

Moo For a Better Tomorrow

By Wael Khalil Manoun

Dearest KG,

It is of standard concern that men can astutely identify the challenges their nation is facing and blissfully resign themselves to the notion that they can never be solved. And it is of much greater concern that so many in its intellectual middle can astutely identify these same challenges, and with a great worry of what tomorrow will bring, resign themselves to the notion that such problems can never be solved. But, of greatest concern to a nation, is when its sages plausibly resign themselves to acquiescence after exhausting the ordinary and mundane for the elixir.

My dearest KG I am well and in good spirits and at peace with what has been written for me in this life, and yet a stoic's mind remains restless with thought of what is probable. I reach out to you at this time to inform that our mother nation suffers but it is not her suffering that pains me, for it is curable. It is in the strictest of confidence I share with you I am greatly pained by the response of her children and their lack of will to remedy her woes. In opposition to my better judgement, I have concluded that I will not detach myself from this pain and that I will hold you responsible for all that I am feeling and enduring.

Confound it, my old friend! But it is you who has infected me with an empathy and an understanding which I struggle to bridle. And yet I cannot say that if I could go back to the day we first met at the bookshop that I would have been better off walking past you as you sat up at that table intriguing and approachable as you were. In life they say your strength eventually becomes your vulnerability and so it was that my inquisitive nature drew me to knowing the man behind the great that preceded him.

My friend you must be made to know that I well and truly appreciated the sunrise and what the day had in store for me without the aid of the mischief you have brought me. And I will never confess that your words may have sweetened my wine on days end. But I will gladly let you know that I hold you solely responsible for why I indulge in a second and why I indulge in thoughts of our mother nation and what could be. Oh my friend what have you done to me, to make me ponder the hopes of men. I would accuse you and your infectious way of cruelty but I know your soul would take great satisfaction with its accomplishment.

My dearest KG if only you could see the world we live in now. I am reluctant to tell you that men walk with the complete history of humanity in the palm of their hands for I know it

would make you envious to be amongst us. But envy not old friend for you will be certainly saddened with what men have done with such knowledge and what they have not done for our mother nation. We are surrounded by enough failure and stagnation that one can safely surmise modern minds must be immune to the greatest lessons and ambitions of human history. My dear friend gone are the days when our people stood at the shores of the great Mediterranean and looked at all the challenges that stood before them and boldly concluded “Carthage it shall be”, and yet there was no destination of that name.

Oh KG if only I could bear the shame of being known as a stoic full of zest and concern. I would confront one and all, and with all the hubris and impatience I could muster, and with the sternest of tones, say unto them “open that device in the palm of your hand and command its mistress to do your bidding”. Let it seek out the forefathers who built a great nation where others found adversity and crumbled. Let it find history’s account of these visionary men who knew that *woe unto them* who build a nation on exclusivity for limited success in the public realm would it have. And so it was that they gathered men in their formative state and instructed them to divide into two. “Be either a donkey or an elephant for freedom of choice is yours, and from hither to yon define what it is a donkey and an elephant have to offer in the service of man, let all that you say and all that you do be of concern for all, but be wary, for there is a catch, be convinced and proud of whatever it is you have chosen to be otherwise the game will not work.”

And in that moment a foundation was laid with robust premise and the environment to bring out the best in men was created. The differences needed for men to thrive were safely established by these visionary forefathers and men were motivated to go forth and do what they do best - compete and cooperate with those different from them for achievement and advancement. And compete with each other they did, and cooperate with each other they did, sharpening iron with iron and thriving in their natural element as they built their state with a safeguarded competition between elephant and donkey.

And so it was that a legend was offered the world over that the streets of this new nation were paved with gold and so it was they attracted one and all. Come and share our dream they said and so audacious they were that they even asked how about you give us your tired, your poor and your huddled masses. We shall rid you of this liability said the forefathers loudly as they whispered amongst each other we will show them what can be done with the individual. And so they came from every nation, every religion and every language known to man and were

harmonised by none but that of economic opportunity and the ability to provide in dignity and honour. And so it was that these alchemist forefathers turned the refuse of nations into a nation's greatest treasure and in the process releasing a blinding level of human potential and energy unseen in centuries.

And so it was that the donkey and the elephant eventually stood at the shoreline, gazed upon the troubles of the world and decreed "For God, glory and gold let us go forth and let us secure a better way of life for all". And so it was that men who were divided into two and united by 3 went on to become the world's dearest Uncle. So revered that every 4 years the donkey and the elephant would hold a race to amuse themselves and the systems of the world would hold their breath in anticipation of the outcome. And so it was that a nation founded on diversity achieved a success which left men pondering "surely this was not random, and yet, surely it is not possible for men to possess such foresight". It seems that in their challenges little do men understand the physics and logic of fortune and who it favours.

My dearest KG oh what knowledge the mistress has to share with those who ask of it and are willing to lend it an attentive ear. The path to overcoming all types of adversity has been paved on many an occasion and yet the resourceful river stands before the great ocean overcome with doubt. This has never been truer than when discussing the troubles of our mother nation with her concerned children. In their reluctance to develop a remedy for her woes they will teach you how to become a great and persuasive orator, and they will teach you how to become a great and convincing thespian, but ungrateful to your teachers will you be. In this age of convenience, it is rather unfortunate one cannot procure a Revolution-in-a-Box from the local dikana so that we may be spared all this bravado and accusation that is needed to dignify capitulation. Personally I suspect that men have already exhausted dikana after dikana and souk after souk in futility, birthing much despair with their expectations of this uninvented ease and their lack of resourcefulness.

My dearest KG I wonder if you will be surprised to learn that once upon a time, I regularly allowed others to interpret my God for me through their own peculiar motives and predispositions. And it is on one of those occasions when sitting through a lecture that I received the revelation that Bani Adam on his creation was given the trait of intellect, which is shared with the angels, and was given the trait of imagination, which is shared with the devil. I will never forget this earth-shattering moment of my youth for hearing the latter part of that statement felt like the sky was falling upon me. I had always taken immense pride in

my imagination and I took great offense with what was said. For over 20 years I just could not fathom how there could be any truth to this teaching which I harboured a complete disdain for.

Unfortunately my old friend, the world being what it is, my thirst was eventually quenched and the knowledge of how imagination is shared with the devil finally availed itself. It was only in analysing this system we have devised for our mother nation that I was able to understand the diabolical nature of human imagination. When nations devised themselves sturdy and robust ideologies to conduct their affairs; with brilliance did we imagine for ourselves a perversion of thought that consumed itself 30 years after its birth. And so, what was sent down to humble us, made us drunk with arrogance and 15-years of aggressive negotiation would take place. Upon its conclusion, again we brilliantly imagined ourselves an even greater perversion of intellect to rule over us which also devoured itself within 30 years. For rather than establishing an inclusive and humble confession of either donkey or elephant so that we may consciously quell the mistrust and darkness that men harbour in their hearts and minds; twice we placed this mistrust front and centre in the public domain and focused every action on its acknowledgment, worship and magnification.

And so it was that we failed to learn from our own bag and the day came where some would raise their arms in the air, and some would fold them, but all would do so out of despair; and all were succumbed by genuine astonishment as though failure was ever in doubt. Enough! Our people concluded. They took to the streets in numbers unseen and chanted against this system that has failed them and their dreams. They had been robbed of their life savings, their labour was of no value, and we would hold memorials every August to remember horrific tragedy. And so it was my friend that after a very long time, and where all else was failing, hardship was the confession that was uniting our people like no other.

In harmony, and with absolute certainty were men were able to articulate what they did not want. And when queried about the desires of their heart, once again they were eloquent and beautifully conveyed a wish to be able to dream of a better tomorrow and to provide for their families in dignity. But when queried as to the way forward, fragmented and inarticulate they became, and so this ever so brief of a window to bring about change disappeared just as it appeared. The unseen numbers dwindled, and all would eventually return to their daily affairs disgruntled and unaccomplished with a black cloud over their heads that only got darker. But fret naught my dear KG despite all this dissatisfaction I can report to you that

your countrymen continued to make us all proud. They lived up to the charm, resilience and spirit that we are so famous for and endured their challenges with dignity in year after year.

Sadly, our mother nation is now all but paralysed. And in life's impeccable twists and turns our strength would become our folly and the cries "we are a resilient people" and "we will endure no matter what" would fill the days, while music and dance would fill the night. And so it was KG that resourcefulness and a spirit that refuses to be broken would intercede and the hopes of a nation would be buried in the sands of time. In a rather charming and poetic manner we sentenced ourselves to enduring hardship rather than committing to the duty of becoming forefathers to our young mother nation which has been thousands of years in the making. Selflessly serving every emperor of the day because of her strategic location and majestic beauty. Relegated to only dreaming of ever being the author of her own destiny.

And now her state organs are deteriorating and functioning at bear minimum capacity. They are crumbling fighting off the diversity, location and beauty that was found in her. Our nation has never needed her children more and yet we have resigned ourselves to the notion that we have done all we can, and she will somehow remedy on her own. But little did we know her challenges were to get much worse.

In an inexplicable turn of events, rather than finding relief, she would be given an even greater responsibility to bear in her frail state. A very peculiar and menacing responsibility that comes with much challenge and one that has destroyed many in its path. For untold treasure was found off her shores, and as the nature of things would have it, a cursed treasure it be. For it only attracts unscrupulous entities who prefer to prey on the misfortune of others to enrich a select few. If it had been found in better times then certainly a cure to so much it might have been, but it was found in a time where it only compounds her perils astronomically.

Never has it been more critical for her people to gather and attempt to remedy the woes of their mother nation with genuine intent. And yet it is that vengeance for yesterday outweighs preventing tomorrow's tragedy in the hearts of men. My dear KG if I were given the opportunity to ask you but one question and be guaranteed an answer, I would ask you "Why is this the prescribed condition of men and how is it overcome?". Maybe the heavens will smile down upon me and you will answer two questions. For in those answers the catalyst needed to remedy our nations woes might be contained and so her fate requires me to be presumptuous.

My dearest KG it is a daunting request to make of men by asking them to question their perceptions and assumptions, but nations have been put on notice since time immemorial to be wary of their collective ideology. The world is a cunning and treacherous place and has no regard for those who do not shrewdly live up to their duty and responsibility. Men cannot afford to live in a fantasy of utopian enclaves on some of the most strategic real estate on earth and yet an affront to their hospitality and reason they remain. And when confronted with accusation of debt to seek a remedy for their ailing mother nation they choose rather to orate and to thesp, “we love her like no other, but the ocean is too mighty for us to sail” and “how are we to float when we are creatures of the land”. They envision the obstacles in their path and do not realize they are halfway to success. They see not outlets for their brilliance but rather reasons to not endeavour.

And I say unto such men but were you asked to fashion a nation on another’s land. Were you needing to convince your people to sell all which they cannot carry and to gather themselves in a sea of hostility. Were you required to change the professions of men from mild mannered money lenders and merchants to Spartan. Surely then you would be righteous to cower in the face of such a proposition. Not that others did cower but that is another of history’s great tales one verbal request away from your possession.

You were but asked to devise a nation where vision and potential qualify men for the public arena. To devise a system where not much more is needed to be known of them but that of what comprehension does he possess of his duty to one and all, and are the morals and ethics his mother nation raised him with in good order. You were but asked to devise a system where blood, faith and family ties are to be the beauty and attraction of village life. A system where men can differentiate themselves into giraffes and cows so that they can have this confession which compels them to compete, and to cooperate, and to seek out great accomplishment.

My dearest KG in the context of modern nations this is but an insignificant paradigm shift and one that can be implemented solely with the lessons of history; easily conceding the need for unimaginable tragedy. And yet, certainly will the senses of men take flight upon hearing of this trite remedy to their woes. The children of our mother nation fear change more than any other challenge and hence it is they delude themselves with the notion that what has delivered them so much heartbreaking suffering somehow has the potential to deliver glad tidings to them and to their children.

Remedy is only ideal to all on a superficial level and yet it is required at the surgical. The strength and spirit of our people is contained in their eyes for all to see, and yet there is no conviction amongst men that we are a great people, of a great nation and that it is mandatory we dream a great dream. We can only cure the dire ailments of our mother nation by living up to every ounce of our potential and delivering a great accomplishment. Ordinary and mundane will never be equitable to what is required of us.

It is my most sincere wish KG that men realize their penultimate act of solidarity to their brethren right now would be to break ranks with them and their fear of change, and to start planting the seeds of a better tomorrow. For it is rare that an opportunity arises when the masses cry “enough!” and are genuinely receptive to direction. This ever so brief of a window will be the ideal opportunity to save our nation but it will require those willing to answer the call of forefathers be ready to illuminate the path. The visionary amongst men must have an appealing and viable map drawn up and ready for this inevitable day whose unknown timing will also be a test in its own right; but whose preparation is mandatory for good fortune to favour that which our hearts desire.

My dearest KG it is my hope you become burdened with these thoughts that ravish my self-discipline. Confound it my friend! What have you done to me? In being concerned for what tomorrow brings I have betrayed the teachings of Marcus with an insolence only you could have instilled in his devotee. What have you done to me that I seek to trespass and alter the destiny men do not write for our mother nation, that I desire men wake from their slumber and look out into the Mediterranean with all its obstacle and say with conviction “Carthage it shall be - for God, glory and gold”.

Wael