich areas.

Co-existence with other tribes

In general, nomadic peoples do not claim ownership of land, but rather the right to proceed on their way: they claim ownership of the migration route and the temporary use of the land over which they travel. Abraham, a forefather from the time before the Egyptian period also granted Lot, a fellow Bedouin sheikh, opportunities for life: "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Avoidance of becoming dependent

Conducting trade, but not becoming dependent on a market in order to sustain life. Trading centres and their markets can be avoided if one so chooses. Avoiding dependence in turn prevents aggression and frustration. The contrast between nomads and sedentary peoples is very old and occupies a prominent position at the beginning of Biblical history. Cain (the name comes from 'acquire') as the tiller of the soil, and Abel ('he who lives and is transient') as the shepherd. Cain was master of all land, Abel of all living creatures. Before long, however, Cain accused his brother of unlawfully entering his land, and the murder was committed.

A constantly recurring theme is the operation of the structuring, walled-in city culture: once someone has power and land, they feel that it is unlawful if others graze their livestock on it. Translated into modern organisations: conflicts between departments, the 'not invented here' syndrome. Power struggles and segregation are the result. The dynastic here is opposite to the charismatic, the structuring opposite to the loose alliance. The separation of functions, as opposed to the integrated connectedness and responsibility of all for all (Amin Maalhof, 1986).

The Mission of Moses

The Hebrew people in exile lived in a situation of *shared poverty* (Geerts, 1963). Because of the increase in population and the limited quantity of land allocated to them, a situation of great scarcity had arisen. They managed to survive - albeit at a very low standard - by dividing up what was available within the alliance of small groups. The alliance between the tribes had been lost. People lived in small communities that felt little connection with one another. Over the years, the identity and self-awareness of the Hebrews had been lost. Their self-image had become that of the Egyptians: slaves to circumstances. The outlook was bleak. Only a revolution might offer a solution. There was no space for small steps forwards. Staying still entailed gradual and certain decline of their own - already seriously threatened - identity.

Moses was faced with the task of teaching these dependent, servile and frightened Hebrews a form of awareness and of living and working together which offered a chance of survival in the wilderness and of reaching the Promised Land. The necessary conditions for survival in a wilderness are: orientation ability, observing and heeding minor changes in the environment, being explorative and alert, going out on reconnaissance, willingness to test out ideas about the environment against and with each other, addressing and training everyone in an integral manner, ability to switch rapidly from shepherd to hunter or soldier and back again, constantly flexible leadership. In the Exodus and the subsequent journey through the wilderness, Moses engaged in this developmental process. A skill which Levi-Strauss summarises under the concept of *bricolage* (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

The 40 years in the wilderness metaphorically stands for the life span of the generation that had experienced life in captivity and yearned to return to it whenever obstacles cropped up on the path to freedom. The wilderness which the Hebrew people had to traverse has in modern times become the harsh market, where mistakes are immediately punished. If we shut out signs

from the environment, cling on to what used to work in a different situation but probably no longer does, if we cease to be alert and to keep one another awake, if we do not demand of everyone their best efforts, then we will die of hunger or thirst, be torn apart by wild animals. In the 'wilderness' one can go bankrupt within a year because of a moment's inattention.

In concrete terms, Moses was faced with several tasks:
1. Instigating and if necessary forcing a revolution in the Egyptian power relations.
2. Reviving nomadic, environment-oriented values, which might enable survival in the wilderness.
3. Organising a way of life which might permit peaceful colonisation of the Promised Land, while retaining the quality of the nomadic lifestyle.

The Approach

The Exodus and ensuing journey through the wilderness contains all the elements of what today would be called a process of transformation: detachment of a group of people from their familiar surroundings, nostalgia for the former situation in the event of setbacks, development of new means of livelihood, embedment of behaviour in new values and norms, invention of a new management structure, retention of enthusiasm, the place of and space for criticism, ability to relinquish acquired positions.

For all of these issues, Moses developed his own approach. An approach which did not emanate from a pre-established strategic course. It was much more a case of navigation and improvisation (Weick, 1995). It was clear that survival demanded enforcement of a break from the existing situation. The route to be followed thereafter was an open space. The Exodus is a classic example of keeping open the possibilities of this open space, and making sure that people do not revert to the familiar - but identity-destroying - patterns of an enslaved and hierarchical way of life.

A reconstruction of what Moses did in order to free his people is only partially possible because there is no precise historiography. Nevertheless, it is

possible to distil from the story some major events which give an indication of the way in which Moses acted. Metaphor and reality are intertwined, as is inevitable with a story that has been orally passed on countless times, that extends far back in history, and was written down only many centuries after the event (Buber, 1965; Potok, 1978). The message prevails over history.

Handling his own uncertainty about the leadership role
Symptomatic of the situation was Moses' action against a slave overseer who mistreated one of the Hebrews. In a sudden upsurge of rage he killed him, but for this he was not rewarded with thanks from his own people. It threatened the stability to which they had meanwhile attached their fate. With this action, Moses did not automatically place himself at the head of a revolutionary process. He even had to flee because of the hostile attitude of his own countrymen.

After his return to the people in exile, Moses often doubted his capacity to influence them. What exactly was the responsibility that he should take upon himself, at what expense, and at what risk for himself?

Moses was regularly confronted with the people's fears, which in fact were very similar to his own. Nonetheless, he retained confidence in his principles and vision, even though that took its toll on the people and on himself. He could still find the strength, time after time, to keep going and to remain inspired by the value of his vision of freedom. He was more a doubter than someone who believed dogmatically in the mission that he wished to fulfil. Sometimes he withdrew for days into the solitude of his tent, as if he could say nothing about the course to be followed. This *seeking* leadership of Moses is congruent with the nature of his message: not being the invulnerable leader, but holding discussions with people in the 'meeting tent' about the options available, attaching challenges and prospects to these for individuals and groups, facing and discussing the risks and fears that people see in them, and sharing the responsibilities that people find too onerous. Moses was not someone who put himself in the spotlight, but rather someone who wished to impart to the people in his 'enterprise' a sense of meaningfulness and destiny.

Instigating the Exodus

Moses went back to his people with the message of an independent, proud, nomadic lifestyle and total connectedness with one another and with nature. As mentioned earlier, the Hebrews had no immediate interest in breaking out of the stable situation in which they were living in Egypt. They were living as slaves, it cannot be denied, but at least they were sure of their food and shelter.

At first, Moses was not yet convinced or motivated to realise his ideal by means of an Exodus. He tried to initiate liberation within Egypt by explaining his vision and message in conversations with the people. The Egyptians - apprehensive of the rising unrest - made working conditions even more severe so that the Hebrews turned away from Moses' message and continued with the shared poverty strategy. Moses then realised that it would be necessary to bring about a radical break from the system, a revolution rather than evolution within the system.

Moses was well acquainted with Egyptian wisdom and religion because, after all, he had grown up in the court. He was remembered from his youth as a troublemaker, an agitator: had he not, for instance, once killed an overseer? Moses made use of this image every time something went wrong in Egypt: plagues of locusts, a long-lasting eclipse of the sun, a river that flowed red; on every occasion he was there to point out to the pharaoh the cause of these plagues: "Let my people go, and your nation will continue to exist; if you do not let us go, your nation will be destroyed".

Another factor was that Moses had a very bad stutter. The Egyptians saw this as a divinely endowed condition, a cause for fear and concern among the courtiers. When finally, at the end of three days of violent thunderstorms, a children's epidemic killed the first-born son of the still young pharaoh, he said to Moses: "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people!"

Meanwhile, Moses had prepared the tribes for their departure from Egypt, by drawing them together with a shared ritual: the eating of the paschal lamb and

unleavened bread (while dressed in travelling attire). The rituals proclaim the message: great haste, readiness to depart, staff in hand. With this, Moses laid the first foundations for cohesion within and between the tribes.

The behaviour of the Hebrews was ambivalent: they were not yet convinced of the better future and the value of what Moses was offering them. They followed him not primarily from conviction, but mainly from fear of what the Egyptians might do to them later. They could no longer stay there, but leaving was equally unattractive.

Stating the strategic intention

In Egypt, the Hebrews were labourers, and now they had to suddenly learn to behave as nomads. They had to survive without the necessary skills, resources and knowledge of the environment. They had to grow and develop in these surroundings, had to find the self-confidence that they could sustain themselves in a totally different and uncertain environment. The people, who had gone with Moses out of fear, soon expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of water and food. They felt that the absence of success in the wilderness could mainly be attributed to the leader. The difficulties sought a way out in the position of the leader.

This upward shifting of responsibility, this turning away from the organisation, this withdrawing and remaining frustrated: all these happened repeatedly throughout the journey. Yet each time Moses managed to inspire the people to travel onwards, mainly by remaining clear about the strategic intention: the Promised Land. A land that is good and large, and has room for everyone. This image represents not so much a specific ultimate aim of development; the Promised Land rather symbolises a quality of life that is present today, if one so wishes.

Moses' view of the leadership role: the non-coercive, involved outsider. Only once in the Exodus story is Moses said to have acted coercively as a leader, broken through the resistance, been authoritarian. This occurred on the banks of the Red Sea, after the Egyptian army had been destroyed. This

event was celebrated with a great feast, which continued for three days and nights. It is written that on the third night Moses made them break camp. He forced the people into the wilderness, to head off into the unknown, to break all ties with the past.

In all other cases the breaking of camp in the wilderness is described as a decision taken collectively: "they moved onward". The strategy in the hazardous journey through the wilderness was based on a process of collective deliberation and decision-making. Moses did not give the people the opportunity to become dependent on him by solving their problems for them. He always maintained a consistent empowerment of the people. He constantly reminded them of the collective challenge. He was not a leader in the sense of a powerful, coercive fat cat. He was in constant discussion with his people about the consequences of the situation for the Hebrew nation as a whole and for every individual member within that: "Accept your responsibility and contribute to our progress".

This is similar to the attitude described by Heider in his discussion of the Tao of leadership: "...there are moments when it seems necessary to act resolutely, strongly, or even forcibly. The wise leader does this only as a last resort..Forcing people to do what you think is good does not result in greater clarity and awareness. Although outwardly there may be obedience, inwardly there arises growing rebellion, confusion or even a need for revenge. The victory is therefore in reality a defeat..." (Heider, 1988).

At the start of his mission, Moses - being simultaneously both Egyptian and Hebrew - was not automatically a member of his own tribe. He had no opportunity to compel his position and acceptance on the 'formal' grounds of being a Hebrew. He had to gain acceptance through the quality of his vision and leadership, not on the basis of origin or history. Conversely, the people also had to give up a self-evident and automatic mode of leadership, and time after time confirm for themselves that Moses vision was (still) worth following. Each time having to choose their own mission, and the people and circumstances connected with this. Not being able to say: he is the

owner/director, so we don't have to give the matter any further thought. Moses was in principle a 'passer-by', not an owner of the people.

Introduction of social values

At one point Moses elaborated ten commandments, which were to serve as a *model for a well-ordered social process* in the Hebrew society. The commandments are a description of the quality of living and working together. In fact, they are more prohibitions than commandments: thou shalt not do harm, thou shalt not steal. Not commandments in the prescriptive sense: thou shalt be good. They are rules of the road, but otherwise leave plenty of space to develop one's own behaviour within that framework. The ten commandments define only what we agree not to do (also see R. Simons' s principle of boundary control), not what we require of behaviour. They are more requests than disciplinary rules and regulations.

The ten commandments are written in the *thou* form. They are addressed directly to every individual member. Unlike with the formulation of an abstract policy or a general regulation, the directive effect of the ten commandments originates in each separate member of the organisation. Examine your own behaviour and draw your conclusions.

A few of these commandments were:
"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image". This means that everything must remain fluid and in motion. Nothing can be fully known, nothing can be fixed for eternity. Beware of your own illusions and strategic short-sightedness. The values of Moses were values which made it easier to be and remain 'on the road'.
"Thou shalt not steal from thy neighbour": you must not deny him, lie to him, or treat him like he doesn't exist. Etymologically the Hebrew word for 'neighbour' means 'companion' (someone who is present with you in the room or living space). Someone who is your equal, with whom you share space and the future. This asks for constant respect for one another and one another's integrity and value. Take one another seriously, do not attack one another, sit

together in a shared room and speak with one another. A value that will support the dialogue between fellow members of an organisation. Not a discussion between manager and employee, but a discussion between equals, all of whom have knowledge of the present reality.

Maintaining organic alliances

At the start of the Exodus, the people were actually nothing more than a disordered crowd of disintegrated tribes, clans and families. Moses united them in twelve tribes, evidently on the basis of a good insight into the mutual relations among these separate groups.

At a point in the journey Moses and his people reached the home of his father-in-law Jethro. During the course of their meeting, Jethro observed that Moses was constantly surrounded by people asking for a judgement on everyday issues and disputes. Seeing this administrative pressure on Moses, Jethro advised him to replace the bottom-up cell structure of the people with a management system in which suitable assistants would manage tens or hundreds of people. However, this system of tens had nothing to do with the real, more organic connections among the various sections of the Hebrew people. It was an inappropriate classification system which did not last to the end of the journey through the wilderness. It did not fit in well enough with the practical experience of the people, because its principles were based on requirements of efficiency; these may be imposed on a very large caravan or on an army during times of war, but not on a nomadic group that has to keep going under daily changing circumstances. For a puzzling analysis of fractal organisations, see van Till (1998)

After this unsuccessful experiment with hierarchical management, Moses again opted for leadership based on vision, quality and acceptance. Leadership based on the need for a fast-action command structure or direct co-ordination and supervision did not fit in with the improvisational life in the wilderness. He chose a system with a prominent position for *elders*. A style of management that is not blinded by status, money or need for social

recognition. Elders are more detached from the external aspects of the social system, have a more reflective approach and in that sense are more creative.

The sabbatical year

Moses looked for ways in which nomadic values could still be used within a sedentary lifestyle. The nomadic lifestyle entailed no attachment to land or property. When a people becomes established in one place, the danger arises of decay from within due to the emergence of inequalities associated with land ownership. Those who possess a lot become miserly, while others enter into 'slavery' because they become poor or fall into debt; there is the threat of a sedentary environment, a new Egypt.

If the organisation is for and of all, the one cannot constantly oppress the other, or keep him in bondage. People in the organisation should repeatedly have their equality re-asserted with respect to their freedom to choose the relations that they desire. Power and formal position can never be an argument for leaving relations as they are; they must be reconfirmed time after time by all concerned, by means of new choices for certain co-operative relations and structures, the allocation of influence and leadership, the distribution of resources and possibilities.

To this end, Moses developed the sabbatical year. This is a year in which all property and legal relationships are dissolved, so that a new start can be made with structuring society: restoration of the original equality, common ownership of land, placing of all the organisation's human, industrial and financial resources at the service of all by all. On this basis the organisation is once again built up and confirmed, everyone feels new responsibility and new energy. Some nomadic tribes still continue this practice today, through new allocation of pasture areas to families or clans every year.

A notable point is that under Israeli law a slave who refused to be set free had a hole pierced in his earlobe: a humiliation inflicted for refusing freedom. In a very radical way, it is made clear that everyone is free as a person, that

everyone decides for himself about his own freedom and autonomy, must take the responsibility for it, and must be called to account for this by society.

Nomadic Leadership

At the beginning of this article we said that many organisations are engaged in a process of transformation. A development in which they leave behind a familiar mode of organisation in functional-hierarchical alliances and set a course for realising a flexible, streamlined and customer-oriented approach. A future of malleable organisations (also see Boulding, 1956, Kuypers, 1986). A future that was foreseen several decades ago in the literature and that in the meantime has acquired messianic characteristics (Emery and Trist, 1965, Harvey et al.)). The future is sketched as a Promised Land in which totally flexible and unproblematic employees work in quiet co-operation with understanding, disinterested and dedicated managers in order to serve the every whim of capricious customers (Eijnatten 1993; Hammer and Champy, 1993; Stacey, 1996). Since the people in this Promised Land appear to have or cause no functional problems, they are simply not taken into consideration. However, anyone who wishes to reach a Promised Land should prepare themselves for a hazardous journey through an unknown landscape. An environment in which survival and the attainment of the stated ideal depend on the improvisational ability and the altruism of the travellers. Qualities which must be reclaimed from such inevitable human qualities as selfishness, lack of imagination and a lazy nostalgia for the country of origin whenever setbacks occur. Just a selection from a long list of (inconvenient) human character traits which are all too easily overlooked in many management studies about redesign of organisations. The journey to the Promised Land can therefore not be made without leaders who keep the ideal alive and nourish the enthusiasm of the followers with their special qualities.

The Exodus from Egypt is an allegorical story about a people who wish to reach a Promised Land. A journey in which a central role falls to Moses as a nomadic leader. A leadership which leaves the initiative with individual group members, so that they can continue to feel responsible for time after time seeking the right answers to unexpected occurrences. This ambition rests on

visionary power and versatility, on the ability to create space for followers' initiatives, on creativity in designing new norms and values, and on a well-balanced personality.

As a nomadic leader, Moses differs from the leader of a mobilisation campaign in that he does not try to hold on to his followers by means of a short-lived concentration of energy on the realisation of an (over-)ambitious objective (Etzioni, 1968, pp 392-406). Moses was not a campaign strategist. He used his special qualities in the service of the people, whom he steadily prepared for the long journey required if they were to be freed from a life where their own identity was not guaranteed. His nomadic leadership stands in the context of a liberation strategy.

Moses is a leader who found a balance between distance and involvement. He came from the outside, but was also from the inside: born a Hebrew, but as a child brought up away from the people. A man who from childhood had learned to identify with his people, but who also managed to free himself from them. He was harshly confronted with the consequences of his youthful impetuosity, and used this to develop insight into himself. He was harshly confronted with the need to use his strength in an appropriate way, but spent a long time looking for and also hesitating about this. He had no immediate objective of personal wealth or power, but worked for the continuity of his people.

He worked not only on solving everyday problems but mainly on redesigning the genetic code of the organisation. His aim was to achieve independence of his people, especially independence from him as the leader figure. He was vulnerable, open about himself and his doubts, did not coerce, passed back the initiative, worked on the quality of the dialogue between people, gave courage. Although he did have experience with living in the wilderness, he also allowed people to come up with solutions themselves.

He introduced a balance between thinking and doing, was a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). He was the target of reproach and aggression,

and wondered whether this reproach was justified or whether it was a case of development pains. He created space. He challenged the people to fill this space with personal choices and responsibility. He freed the people from their reactivity, created by fear, despondency, uncertainty and lack of self-confidence. He indicated how the space could be filled, but usually in an invitational manner. He was present as a counsellor, not as a manager, brought people to the crossroads of making their own choices about their own values and self-image. This was a long process, in which Moses persevered despite his doubts and internal struggles.

It was a leadership of primes inter pares. A leadership which did not impose itself on the people in its environment, but taught them to take their own course in relationship with the environment in which they were placed. This leadership did not rely on its power of command, but on the force of arguments. This ultimately led to a new generation of open, courageous people who acquired an equal place among other peoples. A place that was made solid by a clear identity, a conviction about how and who one wishes to be amid the fluctuations of the environment. An identity that comes across to others as reliable and credible, so that co-operation and co-existence can grow. An identity that also leads to proven conclusions and answers to the question of what social contribution the organisation wishes to make, and how it would like to realise this. That is ultimately the key to continuity in a turbulent environment.

The most important contribution of Moses' leadership is that he gave his people a value perspective and the awareness that it is worthwhile to constantly re-shape that perspective in a different and perhaps better way. Thus, he showed that there are possibilities of elevating life to a higher level of versatility and freedom. This perspective also appears to be embodied in the organisation forms that are still only vaguely emerging, and are shown as a blank space on the aforementioned map of organisations. The roads which traverse that landscape were explored in the Exodus out of Egypt. In the wilderness the course was set, the value perspective was continually

reformulated. Because without that given value perspective, the journey will not succeed.

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