

Salomon's Sophocracy as a Source of Inspiration for Changing Madagascar's History

Randrialiva Soanirina Sehen¹, Robijaona Rahelivololoniaina Baholy²

¹University Ravelojaona, Doctoral School of Inter-Epistemic Studies, Antananarivo, Madagascar

²Engineering and Industrial Process, Agricultural and Food Systems, Polytechnic High School of Antananarivo, Madagascar

Email: robijob111@gmail.com

Abstract:

In the unfolding narrative of Madagascar's post-independence journey, the troubling paradox of economic regression persists amidst the nation's bountiful natural wealth, coveted by others. Despite the implementation of diverse policies by successive leaders, the pervasive specter of poverty endures. This theological contemplation propels a fervent call for a policy metamorphosis – a conscientious exploration of sophocracy, rooted in the wisdom epitomized by King Solomon, as a transformative catalyst. A historical-critical analysis of Solomon's governance, woven from biblical texts and scholarly discourse, reveals sophocracy's potential to restore equilibrium, necessitate substantive reform, and harmoniously integrate with other forms of power. Yet, the theologian's discerning gaze acknowledges the need for an adapted Malagasy sophocracy, cognizant of human vulnerabilities. The prospect emerges that a locally nuanced sophocracy, grounded in Malagasy wisdom and identity, could redefine the nation's history. However, this journey is tempered by a vigilant consideration of internal and external risks, echoing the delicate interplay between divine guidance and human agency.

Keywords:

Madagascar; sophocracy; regression; power; politics; peace; reform

I. Introduction

A country's development depends primarily on the system of government and the policies adopted by the president or head of state. Unfortunately, despite the various policies applied to Madagascar since its independence, the economic situation has never ceased to regress, plunging the country into poverty, distress and despair. So why not find a new way of governing? Why not choose a policy that could change our history? How can we move from crisis to glory? This article will attempt to answer these questions.

Given that our history bears striking similarities to the history of the people of Israel, we thought it might be possible to find solutions based on the policy of King Solomon. We have opted for the method of historical-critical analysis, starting with studies of the biblical texts and historical books that tell the story of this king of Israel. We have yet to follow the steps of diachronic exegesis properly, as this is not really necessary in this study. Instead, we have focused on the theme, context and unfolding of the story, in order to draw out the positive and negative sides of his way of ruling over Israel. Apart from the historical-critical analysis, a comparative study of Israel's history with that of Madagascar is in force.

It's highly likely that some scholars (of whom we'll mention a few) have already studied the story of King Solomon, but from a purely scientific angle. So we're going to take a closer look at the spiritual side of the story, especially the political ethics, providing a better understanding of the attitude and behavior that a king worthy of the name should have.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 King Solomon and His Rule over Israel

a. General Context

According to NOTH, Palestine was never a rich country (LODS, 1969). And yet, it was strategically located where exchanges between the three continents known in Old Testament times (Europe, Asia and Africa) should take place. LODS said it was an indispensable ring in the chain that united the great civilized states of antiquity. Owning this land is therefore essential for those who want to do business and expand their empire. The great powers of his time all tried to colonize it, and it became a land of bloody battles. The people had long lived in fear, anxiety and political instability, due to the law of the strongest and wars for power. But everything changed in King Solomon's time: from the barbaric era to the age of peace, from the tabernacle to the temple, from chaos to the cosmos. He accomplished feats never before seen in Israel. He was able to stabilize his country's economic situation, placing it among the great powers of his time.

Many scholars find Solomon's story truly impressive. One wonders whether it's the work of a prophet who would like to idealize it, or a history-list written under his guidance and commandments because it's too good to be true. Recent researchers even think that the splendor, glory and all the components of a golden age are very likely more mythical than real. What's more, apart from the Bible, there are almost no similar sources recounting Solomon's exploits. Yet we mustn't overlook the fact that he is universally acknowledged.

We also found that there are contradictory traits to his character. This is explained by the fact that there are several authors and writers: some pro-monarchic and others anti-monarchic, who give their own descriptions. But a new reading of his story, weighing up the pros and cons, will reveal this great Sophocrat of the Bible: his politics, his thinking and his way of acting, in order to explain the sudden change during his reign.

b. Solomon's Policies

As the last king of the United Kingdom of Israel (made up of the twelve tribes), Solomon applied three main forms of power: theocracy, monarchy and, above all, sophocracy.

1. The Theocracy

JACOB said that Yahweh's kingship is the central theme of the Old Testament (JACOB, 1968). Von RAD insists that no one should rule over Israel because to do so would be to encroach on Yahweh's sovereign rights (JACOB, 1968). The basis of successful politics in Israel is therefore theocracy, or "God's power". VIGOUROUX asserts that what we are talking about here is not absolute theocracy, but theocracy exercised by a dual power (VIGOUROUX, 1928; JACOB, 1968). This implies that whoever wants to reign must accept God's commandments, agree to be his lieutenant as CHARPENTIER says, and be responsible for the nation's salvation before God (CHARPENTIER, 1997).

When Solomon took power, he had a good relationship with God. He communicated with Him and agreed to be the channel through which divine realities are accessible to man.

2. The Monarchy

Monarchy is a regime in which a single person, the king, exercises all powers. No institution or constitution controls it.

During his reign, all powers were in Solomon's hands: executive, legislative, judicial, religious, socio-cultural, ... so he didn't have to seek advice or approval from others before deciding what he thought was right or wrong for his country. He was free to realize his visions through the people, who owed him total obedience. In this way, he was able to perform exploits without anyone getting in his way. But above all, Solomon was a king who did not let himself be influenced by others, and who mastered his opponents perfectly (I King 2, 12-44; I King 11, 26-40).

Samuel, on the other hand, described monarchy as a form of voluntary slavery for Israel (I Sam 8), since the king had the right to conduct searches, charge taxes and require people to work for him and the country. Now, this is logical because to rule, a king needs possessions, a court, subjects and he deserves to be maintained. He has to be careful, because there are some recommendations that Moses mentioned in Deut 17:14-20.

3. Sophocracy

The word "sophocracy" comes from two Greek words: *sophos* (wise)/ *sophia* (wisdom) and *kratos* (power). It literally means: "the power of the wise", "the power of wisdom" or, as others put it, "the wisdom of power". In other words, sophocracy is a policy of placing power in the hands of the wise, those who possess knowledge and understanding, with the aim of reigning in the power of wisdom and manifesting wisdom in power. The sophocrat is a person with the ability to solve problems in difficult situations.

Isaiah 11:2 gives synonyms for biblical wisdom: understanding, counsel and strength, knowledge and fear of the Lord. The Book of Proverbs associates it with the Hebrew term "daat", translated as "knowledge" (Pro 1:7). This word comes from the verb "yadah", which not only means "to know", but also has a theological meaning, indicating an intimate relationship between two beings, or between God and man. For this reason, wisdom is defined as the fear of God (Pro 9:10; Psa 111:10). An anxiety that doesn't drive people away, but one that implies a relationship and dependence on God. Wisdom obliges us to live according to God's will, walking the right path. Thus, wisdom is the ability to conduct oneself virtuously.

Sophocrats behave with dignity, both ethically and politically.

In Solomon's case, it was with wisdom that he led the people of Israel. This is exceptional wisdom because throughout the story, the narrator of the Old Testament accounts insists that Solomon's wisdom was given to him directly by God after his request. When the Lord appeared to him in the dream at Gibeon recounted in the Bible in I Kings 3, he asked Him for wisdom so that he could lead the people in righteousness and success. Clearly, wisdom is defined here as having a heart with understanding, the ability to discern right from wrong in order to judge and govern the people well (v. 9), uprightness and insight, the spirit of discernment (v. 11. 12) and the power to do justice.

For the most part, the wisdom it speaks of is similar to folk wisdom. A wisdom based on common sense, the ability to make apparently right choices, a practical wisdom of life that is not necessarily based on philosophical or religious precepts. And it's important to recognize that many currents of thought inspired the wisdom mentioned in the Bible. For this reason, there are many similarities between biblical wisdom and Eastern wisdom. The same themes have been discussed.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1. Prioritizing the Mission Dedicated to God

Right from his rise to power, the author of the books of Kings shows us just how good Solomon's relationship with God was (I King 3). The very center of his story is the temple (I Kings 6-9). David his father, who had a desire to build a temple, bequeathed him this task (I King 2), and it was for this reason that he dedicated himself to this mission. He put God first.

It should be noted that at the beginning of Solomon's reign, the people continued to worship in high places, as there were no suitable places to worship Yahweh yet. Solomon therefore went to great lengths to build an exceptional temple. The temple was so important in the eyes of the people that it proved the divine presence and thus increased their faith. According to HAASBROEK, it was here that the people could communicate with God: in the place where He manifests and reveals Himself (HAASBROEK, 2004). The temple is also the only place that unites the people. So, even if idolatry had not been completely wiped out (I Kings 11), the temple manifested Yahweh's strength and authority over all Israel. As a result, Israel recognized that He is the God of all gods.

Solomon is seen as a pious king (I King 8; 9) who:

- offered gifts and sacrifices three times a year;
- erected an altar to the Lord;
- burned incense (I King 9, 24) and even took pleasure in imitating the priests.

In this way, the people showed him respect, or at least accepted his authority.

a. Justice in Judgment

Solomon judicially demonstrated his wisdom when judging the two women who claimed to be the mothers of the living child (I King 3, 16-28). The spirit of discernment let him know the truth at a crucial moment. But there were no more similar stories that evoked his judgment on Israel.

Faced with the two women in dispute over custody of the child, Salomon showed himself to be impartial. He didn't let himself be intimidated by the words and pleas of the two women, nor did he judge them on the basis of their mutual accusations. He didn't even listen to them, but just followed his intuition in the face of this difficult situation for which he was obliged to give a verdict. The first verdict was not to provide the conflicting live baby to anyone. A verdict that implied the death of the baby by dividing it up so that everyone could have their share. But it ended up revealing the truth. Who would have thought of such a thing? Only a wise man thinks like that. A strange form of wisdom indeed, but the truth has come out.

Solomon is described as stern and ruthless, but fair. WESTERMANN said he has a dry, formal and impersonal manner ... no trace of human warmth (WESTERMANN, 1996) even towards a baby. A man who isn't afraid to kill to get his way. Will do anything to find the truth. Once again, Solomon's wisdom may be classified as folk wisdom. He knew how to make good decisions without resorting to DNA testing or any of the other ways possible in this day and age.

b. Good Corporate Governance

Good governance manifests itself primarily in the administration of the State.

Solomon followed exactly the policies of the other kings who were already practicing monarchy, but he improved a few details to prove his wisdom against all odds. The

administration of human resources and territory was a little more important to him. I King 4:1 - 5:8 mentions the various chiefs and heads of the different court affairs they had at his service. The appointment of so many people shows not only the stability of his power, but also his good sense of organization.

1. Human Resources Administration

Solomon didn't work alone; he chose several people he deemed competent to help him develop his kingdom. It's like appointing ministers for a specific mission, according to the talents and values of the qualified individuals: writers, secretary, palace manager, person in charge of chores, etc,

His way of working shows us that he was a true leader. He didn't keep the direction of all the work to be done to himself, he left it to others in charge and became just a coordinator who supervised and directed. His authority forced others to respect him and work seriously. But more than that, the trust he placed in those in charge was the key to his success.

2. Territorial Administration

In 1000 BC, David succeeded in uniting the twelve tribes of Israel by choosing Jerusalem as his capital. Solomon changed the order of things slightly. Apart from the tribe of Judah, he divided the country into twelve districts, each under the authority of a prefect. Each district was responsible for the upkeep of the king and his household for one month of the year. These districts do not really coincide with the former territories of the tribes. In so doing, Solomon intended to break down the frameworks of autonomous provincial life.

c. Passion in Art and Culture

Solomon loved beauty. He wanted things to be impeccable, inside and out. The temple and palaces built in his time are evidence of this passion for beauty.

As a philosopher, he uttered three thousand maxims and composed five thousand quantum (I King 5, 12). Solomon's wisdom was inspired by meditation on what happens in the lives of human beings, their relationship with themselves and with nature, and concludes from this. These conclusions are summed up in touching proverbs and poems, easily passed on to those around him and generations to come. It is said that people from all over the world came to hear his wisdom (I Roi 5, 14). Since this was the time when writing began to spread, he was able to prove his intellectual level and his philosophy inspired from on high in writing.

Wisdom can be defined here as understanding the hidden things of life. WILHELM said that the wise man is the person who understands the freedom God has given him, and knows how to use it for good (WILHELM, 1951). So it's important always to learn.

d. International Relations Management

Unlike his father, Solomon's aim was always to get on well with the rulers of other countries. His first aim was to prevent the bloody wars that impoverished the people and made them live in fear, dread and anxiety. To achieve this, he married princesses from all over the world. His marriage to over 1,000 women, as recorded in I Kings 11:3, is truly astounding to Bible readers. However, this is not an exception, and it's not as extraordinary as people make out, because at the time, political marriage was beneficial to the nations. It marks the union of two peoples and makes them more powerful in the face of enemy attacks. Most of these women hardly ever met Solomon. Andrianampoinimerina also applied this policy, marrying the twelve princesses of the twelve mountains around Antananarivo. This policy enabled him to make more

conquests, unite the six Imerina clans and avoid inter-clan wars. Knowing how to choose concubines also requires another form of wisdom: Solomon married the daughters of the kings of the great nations (Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon...). Courtesy visits multiplied, demonstrating the understanding and peaceful agreement between foreign countries (I King 10, 1-13).

His second goal was to be noticed by the other nations: to perform feats, build sumptuous palaces and a gigantic temple, so that the state of Israel could be ranked among the great powers of its time. At that time, Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia were experiencing difficulties and had become somewhat weakened (especially in David's time), so David and Solomon took advantage of this situation to straighten out the state of Israel.

His third goal was to enrich himself by trafficking, trading and taxing. The strangest thing is to understand how he was able to change the situation in his favor to such an extent that silver became a base metal in his reign? If Israel was oppressed by other nations during the period of the judges, according to I Kings 5:1 and 9:20-21, by Solomon's time, many countries were paying him taxes and were under his rule.

He therefore opted for other, visibly more effective solutions, and acted in different ways depending on the context.

3.2 The Root Causes of His Kingdom's Downfall

Solomon was an extraordinarily powerful king. Unfortunately, just after his death, his kingdom divided, collapsed and never recovered as such. His lust, beauty and success were short-lived. Not even his son, heir to the throne, had the opportunity to enjoy all that wealth and splendor. Which goes to show that updating Solomon's policy is no easy task. One really has to take into account the risks and threats coming from within and without. We ask ourselves, how did he govern so that such a powerful kingdom could collapse? What were his mistakes ?

a. The Illegal Seizure of Power

If we refer to the birthright, which in those days was common when appointing a king's successor, Solomon was far from it. David, his father, had several wives in Hebron and Jerusalem, with whom he bore children (GIBERT, 1983). Solomon was the tenth son, which is why the kingdom was not handed to him on a silver platter, even though David had promised Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him to the throne. As a result, he had witnessed the competition between his elder brothers, and from the moment he ascended to power, he first and foremost mastered his opponents (I King 2:12-44). So he and those closest to him had to eliminate, one way or another, anything that might interfere with that power, so that he could complete his works and visions as he wished and without anyone being able to disturb him. His imperialism is therefore based on force, intolerance and dictatorship. Indeed, a barbaric people deserve a king who imposes his will on its people.

Seeing these massacres, it's out of fear that the people have accepted it, but the people are just waiting for the right moment to revolt. This means that oppression isn't always effective; on the contrary, it pushes people to hold grudges and be consumed by hatred inside.

b. Moving Away From Theocracy

As his kingdom grew, he gradually moved away from theocracy. Believing himself to be wise, he didn't even consult the prophets' advice, and deviated little by little. To the point of daring to offer sacrifices, even though it was for this reason that the Lord denied Saul (I Sam 13).

The most scandalous thing, according to I Kgs 11:4-8, was to build altars for the gods of his wives and to offer sacrifices on them. As CAZELLES said, the political marriages he believed to be assets for maintaining good international relations were sanctioned by the erection on the Mount of Olives of temples in honor of the gods of his princesses (CAZELLES, 1982).

In the end, he thought he was a god, just as the kings of other countries do and think (LODS, 1969; CHOURAQUI, 1994), and ended up forgetting about the theocracy. WENIN said that populism was taking its place (WENIN, 1994).

c. The Folly of Grandeur

Soon after his rise to power, his ambition grew and grew. He wanted to move Israel too fast along the path of great civilization. The love of the world and its pleasures took hold of him. He tried to build fortresses, palaces and an extraordinary Temple, to be seen and glorified by all those around him. Unfortunately, it was the people who suffered the consequences, for it was the people and only the people who provided for the king and his entourage. Taxes and drudgery had become yokes that impoverished the people and led them to revolt just after his death. It should be pointed out that, according to PONS, it was above all the northern kingdom that he oppressed (PONS, 1981), since the tribe of Judas from which he came was deprived of taxes. Perhaps also because the North was richer, vaster and more fertile, and meddled in international affairs, as MOURIQUAND put it in 2008.

Dictatorship and abuse of power ruled Israel. Let's not forget that WESTERMANN said he led in a dry manner, with no trace of human warmth (WESTERMANN, 1996), especially when it came to keeping that power. What's more, he took advantage of his position and power to enrich himself and dominate the people he oppressed. He was no longer content with the inheritance bequeathed to him by his father, for the upkeep of the palace and temple with its occupants required a considerable sum of money. Taxes and forced labor were no longer enough, so much so that he had to cede twenty villages in the Kabul region north-east of Akko to pay the debts of Hiram de Tyr, his architect.

Despite the opportunities presented to Solomon, his success only lasted a short time. Simply because his people didn't have access to this luxury. His wealth benefited only him, not his people. And the poor can never support the rich forever. He should have cared a little more about his people, knowing how to detect the threats he himself created. Solomon fell into his own trap.

3.3 The Importance of Sophocracy in Changing Madagascar's History

Madagascar, like Palestine in the past, is a blessed land flowing with milk and honey, with natural riches that amaze the world. But until now, the majority of the population has lived in misery. No policy has had any effect, and strikes ending in coups d'état recur almost every term. What can we do about it? It's time for a change of policy, and why not try sophocracy?

The story of Solomon showed us the value and importance of sophocracy. But what proof is there that this policy could change Madagascar's history?

An analysis of the facts gives us the following results:

- Sophocracy restores peace
- Sophocracy requires major reform
- Sophocracy combines with other development policies

Results that naturally imply changing history.

3.3 The Importance of Sophocracy

During King David's reign, wars and conquests were frequent; but all disappeared in Solomon's time, except for conflicts when he took power. Which goes to show that wisdom leads to peace. Wisdom strives to avoid wars and misunderstandings, so as to live in stability. Wisdom encourages good relations with others. This means that, with wisdom, we can live in harmony and cohesion, we can join forces and we don't have to destroy each other or always be in competition. On the contrary, we can help each other to succeed together.

This applies not only to Israel, but also to Madagascar.

A diachronic and comparative analysis of Madagascar's history, from the monarchical period to the present day, reveals striking differences between life before colonization and life today. These differences are due to the fact that the change in the form of power, the change in development policy, and the change brought about by globalization directly affect the social and economic life of the people. These changes have led the Malagasy to devalue their culture, and thus lose their identity and the wisdom of their ancestors. Yet, thanks to Malagasy wisdom, our ancestors were able to maintain our society in a period of solidarity, harmony and cohesion through fihavanana. The ancestors unconsciously applied sophocracy.

This period may not have been glamorous or luxurious, but it was a time of peace. Malagasy wisdom encouraged our ancestors to respect one another and to place their loved ones above themselves. It was a world without selfishness, where fraternity came first, even though schools as such did not yet exist. Education was passed on by elders, who had a duty to pass it on from generation to generation. A school without walls, but one that taught conscience and the fear of God, to the point where no one even dared to steal zebu droppings.

Madagascar needs someone capable of restoring, respecting and promoting this traditional Malagasy wisdom.

3.4 The Importance of Sophocracy

Solomon's sophocracy was a great reform. We need it badly.

At present, we live in a democracy where the people hold power. But the facts show that the Malagasy people are unable to distinguish right from wrong. They can't even control their own actions: political crises ending in bloody wars every decade; the destruction of common property leading to the ruin of our heritage; and endless power struggles, prove that democracy in its current form is not good for us. As a result, the wrong choices are multiplying, sinking the country deeper and deeper into total poverty.

The political leaders are no longer able to overcome the problems. They are content to think about what is happening today, to think about themselves and to enrich themselves while they are in power. But the fact that they only think about meeting daily needs, without worrying about the future, encourages them to go into debt or to sell Madagascar's wealth, even indirectly. For example, by letting other countries exploit our wealth for decades in exchange for a certain sum of money supposedly earmarked for public works, but which frequently vanishes into thin air. The problem is that these exploiters only leave the field when our wealth is exhausted. We live on handouts, loans and aid through donor-funded development projects.

The irony is that in democracy, there's a saying that goes: "The voice of the people is the voice of God"; so, doesn't God want us to be happy? If that's true, why did He give us a country overflowing with natural wealth? Isn't it so that we can enjoy it with happiness and prosperity?

To succeed, Madagascar needs major reform in all areas: starting with educational reform, followed by administrative, constitutional and institutional reform, and above all religious reform. Educational reform will lead to a change in behavior and mentality. Administrative reform will deal with the way we manage our assets and natural wealth. Constitutional and institutional reform will implement development policy. Religious reform will lead to repentance and a return to faith and trust in God.

Wisdom could help whoever holds power to bring about this reform. Human history has proven this a thousand times over: Solomon for Palestine, Nelson Mandela for South Africa, Paul Kagamé for Rwanda,... and many other similar stories. So why not try sophocracy in Madagascar?

3.5 Sophocracy Combines with Other Forms of Power

Sophocracy is a policy that adapts and combines with other forms of power. In Israel, Solomon associated it with theocracy and monarchy. This implies that the leader can choose his own policy, but must know how to combine sophocracy with it. On the other hand, the other form of power associated with sophocracy must in no way contradict it. Saliou Toure and Ibrahim Lokpo, both recent researchers who have written books about sophocracy, insist that this ideal mode of governance is without political parties. They're both right, because sophocracy aims to succeed. According to what has been published on the Internet, these two men have written a book on sophocracy [W1 ; W2], respectively. So those who call themselves patriots have a duty to show solidarity and work together for the good of their country. If successive Malagasy presidents have yet to succeed so far, it's mainly because of misunderstandings between the different political parties and the strong desire to hold power alone.

According to a study of Madagascar's history, two main policies have been applied since independence: Socialism and Democracy. Two policies which obviously have their strengths and chances of success, but which achieve nothing without the power of wisdom.

A reminder:

- Socialism is a political doctrine that promotes collective action. It aims to transform social organization with a view to achieving justice between people. It seeks to combat injustice and oppression; equalize people's standard of living so that power and wealth are not in the hands of a few; eradicate ethnic and religious discrimination; and allow people the freedom to choose their own religion.
- Democracy is a form of power in which the people hold the power to make decisions in their country. In a democratic country, all citizens are born free and have equal rights. They have the right to express them and to know everything that happens in their homeland. The purpose of democracy is to preserve and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, to ensure social cohesion and justice, to foster economic and social development, and to guarantee the stability and well-being of society.

Choosing one or the other, or opting for a new form of power, is fine if you decide to apply sophocracy. The important thing is to leave power to the wise, the educated, those with the knowledge and ability to discern right from wrong.

3.6 The Problems to Solve

Talk of a great reform through sophocracy invigorates the hope of finding a better future. However, is it possible to solve the major problems linked to the socio-economic, religious and political context in this country in a state of permanent crisis? Do the people really want to change their history ?

a. The Socio-economic Context

In Madagascar, power is in the hands of those with money. So, the state of poverty and distress has influenced the mentality of the people. There's no longer any respect or solidarity, and selfishness takes over. People kill each other for a lousy sum of money. Laziness, social injustice, corruption, violence, rip-offs and insecurity reign everywhere. Unemployment, daily needs and the question of survival have driven people to live in debauchery in order to forget their life of misery. Others devote themselves to acts of banditry, illicit trade and various shady deals to get rich. For in Madagascar, those who work hard and upright find it hard to enjoy a comfortable life, if the smallest salary they earn at the end of the month is anything to go by. Except for those who have already inherited it from their parents or those with start-up funds to set up their own business. The Malagasy have therefore lost their values and their identity by sinking into a life that should not be theirs.

Another problem linked to environmental degradation is that the majority of Malagasy people are farmers, but the rate of production is falling considerably due to over-exploitation of nature, bush fires, slash-and-burn cultivation and climate change.

How can we change this situation? Is it possible to change a mentality that has been ingrained for sixty (60) years? Is it possible to make educational reforms ?

It's not easy, but it's not impossible. Restoring the value of Malagasy wisdom is essential, and a major reform would do nothing to benefit the minorities who are currently profiting. However, if we want to change the course of history, we must have the audacity to do so, just as Solomon eliminated everything that could harm his kingdom in one way or another.

3.7 Faith and Philosophy in the Exercise of Power

The story of Solomon shows us that the political leader must have divine wisdom, otherwise he won't be able to succeed. This is nothing new, as faith and power have been closely linked throughout Madagascar's history. The majority of the Malagasy people believed in God and His providence, long before the missionaries arrived in Madagascar. This belief has influenced politics. Spiritual guides or church leaders have always played an important role, and their advice or counsel was important. At the time of the monarchy, traditional religion took its place before Ranaivalona I; but the Christian religion became the state religion at the time of Ranaivalona II. Since then, most Malagasy people, especially the Merina ethnic group, have lived in syncretism. The problem created by the existence of several forms of church aggravates the situation, to the point where many start to become atheists or no longer serve God properly. So how do we explain the value of this divine wisdom, as the Bible has shown us? What will non-Christians say? What will traditionalists say? How do we distinguish divine wisdom from human wisdom? It's time for us to renew the relationship between Church and State, so that each can take its place.

3.8 Faith and Philosophy in the Exercise of Power

Like Palestine, Madagascar possesses natural riches that attract the covetousness of other nations. Those in power therefore have the opportunity to manage these riches as they see fit. But since the desire to enrich oneself is the primary reason most people enter politics in Madagascar, the wars for power are endless. There are always those on the other side who only criticize and act in bad faith. Political partisans are nothing but fanatics who think only of themselves and don't see the good that others do. So how can they agree to work together, with their different politics and their thirst for leadership? Who will agree to change and humiliate themselves? How can we establish sophocracy so that everyone understands that wisdom also means knowing how to listen to and tolerate the opinions of others? This implies that not everyone is always wrong and, conversely, not everyone is always right.

It's a challenge we still have to take up. What's more, at present, each person is no longer placed at his or her fair value and competence, because corruption is so immoral that the possession of money is a means of becoming a civil servant or an executive in a well-known and reputable company.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of King Solomon's reign and the application of sophocracy as a potential source of inspiration for changing Madagascar's history offer a profound lens through which to examine the interplay of governance, spirituality, and socio-economic development. As we delve into the historical and biblical narratives, it becomes evident that Solomon's sophocracy, characterized by a harmonious blend of theocratic principles, monarchical authority, and wise governance, held the potential to elevate a nation.

The manifestations of Solomon's sophocracy, from prioritizing divine mission to upholding justice in judgment, from effective corporate governance to a passion for art and culture, exemplify a holistic approach to leadership. However, as history unfolds, we also encounter the tragic downfall of Solomon's kingdom, marked by the illegal seizure of power, a departure from theocratic foundations, and the perilous allure of grandiosity.

Drawing parallels between Israel's history and that of Madagascar reveals an opportunity for transformative change. Sophocracy, with its emphasis on restoring peace, calling for major reform, and integrating with other forms of power, emerges as a beacon of hope. In the context of Madagascar's challenges, encompassing socio-economic complexities, the role of faith and philosophy in governance, and the inherent struggles for power, sophocracy presents itself as a viable solution.

As we contemplate the potential implementation of sophocracy in Madagascar, it is imperative to acknowledge that its success hinges not only on the adoption of wise policies but also on the ethical conduct of leaders. Theological reflections on Solomon's story underscore the importance of humility, justice, and a steadfast commitment to the divine mission.

In this theological perspective, sophocracy is not merely a political ideology but a moral imperative—a call to stewardship that transcends the secular realm. By intertwining governance with spiritual values, Madagascar has the opportunity to forge a unique path towards prosperity, grounded in justice, compassion, and a deep sense of responsibility.

In the journey ahead, addressing the socio-economic context, reconciling faith and philosophy in the exercise of power, and mitigating power struggles become the challenges to surmount. The lessons from Solomon's sophocracy serve as a guiding light, reminding us that a nation's destiny is shaped not only by its policies but by the ethical character of its leadership.

In embracing the potential of sophocracy, Madagascar stands at a crossroads—a juncture where the wisdom of the past meets the aspirations of the future. As theologians of governance, let us envision a Madagascar where the echoes of Solomon's virtues resonate in the corridors of power, and where the pursuit of glory is inseparable from the pursuit of righteousness.

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