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PHILOSOPHY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE LIGHT OF 1 KINGS (12:1-19): THE INTERSECTION OF PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE

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Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of philosophy and scripture through an examination of emotional intelligence in the context of 1 Kgs 12:1-19. Employing a philosophico-biblical methodology, the study combines conceptual analysis with biblical exegesis to illuminate the role of emotional intelligence in leadership and decision-making. The narrative of Rehoboam's reign serves as a case study, demonstrating how a leader's emotional competencies – or lack thereof – can significantly impact societal outcomes. The research delves into the philosophical underpinnings of emotional intelligence, situating it within broader discussions of wisdom, ethics, and human nature. Through a detailed exegesis of 1 Kgs 12:1-19, the paper analyses the historical context, literary structure, and theological implications of Rehoboam's fateful decision. This analysis reveals striking parallels between ancient leadership challenges and modern concepts of emotional intelligence. By examining Rehoboam's interactions through the lens of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, the study illustrates how deficits in these areas led to the division of the Israelite kingdom. The paper argues that this biblical narrative offers timeless insights into the critical role of emotional intelligence in governance, conflict resolution, and human relations. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches our understanding of a vital moment in biblical history but also demonstrates the enduring relevance of scriptural wisdom to contemporary leadership theory and practice. The study concludes by highlighting the potential for further research at the nexus of philosophy, theology, and emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Philosophy, Scripture, self-awareness

1. Introduction

The intersection of philosophy and scripture offers a rich ground for exploring fundamental questions about human nature and societal dynamics. This paper ventures into this intersection by examining the concept of emotional intelligence through the lens of 1 Kgs 12: 1-19, a crucial narrative in the Hebrew Bible. By employing a philosophico-biblical methodology, the study aims to illuminate the profound connections between ancient wisdom and modern psychological



insights. The story of Rehoboam's reign and the subsequent division of the Israelite kingdom serves as a persuasive case study for understanding the critical role of emotional intelligence in leadership. Set against the backdrop of a complex political and social landscape, the narrative provides a timeless illustration of how a leader's emotional competencies – or lack thereof – can shape the destinies of entire nations.

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized emotional intelligence as a crucial factor in effective leadership across various domains (Goleman, 2010; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012). However, the philosophical underpinnings of this concept and its manifestations in ancient texts remain underexplored. This paper seeks to bridge this gap by analysing the theological and philosophical implications of emotional intelligence as portrayed in the biblical account of Rehoboam's fateful decision. Through an exegesis of 1 Kgs 12: 1-19, it will examine how Rehoboam's interactions with his advisors and subjects reveal critical aspects of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, empathy, and social skills. By situating this analysis within broader discussions of wisdom, ethics, and human nature, the study aims to demonstrate the enduring relevance of scriptural insights to contemporary understanding of emotional intelligence from the viewpoint of leadership theory and practice. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches one's understanding of a significant moment in biblical history but also offers valuable insights into the philosophy of emotional intelligence and the nature of effective leadership in any era.

2. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between philosophy and scripture by examining emotional intelligence in 1 Kgs 12: 1-19. It will analyze the concept within the philosophical framework of wisdom, ethics, and human nature, focusing on leadership dynamics and decision-making processes. The theological implications of emotional intelligence will be examined in the context of divine sovereignty and human free will. The study will draw parallels between ancient narratives and modern leadership theories, particularly those related to emotional intelligence, and demonstrate the relevance of scriptural wisdom to contemporary leadership challenges and organizational management. The research will contribute to the emerging field of the philosophy of emotional intelligence by providing insights from an interdisciplinary, philosophico-biblical perspective. It will also examine the potential of integrating philosophical inquiry and scriptural analysis to understand complex human dynamics and leadership principles. The study aims to bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and modern psychological insights, offering a unique contribution to both philosophical discourse on emotional intelligence and leadership studies.

3. Significance of the Study

This study is significant in the following ways:

- i. **Interdisciplinary Integration and Methodological Innovation:** This research contributes to the growing field of interdisciplinary studies by examining emotional intelligence through the



intersection of philosophy and biblical exegesis. The philosophico-biblical methodology employed offers a novel approach to analyzing historical texts, offering inspiration to interdisciplinary methods in other fields of study.

- ii. **Leadership Insights and Contemporary Relevance:** The analysis of Rehoboam's reign in 1 Kgs 12: 1-19 offers valuable insights into leadership dynamics, highlighting the critical role of emotional intelligence in governance. By drawing parallels between ancient leadership challenges and modern concepts of emotional intelligence, this study underscores the enduring relevance of scriptural wisdom to contemporary leadership theory and practice.
- iii. **Philosophical Framework and Ethical Implications:** This study contributes to the emerging field of the philosophy of emotional intelligence, by situating emotional intelligence within broader philosophical discussions of wisdom, ethics, and human nature. In this way, it highlights the ethical dimensions of leadership, emphasizing the importance of emotional competencies like self-awareness, empathy, and social skills in positions of power.
- iv. **Contribution to Leadership Studies:** The paper offers valuable lessons for modern leadership training and development programs, by illustrating how deficits in emotional intelligence led to the division of the Israelite kingdom. It provides a unique perspective that bridges ancient wisdom and modern leadership theories.
- v. **Bridging Disciplines:** This study demonstrates the potential for integrating insights from philosophy, theology, psychology, and leadership studies, encouraging further interdisciplinary research in these areas. It paves the way for future studies at the nexus of philosophy, theology, and emotional intelligence, potentially informing both academic discourse and practical leadership applications.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions would be employed as consistent guide throughout the study:

1. How does the narrative of Rehoboam in 1 Kgs 12: 1-19 illustrate the principles and ethical implications of emotional intelligence, and what are the consequences of his deficits in this area?
2. What are the philosophical underpinnings of emotional intelligence, and how can they be identified in ancient biblical texts, particularly in the context of Rehoboam's leadership?
3. How does the integration of philosophical and theological perspectives enhance our understanding of emotional intelligence in biblical narratives, and what parallels can be drawn between Rehoboam's leadership and modern leadership theories?
4. How can insights from the intersection of philosophy and scripture, as demonstrated through Rehoboam's story, inform contemporary leadership practices and theories?



5. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this paper is one that creates a space for the intersection of philosophy and scripture, thus, offering a rich and fascinating area of exploration. It is also based on the understanding that philosophical inquiry and scriptural analysis can complement each other in various ways. This methodology is called the philosophico-biblical. It makes a beautiful combination of the theological and philosophical patterns of thinking and research. At the philosophical level, a conceptual approach is undertaken with the aim of clarifying their objects and understanding them. Given that an analysis of concepts may help the understanding of the phenomenon that the term denotes. At the level of theology, a biblical-exegetical method is adopted. This complementary approach is based on the understanding that there is an inescapable philosophical element in every theology (Kanu 2010, Kanu 2011 & Kanu 2012).

However, the Patristic approach that employed philosophy at the service of theology, giving Christian interpretations to Neoplatonic concepts such as logos, divine mind, soul, creation, problem of evil universals, particular, freedom and foreknowledge, thus creating no clear cut distinction between philosophy and theology (Davies 2004, Gracia and Noone 2003, *Schulman* 2002, Kretzmann 2002, Hyman and Walsh 1967, Catarina and Stephen 2016), the present approach employs philosophy and scriptural texts for the service of each other. Therefore, while the exegesis of a scriptural text deepens an understanding of a philosophical concept, philosophical concepts, which are useful tools for clarification and development of ideas, help immeasurably for a better understanding of what is happening in the scriptural text.

Table 1: Intersection of Philosophy and Scripture

S/N	Intersection Point	Description
1	Ethical inquiry	Philosophical ethics and scriptural teachings on morality and justice can inform each other
2	Metaphysics and cosmology	Philosophical discussions on reality, existence, and the nature of the universe can intersect with scriptural accounts of creation and the divine
3	Epistemology and hermeneutics	Philosophical theories on knowledge and interpretation can inform scriptural exegesis and understanding
4	Theology and the nature of God	Philosophical debates on the divine can engage with scriptural descriptions of God's nature and attributes



5	Human nature and anthropology	Philosophical discussions on human existence and nature can intersect with scriptural teachings on human creation, sin, and redemption
6	Free will and determinism	Philosophical debates on agency and determinism can engage with scriptural teachings on human responsibility and divine sovereignty
7	Virtue ethics and character development	Philosophical discussions on virtues and character can inform scriptural teachings on moral development and spiritual growth
8	Political philosophy and social justice	Philosophical debates on politics and justice can intersect with scriptural teachings on social justice and compassion
9	Aesthetics and beauty	Philosophical discussions on beauty and aesthetics can engage with scriptural teachings on creation, art, and worship
10	Mysticism and spiritual experience	Philosophical explorations of mystical experiences can intersect with scriptural accounts of spiritual encounters and divine presence

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6. Philosophy of Emotional Intelligence

Human emotions are a critical part of our existence as they influence the way we see our environment, understand it, respond to that awareness, and in fact, can serve as a great compass for navigating the world (Kanu 2024). It is, therefore, not surprising that psychologists, therapists, economists, sociologists, etc., have started studying the abilities and capacities of the human person to reason and understand their own emotions, to effectively perceive emotions as well as manage them, especially in relation to others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera 2006, Schulze & Roberts 2005, Bar-On 2006, Goleman, 2010; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012). These studies gave rise to the nomenclature: “emotional intelligence”. It has since become a concept that is used in virtually every field of study, employed for the evaluation of performances and for accounting for differences in levels of success (Goleman, 1998, St. Clair, 2004, Sewell, 2011).

Mental Health America (2023) defines emotional intelligence as: “the ability to manage both your own emotions and understand the emotions of people around you”. It further pointed out five key elements to EI, which include: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, and observed that people with high EI can identify how they are feeling, what those feelings



mean, and how those emotions impact their behavior and in turn, other people. This helps human relationships and understanding.

The Economic Times (2023), defines emotional intelligence as: “the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well. In other words, they can influence the emotions of other people also.” It further identified five main elements of emotional intelligence, which include: Self-awareness - the capacity to understand the self, Self-regulation- the capacity to control the self, Motivation- the capacity to influence people, Empathy - the capacity to put yourself in the shoes of others, Social skills- the capacity to communicate.

Landry (2019), in her article published in the Harvard Business School Online, defines Emotional intelligence “as the ability to understand and manage your emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of those around you”. She further broke emotional intelligence into four core competences: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship management.

Within philosophy, the philosophy of emotional intelligence is a new area of study. It critically studies the implications of emotional intelligence on personal development, interpersonal relationships, and society as a whole (Kanu 2024). Philosophy, etymologically is *love of wisdom*, which involves the ability to think and act using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense and intuition. Grossmann (2017) avers that this is associated with attributes such as judgment, emotions and virtues, and, therefore, emotional intelligence. This has led philosophers to begin to reflect on the place of wisdom in the management of emotions (Grossmann, Oakes, and Santos 2019; Kunzmann and Glück 2019; Staudinger and Glück 2011; Walsh 2015). Philosophers have also located emotional intelligence as belonging to the ontological level (Sfetcu 2020, Cummings, Hayduk, and Estabrooks (2005). Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) introduces an epistemological dimension given that the knowledge of the self in relation to others is important. In relation to ethical decision-making and the appreciation of values, ethics and axiology respectively, become important areas of concern in emotional intelligence (Kanu 2024).

7. Biblical Perspective of Emotional Intelligence (1 Kgs 12: 1-19)

7.1 Exegesis of 1 Kgs 12: 1-19

a. Historical Context

The events of 1 Kgs 12:1-19 unfolded during the reign of Solomon, who brought prosperity and expansion to the United Kingdom of Israel. However, tensions were brewing that ultimately led to the kingdom's division. Solomon's rule laid the groundwork for future conflicts that his son would inherit. The unified monarchy under Solomon presented both strengths and weaknesses, with unprecedented wealth and international recognition but also exacerbated existing divisions between the northern and southern tribes (Pilani, 2023a). Solomon's policies, particularly his



heavy taxation and forced labour programs, disproportionately burdened certain segments of the population, creating economic disparities between different regions and social classes (Pilani, 2022). As Solomon's reign progressed, tensions between the northern and southern tribes grew more pronounced. The rise of Jeroboam, a capable leader from the northern tribe of Ephraim, further complicated the political landscape.

The economic conditions of Israel at the time of Solomon's death were complex, with the burden of supporting Solomon's grand projects and lavish lifestyle falling heavily on the common people. This led the people, under Jeroboam's leadership, to approach Rehoboam with their plea for relief. The cultural expectations of kingship in ancient Israel, such as the Deuteronomic ideal of a servant of God and protector of the people, often clashed with the realities of governance and the influences from surrounding cultures. The role of divine appointment in legitimizing kingship was crucial in ancient Israel, with the king seen as God's anointed representative. Rehoboam's failure in emotional intelligence led to the division of the kingdom due to his inability to empathize and respond wisely to the existing tensions and burdens on the people (Pilani, 2023b). This critical moment in Israelite history serves as a powerful illustration of how a lack of emotional intelligence in leadership can have profound and lasting impacts on a nation and its people.

b. Structure of 1 Kgs 1:1-19

This literary structure of 1 Kgs 12:1-19 is organized into five main sections, each highlighting a key element of the narrative and its emotional dynamics. It begins with setting the scene, introducing the main characters and the political context (I: 1-3). The second section (II: 4-5) presents the people's petition, showcasing their emotional appeal for relief. The third section, focusing on Rehoboam's consultation (III: vv. 6-11), contrasts two sets of advice reflecting different levels of emotional intelligence. Verses vv. 12-15 constitutes the fourth section (IV). It describes Rehoboam's decision, emphasizing his lack of empathy and emotional awareness. The final section outlines the people's reaction, illustrating the emotional and political consequences of Rehoboam's choice (V: vv. 16-19).

I. Setting the Scene (vv. 1-3)

II. The People's Petition (vv. 4-5)

III. Rehoboam's Consultation (vv. 6-11)

IV. Rehoboam's Decision (vv. 12-15)

V. The People's Reaction (vv. 16-19)

c. Content Analysis of 1 Kgs 12:1-19

i. Setting the Scene (vv. 1-3)



The opening scene of 1 Kgs 12:1-3 sets the stage for a focal moment in Israelite history. Rehoboam's journey to Shechem for his coronation is significant, as Shechem held historical and religious importance for the Israelites (Laughlin, 2006). The choice of this location may have been an attempt to unite the northern and southern tribes, acknowledging their shared heritage. The return of Jeroboam from Egypt adds tension to the narrative. Jeroboam, who had fled from Solomon's wrath (1 Kgs 11:40), returns at a critical juncture. This timing suggests divine orchestration, aligning with the prophecy of Ahijah (1 Kgs 11:29-39). The Hebrew text uses the verb *wayyābō'* (and he came) to describe Jeroboam's return, emphasizing his active role in the unfolding events (Sweeney, 2007). The summoning of Jeroboam by the people *wa|yyišlūHū wayyiqrū'û-lô* (Then they sent and called him) indicates his popularity and the people's desire for his leadership. This action sets up a confrontation between the Davidic heir and a charismatic leader (Jeroboam) from the north, reflecting the underlying tensions between the tribes (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006).

From a historical perspective, this scene reflects the political realities of the time. The fragile unity achieved under David and Solomon was now under threat, with longstanding tribal rivalries resurfacing. The mention of Jeroboam's exile in Egypt also points to the complex international relations of the period, with Egypt often playing a role in Israelite politics (Kitchen, 2003). This opening sets the stage for a clash of leadership styles and political ideologies, with Rehoboam representing the established Davidic dynasty and Jeroboam embodying the aspirations of the northern tribes. The historical context suggests a delicate balance of power that could easily tip, depending on how the new king would handle the situation (Miller & Hayes, 2006).

ii. The People's Petition (vv. 4-5)

The people's petition in 1 Kgs 12:4-5 reveals the underlying tensions that had been building during Solomon's reign. The request for a lighter burden, expressed in Hebrew as *hāqēl mē'ābōdat 'ābīkā haqqāšā* (lighten the hard service of your father), points to the economic and social pressures faced by the Israelites under Solomon's rule (Cogan, 2001). This plea suggests that Solomon's ambitious building projects and luxurious lifestyle had come at a significant cost to the common people. The promise of loyalty, conveyed through the conditional statement "we will serve you," indicates that the people were not outright rejecting the Davidic dynasty. Instead, they were seeking a renegotiation of the social contract between ruler and subjects (Brueggemann, 2000). This approach reflects a sophisticated political awareness among the Israelites, demonstrating their understanding of the reciprocal nature of kingship in the ancient Near East.

Rehoboam's request for time, "Go away for three days, then come again to me" (*lūkū 'ōd šülōšā yāmīm wūšū'bū 'ēlāy*), can be interpreted in various ways. From a historical-critical perspective, this delay might represent a genuine need for consultation, reflecting the complex decision-making processes in the royal court (Sweeney, 2007; Usman & Paul, 2024). Alternatively, it could be seen as a political maneuver, buying time to assess the situation and potentially gather support. The historical context of this petition is crucial. The unified monarchy under David and Solomon had brought both glory and burden to Israel. Solomon's reign, while marked by great achievements,



had also introduced heavy taxation and forced labor (1 Kgs 5:13-14). The petition thus represents a moment of reckoning, where the sustainability of Solomon's policies was being questioned (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006).

Furthermore, the scene highlights the delicate balance of power between the monarchy and the people. The fact that the people felt empowered to make such a petition suggests that the Israelite monarchy was not absolute, but rather existed within a framework of negotiated responsibilities and rights (Levinson, 2001). This episode also foreshadows the potential for division within the kingdom. The unity of Israel, achieved under David and maintained under Solomon, was now at risk. The people's petition serves as a litmus test for Rehoboam's leadership, challenging him to manage the delicate balance between maintaining royal authority and addressing the genuine concerns of his subjects (Miller & Hayes, 2006).

iii. Rehoboam's Consultation (vv. 6-11)

Rehoboam's consultation, as depicted in 1 Kgs 12:6-11, presents a stark contrast between two approaches to leadership, reflecting different generational and ideological perspectives. The narrative employs a common ancient Near Eastern literary device of contrasting counsels to highlight the critical nature of Rehoboam's decision (Sweeney, 2007). The advice from the elders (*zūqēnīm*) in vv. 6-7 embodies an empathetic approach and focuses on servant leadership (Onukwuba, Idornigie, Ekpe & Paul, 2023). Their counsel, "If today you will be a servant to this people and serve them" (*im-hayyôm Ti/hyè-`e`bed lă`ām hazzè wa/`abadTām*), emphasizes the king's role as a servant to his people. Brueggemann (2000) affirms that this perspective aligns with ancient Near Eastern concepts of kingship, where the ruler was expected to ensure the welfare of his subjects. The elders' advice reflects a nuanced understanding of political realities and the importance of maintaining popular support.

In contrast, the young men's (*yūlādīm*) advice in vv. 8-11 represents an authoritarian approach focused on power and intimidation. Their suggestion to say, "My little finger is thicker than my father's waist" (*qā|ʔonnī `ābā mimmotné `ābī*), is a vivid metaphor emphasizing Rehoboam's supposed superiority over Solomon. The threat to increase the people's burden and to discipline them with scorpions instead of whips is a clear escalation of oppressive tactics (Cogan, 2001). From a historical-critical perspective, this juxtaposition of advice may reflect actual tensions within the Israelite court. The elders likely represented the established political elite who understood the fragility of the united monarchy, while the young men might have embodied a new generation eager to assert royal power more forcefully (Miller & Hayes, 2006).

The Hebrew text's use of the term "*yūlādīm*" (usually translated as "young men") for Rehoboam's peers is noteworthy. While Rehoboam was likely around forty years old at this time (1 Kgs 14:21), the text infantilizes his advisors, possibly critiquing their immaturity and lack of wisdom (Frolov, 2018). This episode also reflects broader themes in the Deuteronomistic history regarding proper kingship. The elders' advice aligns more closely with the ideal of kingship presented in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, which emphasizes humility and service. The young men's counsel, by



contrast, represents the kind of royal excess and oppression that the Deuteronomist often criticizes (Levinson, 2001). The consultation scene thus serves multiple narrative and theological functions. Alter (2013) for instance, writes that it provides a rationale for the impending schism, critiques certain forms of kingship, and illustrates the consequences of rejecting wisdom. Moreover, it sets up the tragic irony of Rehoboam's decision, as the reader is made aware of the better path not taken.

iv. Rehoboam's Decision (vv. 12-15)

The narrative of Rehoboam's decision in 1 Kgs 12:12-15 presents a crucial turning point in Israelite history, marked by the new king's fateful choice and its immediate consequences. The return of the people after three days (*wayyābô yorob`ām wükol-hä`ām*) creates a sense of anticipation and tension, setting the stage for Rehoboam's response (Sweeney, 2007). Rehoboam's harsh response, choosing to follow the advice of the young men, is conveyed through strong language: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke" (*'äbî hikBîd 'e/t-`ullükem wa`ânî `ösîp `a/l-`ullükem*). The use of the root *kbd* (to be heavy) emphasizes the increasing burden, while the contrast between "my father" and "I" underscores Rehoboam's determination to assert his own authority (Cogan, 2001). This response reflects a misunderstanding of the political realities and the delicate balance required to maintain the united monarchy.

The text's notation of divine influence, "for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord" (*Kî/-häytâ siBBâ mē`im yhwh*), introduces a theological dimension to the historical narrative. This statement aligns with the Deuteronomistic perspective that sees God's hand guiding historical events, often as a response to human actions (Nelson, 1987). In this case, it refers back to the prophecy given to Jeroboam by Ahijah (1 Kgs 11:29-39), creating a sense of divine causality in the unfolding events. This episode reflects the complex political dynamics of the time. The united monarchy, a relatively recent development in Israelite history, was built on a fragile foundation of tribal alliances and centralized authority. Rehoboam's decision exacerbates existing tensions between the northern and southern tribes, which had different economic interests and historical experiences (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006).

The harsh response also indicates a shift in the nature of Israelite kingship. While David and Solomon had to balance royal authority with the interests of tribal leaders, Rehoboam appears to be attempting to assert a more absolute form of monarchy, possibly influenced by surrounding nations or by an inflated view of royal prerogative (Miller & Hayes, 2006). The mention of divine causality raises important questions about the relationship between human free will and divine providence in the Deuteronomistic worldview. While Rehoboam makes his own decision, the text suggests that this aligns with a larger divine plan. This theological interpretation of historical events is a key feature of the Deuteronomistic history, that provides a framework for understanding national successes and failures (Römer, 2007; Richard, Paul & Azuwike, 2024). Moreover, the decision scene serves as a critique of kingship that fails to embody the ideals of servant leadership. Rehoboam's rejection of the elders' advice, indicates his failure to fulfill the covenantal responsibilities of a king towards his people, as outlined in texts like Deuteronomy 17:14-20



(Levinson, 2001). This critical moment in the narrative not only explains the historical division of the kingdom but also serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of poor leadership and the complex interplay between human choices and divine will in shaping history.

vi. **The People's Reaction (vv. 16-19)**

The people's reaction to Rehoboam's harsh decision, as depicted in 1 Kgs 12:16-19, marks a decisive moment in Israelite history, resulting in the permanent division of the united monarchy. The rejection of the Davidic dynasty is encapsulated in the powerful declaration, "What share do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse" (*mà-llänû Hē'leq Būdäwîd wüöl/ 'naHâlâ Būben-yîšay*). This rhetorical question and statement reflect a deep-seated resentment and a rejection of the southern-based Davidic rule (Sweeney, 2007).

The call to return to their tents, "To your tents, O Israel!" (*lū 'öhälÊ^okä yiSrä 'ël*), is not merely a dispersal order but a repudiation of centralized authority. This phrase echoes similar calls in earlier periods of Israelite history, such as during Sheba's revolt (2 Samuel 20:1), suggesting a return to a more decentralized, tribal-based social structure (Cogan, 2001). The departure of the northern tribes represents a literal and symbolic break from the united monarchy. The text's statement *wayyē'lek yiSrä 'ël lū 'öhäläyw* (Israel went to their tents) indicates not just a physical departure but a withdrawal of political allegiance. This schism had been foreshadowed by earlier tensions between north and south, dating back to the time of David (2 Samuel 19-20), and reflects the fragile nature of the united monarchy (Finkelstein & Silberman, 2006). The appointment of Jeroboam as king over Israel is presented as a natural consequence of these events. The Hebrew text uses the term *wayyimlök* (he reigned), suggesting a popular acclamation rather than a formal coronation ceremony. This reflects the different political traditions of the northern tribes, where kingship was often seen as more elective than hereditary (Miller & Hayes, 2006).

The note that only Judah remained loyal to Rehoboam underscores the extent of the division. The use of the term *Būbêt Däwîd* (house of David) emphasizes the dynastic nature of the southern kingdom's loyalty, contrasting with the more fluid political allegiances in the north (Na'aman, 1996). From a historical-critical perspective, this account of the kingdom's division likely reflects later theological interpretations of historical events. The Deuteronomistic historians, writing centuries after these events, shaped the narrative to explain the political realities of their time and to provide a theological framework for understanding Israel's history (Römer, 2007). The swift and decisive nature of the division as presented in the text may simplify what was likely a more complex and gradual process. Archaeological evidence suggests that the distinction between Israel and Judah developed over time, with varying degrees of cooperation and conflict (Mazar, 2010). The narrative also serves to legitimize the southern kingdom's claim to be the true inheritor of the Davidic covenant, despite controlling only a small portion of the former United Kingdom. By emphasizing Judah's loyalty, the text reinforces the idea of a continuing Davidic line, crucial for later messianic expectations (Levenson, 1985).



Moreover, the people's reaction and the resulting schism are presented as a fulfillment of divine will, connecting back to the prophecy of Ahijah (1 Kgs 11:29-39). This theological interpretation of political events is a hallmark of the Deuteronomistic history, which seeks to understand Israel's past through the lens of covenant theology (Cross, 1973). In conclusion, this passage not only narrates a pivotal moment in Israelite history but also reflects the complex interplay of political, social, and theological factors that shaped the understanding and interpretation of that history in subsequent generations.

8. Theology and Emotional Intelligence in 1 Kgs 12:1-19

The story of Rehoboam and the division of the kingdom in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 12:1-19) has significant theological implications. It is presented as part of God's plan for Israel, not just a political upheaval (Knoppers, 1993). The text suggests that Rehoboam's actions were the immediate cause of the split, but it was ultimately part of God's design to punish Solomon's idolatry (Provan, 1995). This theological perspective adds complexity to understanding leadership and divine sovereignty, suggesting that even poor decisions can serve a greater purpose within the divine plan (Brueggemann, 2000). The story also connects to wisdom literature, particularly Proverbs, as the contrast between elders' counsel and young advisors echoes themes about wisdom and discernment in leadership (Longman, 2006).

Additionally, the narrative serves as a case study on the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership. Rehoboam's interactions reveal his limited self-awareness and poor self-regulation, demonstrating his impulsive desire for power and dominance. His delayed response to the people's petition for a lighter burden demonstrates a lack of empathy towards their concerns. Rehoboam's decision to follow the advice of the elders demonstrates poor judgment and a lack of self-awareness about the consequences of his actions. His harsh response to the people demonstrates poor communication and leadership skills, a lack of empathy, and an inability to read the emotional climate of his subjects. The consequences of Rehoboam's emotional intelligence failure are swift and severe, leading to the rejection of his authority and the division of the kingdom. This narrative serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of emotionally intelligent leadership, demonstrating that effective leadership requires not just political acumen or divine sanction but also the ability to understand, connect with, and respond appropriately to the emotional needs of others.

9. The Philosophy of Emotional Intelligence through the Lens of Scripture

The intersection of philosophy and scripture provides a rich perspective for exploring fundamental questions about leadership, human nature, and societal dynamics. This study examines the concept of emotional intelligence through the lens of 1 Kgs 12: 1-19, a narrative in the Hebrew Bible, employing a philosophico-biblical methodology that combines conceptual analysis with biblical exegesis (Kanu, 2010, 2011, 2012). The story of Rehoboam's reign and the subsequent division of the Israelite kingdom serves as a compelling case study for understanding the critical role of emotional intelligence in leadership. Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized emotional



intelligence as a crucial factor in effective leadership across various domains (Goleman, 2010; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2012). However, the philosophical underpinnings of this concept and its manifestations in ancient texts remain underexplored.

Emotional intelligence, defined as “the ability to manage both your own emotions and understand the emotions of people around you” (Mental Health America, 2023), encompasses five key elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These elements are strikingly evident – or notably absent – in the biblical account of Rehoboam’s fateful decision. The narrative in 1 Kgs 12: 1-19 reveals Rehoboam’s interactions with his advisors and subjects, highlighting critical aspects of emotional intelligence. His lack of self-awareness, poor self-regulation, and failure to empathize with his people’s concerns demonstrate significant deficits in emotional intelligence (Cogan, 2001; Brueggemann, 2000). The consultation scene, where Rehoboam rejects the wisdom of the elders in favor of his young advisors’ harsh counsel, further emphasizes these deficiencies (Miller & Hayes, 2006).

From a philosophical perspective, this narrative raises important questions about the nature of wisdom, the ethics of leadership, and the interplay between divine sovereignty and human free will. The story is presented as part of God’s plan for Israel, not just a political upheaval (Knoppers, 1993), adding complexity to our understanding of leadership and divine providence. The consequences of Rehoboam’s emotional intelligence failure – the rejection of his authority and the division of the kingdom – illustrate how a leader’s lack of emotional competencies can lead to the breakdown of social and political structures (Sweeney, 2007). This outcome underscores the importance of empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation in leadership roles.

This ancient narrative offers timeless insights into the critical role of emotional intelligence in governance, conflict resolution, and human relations. By examining Rehoboam’s reign through the lens of modern emotional intelligence concepts, we gain a deeper understanding of both the biblical text and the enduring relevance of emotional intelligence in leadership. The philosophico-biblical approach employed in this study demonstrates the potential for integrating insights from philosophy, theology, psychology, and leadership studies. It paves the way for future research at the nexus of these disciplines, potentially informing both academic discourse and practical leadership applications.

10. Conclusion

This study has examined the intersection of philosophy and scripture through the lens of emotional intelligence in the context of 1 Kgs 12: 1-19. It employed a philosophico-biblical methodology through which it illuminated the significant role that emotional intelligence plays in leadership and decision-making, both in ancient narratives and contemporary settings. The narrative of Rehoboam’s reign provides a fascinating case study, demonstrating how a leader’s deficiencies in emotional intelligence – specifically in self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills – can lead to adverse societal outcomes, such as the division of the Israelite kingdom.



The analysis of Rehoboam's interactions with his advisors and subjects reveals critical deficits in emotional intelligence, which were instrumental in his leadership failures. This study situates these findings within broader philosophical discussions of wisdom, ethics, and human nature, underscoring the timeless relevance of scriptural wisdom to modern leadership theory and practice. The consequences of Rehoboam's actions highlight the importance of emotionally intelligent leadership for maintaining social cohesion and effective governance.

Furthermore, this interdisciplinary approach not only enriches our understanding of a critical moment in biblical history but also demonstrates the potential for integrating insights from philosophy, theology, psychology, and leadership studies. It paves the way for future research at the nexus of these disciplines, potentially informing both academic discourse and practical leadership applications. In conclusion, the study underscores the necessity for modern leaders to cultivate emotional intelligence to navigate the complexities of human interactions and societal dynamics effectively. By means of bridging ancient wisdom and contemporary leadership theories, this research contributes to the emerging field of the philosophy of emotional intelligence and offers valuable insights for both scholarly inquiry and practical implementation in leadership development.

11. Recommendations

The following are recommendations considered to be the proceeds from this study:

- a) Educational institutions should consider developing interdisciplinary curricula that combine philosophy, theology, psychology, and leadership studies. This approach can provide a holistic understanding of emotional intelligence and its application in various fields.
- b) Modern leadership development programs should integrate emotional intelligence training. Emphasizing self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills can enhance leaders' ability to connect with and manage their teams effectively.
- c) Scholars should explore other biblical narratives and ancient texts to uncover additional insights into emotional intelligence. Comparative studies can highlight universal principles of emotional intelligence and their relevance across different cultures and historical periods.
- d) Leadership studies can benefit from incorporating philosophico-biblical methodologies. By examining leadership through both philosophical and scriptural lenses, researchers and practitioners can gain deeper insights into the ethical and emotional dimensions of effective leadership.

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