ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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A VIRTUE-BASED REFLECTION ON THE GOLDEN RULE AS A BASIS OF UNIVERSAL MORALITY

BY

JOSEPH K. RONOH (DPT/LMR/2008/16)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION

AUGUST, 2020

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DECLARATION AND APPROVALS

This is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other University.

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ABSTRACT

The term 'Golden Rule' (GR) is used in reference to the maxim, "Do to others as you would have them do to you". Variant GR formulations have been developed such as the 'Silver Rule' which says, "Do not treat others as you would not like them to treat you", and the 'Copper Rule' (also known as 'Platinum Rule') which states, "Do unto others what they would have you do to them". The studies that have been conducted on the GR have largely focused on the action aspect which has proved untenable because of human inability to observe rules. This study sought to explore the GR in the context of the virtue of 'beingness' or cultivation of character with a view to determining its potentiality as a basis of universal morality. With regard to the methodology, both the primary and secondary sources relevant to the study were identified, interpreted, analysed and synthesized. Therefore, instead of dwelling on "what one ought to do" which is the focus of deontological, teleological and/or utilitarian perspectives, the study adopted a virtue-based approach to the GR which concentrates on "what one ought to be". In other words, 'being' precedes (and transcends) 'doing'. The study has attempted to avoid any religious and/or secular excesses or biases in order to remain neutral and maintain a universal breadth. The research established that the GR, viewed from a virtue-based approach which focuses on the beingness or character of the moral agent, transcends the religious, traditional and cultural norms in that it prioritizes the moral agent in determining the moral action; hence would serve as a basis of universal morality especially in a 'global village'. The study, then, recommends that the concept of building character or 'beingness' should be adopted by religions or communities in order to attain the ultimate requirements of the GR. This approach to morality would not only guard against potential moral tensions and/or competition and instead encourage a give-and-take attitude towards building a global morality. Further study on the virtue-based or 'beingness' of the GR could be customized to institutional, religious, cultural and even political settings.

DEDICATION

This work is, first and foremost, dedicated to God almighty for his grace upon my life. It is also dedicated to my dear wife, Sophia, for her unqualified support and steady encouragement during my labourious journey of the study. Her persistent prayer and best wishes have not been in vain. To our sons, Nathan and Ebenezer, their patience and discipline gave me more strength, confidence and courage to continue with the study. Last, but not least, this study is dedicated to all men and women of goodwill who wish to make the age-old Golden Rule maxim a way of life towards an all-inclusive world founded on the virtues of love, forgiveness, peace, compassion and honesty.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
Ac.	The book of "Acts" in the Bible
AD	*Anno Domini* (Latin) meaning "in the year of the Lord"
BC	Before Christ
CE	Common Era
CI	Categorical Imperative
CM	Common Morality
CR	Copper Rule
Chron.	The book of "Chronicles" in the Bible
Col.	The letter to the "Colossians" in the Bible
Cor.	The letter to the "Corinthians" in the Bible
De doct. Chr.	*De Doctrina Christiana*
Deut.	The book of "Deuteronomy" in the Bible
Etc.	*Et cetera* (Latin) meaning "and so forth" or "and other things"
Ezek.	The book of "Ezekiel" in the Bible
Gal.	The letter to the "Galatians" in the Bible
Gen.	The book of "Genesis" in the Bible
GCs	Geneva Conventions
GE	Global Ethic
GEs	Global Ethics
GR	Golden Rule
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (Latin), meaning "for example"
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
i.e.	*id est* (Latin), which means "that is"
Jn.	The gospel according to "John" in the Bible
Jos.	The book of "Joshua" in the Bible
Kgs.	The book of "Kings" in the Bible
Lev.	The book of "Leviticus" in the Bible

Lk.	The gospel according to “Luke” in the Bible
Mat.	The gospel according to “Matthew” in the Bible
Mk.	The according to “Mark” in the Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NNRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Num.	The book of “Numbers” in the Bible
Pet.	The letter of “Peter” in the Bible
PEV	Post-Election Violence
Rom.	The letter to the “Romans” in the Bible
NRSV	Revised Standard Version
Sam.	The book of “Samuel” in the Bible
SAPS	South African Police Service
SR	Silver Rule
TED	Technology, Entertainment and Design
Thess.	The letter to the “Thessalonians” in the Bible
TJRC	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

DEFINITION OF TERMS

BEINGNESS: The quality or essence ('beingness') of life in an individual characterized by compassion, love, care and/or feeling for oneself and especially for others.

CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE (CI): A term used in reference to the principle that was formulated by German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), which states that "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (Kant, 1993:4.421).

CLASSICAL UTILITARIANISM: A type of teleological theory; it defines right action in terms of promotion of happiness, and wrong action in terms of pain or the reverse of happiness (Mill, 1863:10). In the words of Bentham (1977:393), utilitarianism is "the greatest happiness [*pleasure*] of the greatest number".

COMMON MORALITY (CM): Refers to the minimum binding moral values that cut across cultures and/or religions. These are values or norms that people know instinctively and are applicable to all humans regardless of their historic time and place (Gert, M, & Clouser, 1997:10).

COMMONNESS: A state of being that is shared by all. When applied to humans, it is simply that state of being a person just like any other – that is, without regard to race, religion, social status or culture.

COPPER RULE (CR) or PLATINUM RULE (PR): A precept that says, "Do unto others what they would have you do unto them" or "Do not do unto others what they would not have you do unto them". The term 'Copper Rule' was coined by Yong Huang (2005:405-406) as an alternative to both the GR and the SR, arguing that the uniqueness of the desires of the recipients, rather than ours, should take precedence in our actions.

DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS: Derived from the Greek woods *deon* ('duty' or 'obligation') and logos ('study' or 'science'), is a moral theory that

holds that certain acts are obligatory or not obligatory, regardless of the consequences of their performance or non-performance. Thus, unlike consequentialism which holds that an act is morally permissible if and only if it has the best overall consequences, deontology insists that certain acts are morally forbidden even when they would lead to better results overall (Kant, 2002:142).

DIVINE COMMAND THEORY: The view that morality is dependent on God and that moral obligation consists in obedience to God's command. It claims that morality is ultimately based on the commands and character of God, and that morally right action is the one that God commands or authorizes (Austin, 2020:2).

DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA (*de doct. Chr.*): Refers to the four (4) books/volumes of St. Augustine of Hippo written between AD 396 and 426. It is a collection of exegetical works to guide the reader in understanding and/or interpreting the sacred scriptures.

ETHICAL EGOISM: An ethical theory that declares an action as good if it produces or is likely to produce results that maximizes the individual's self-interest. Thus, self-happiness is the highest moral purpose for an ethical egoist (Rand, 1964:30)

ETHICS AND MORALITY: The two words shall be treated as synonyms and used interchangeably in this study. *Ethics* is to Greek (*ethos* – "spirit", "Character", "habit") as *Morality* is to Latin (*mores* or *moralis* – "customs", "habits", "practices", "traditions") (Fransson, 2017:73). Thus, both terms address the subject of conduct (good/bad, right/wrong) in a given community or context.

EXEGESIS: A critical analysis, interpretation or explanation of a written work. With respect to religious writings, exegesis involves analysing the text in terms of its original or earliest language/s and context so as to deduce its structural and theological meaning. It is, however, beyond the scope of this study to apply exegesis in its strictest sense; rather the religious texts

referred to herein are those that lend credence to the GR and/or the overall argument of the study.

GENEVA CONVENTIONS (GCs): According to Miriam Webster dictionary, GCs means a "series of agreements [treaties], concerning treatment of prisoners of war and of the sick, wounded, and dead in battle first made at Geneva, Switzerland in 1864 and subsequently accepted in later revisions by most nations".

GLOBAL ETHIC (GE): An ethical perspective that claims the existence of basic common values, standards, norms, and attitudes that can be affirmed by all religions and supported by non-religious persons (Küng, 2005:1).

GLOBAL ETHICS (GEs): A critical ethical perspective/enquiry into the nature and justification of values and norms that are globally recognized (Dower, 1998:2).

GLOBAL MORALITY (GM): A moral disposition that engenders mutual respect, dignity and equality among human beings across the globe.

GLOBAL VILLAGE: The interconnectedness, especially technologically, of the world to the extent that it has been perceived as a single global community in spite of diverse ideological backgrounds.

GLOBALIZATION: A process of integration and interdependence of human beings across national boundaries in terms of economy, politics, technology, culture and moral values (Irani & Noruzi, 2011:216).

GNOSTICISM: The belief that the demiurge or a lesser divinity created the world and that Christ, the emissary or esoteric knowledge (*gnosis* – 'to know') of the remote Supreme Being, came to liberate the divine spark that had been trapped within the human body, matter (Dillon, 2010:24).

GOD: The Supreme Being who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; is all knowing, all-powerful, ubiquitous and perfect. This study takes the theistic or monotheistic understanding of God as its point of departure but acknowledges other positions as well.

GOLDEN RULE (GR): A term that is popularly used in reference to the maxim, "Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you" or "Do not do unto others what you would not like them to do unto you." It is the act of treating other people impartially irrespective of their colour, religion, ethnicity, race or geographical location. This study takes the GR as an approach that transcends the natural law or the ethic of reciprocity.

GOOD: George E. Moore (Moore, 1959:13) argued that 'good' is indefinable because of what he termed as 'naturalistic fallacy' or a situation in which a term is used in an argument that may not be related to its definition. For instance, hedonists might associate 'pleasure' with good while utilitarians may equate 'good' with usefulness. Moore preferred pointing at an action or a thing and declaring it good or otherwise. Thus, Moore proposed moral intuitionism as a determinant of the 'good'. The 'good' in this study is the absence of self-centredness. It is the ability to empathize with, and have compassion for other people without regard to race, gender, status, nationality or religion.

LAW: Unless the context suggests otherwise, law in this study refers to a system of rules (that is, legal system) which regulates the actions of the citizens of a country. Such rules (laws) are normally enforced through a court of law where punishments and/or acquittals are pronounced.

LEX TALIONIS: (from Latin *lex* – 'law'; and *talion* – 'sameness') means a rule (law) of punishment for crime according to which the retribution should strictly correspond to, or be proportional to the harm inflicted (Nissel, 2009:114).

MORAL AGENT/SUBJECT: The initiator of the action or the 'you' in the GR maxim, "Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you" or "Do not do unto others what you would not like them to do unto you." A moral agent is that being who is capable of acting according to some notion of right and wrong and is willing to be held accountable for the action/s.

OTHERS: The recipients or patients of the action/s from the agent in the GR maxim.

PERSONHOOD: The quality or condition of being a human being.

PRINCIPLE OF COMPOSITIONALITY: A rule, which states that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its parts and the rules used to combine them (Santos, 2017:109).

RECIPROCITY: Derived from the Latin word '*reciprocus*', which means 'moving back and forth'. It describes a situation where goods or benefits move back and forth between participants (Molm & collet, 2007:200). Essentially, reciprocity operates on the philosophy of 'I will scratch your back and you will scratch mine' or 'I will be kind to you if you are kind to me'.

RELATIVISM: The denial that there are certain types of universal and/or fixed truths. Basically, relativism is against absolutism (or the view that some truths are universally applicable), objectivism (or the belief that certain truths exist independently of human knowledge or perception of them) and monism (or the position that there can be no more than one correct opinion, judgment or norm).

RELIGION: Means to ascribe honour, respect and reverence to a supreme or divine being. In other words, it is the belief in God or gods, often expressed in worship or ritual/s. This study uses 'religion' with special reference to the Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

SILVER RULE (SR): A maxim that states, "One should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated" – also known as the negative form of the GR. The term 'Silver Rule' is attributed to Robert Spitzer (1932-2015) although the principle (also known as the principle of non-maleficence) has been in existence for over 3,000 years. The proponents of the SR claim that unlike the GR which tends to emphasize on rewarding bad conduct or being nice even to those who mistreat us, it insists on rewarding good deeds and punishing bad ones.

SOLIPSISM: The view that claims that only oneself or one's own consciousness exists. In other words, solipsism (or egocentrism) holds that the individual stands in isolation from any other person or external things that may exist.

SUBJECTIVISM: The notion that what is right or wrong is determined by the individual's belief and conscience.

TELEOLOGICAL ETHICS or **CONSEQUENTIALISM:** It comes from the Greek word *telos* meaning 'goal', 'end' or 'purpose'. It is an ethical theory that maintains that the rightness of an action is determined by its ability to achieve the goal of maximizing the good [end] results (Baumane-Vitolina, Cals, & Sumilo, 2016:110). In essence, it does not matter what one does in order to maximize the consequences. Variants of teleological ethics include *classical utilitarianism* and *ethical egoism*.

UNIVERSAL: That which concerns humanity and/or other species around the world.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR): An affirmation that was adopted by the UN's General Assembly in 1948. The declaration was informed by the experiences of the two World Wars. It consists of thirty (30) articles touching on a whole range of basic rights such as right to life, freedom of thought, right to liberty and security, right to democracy, right to fair and public hearing, among others (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2015:8-62).

UNITED NATIONS (UN): An international organization formed in 1945 whose headquarters is in Manhattan, New York. The UN is responsible for increasing political and economic cooperation and maintenance of order among member countries. Currently the UN has 193-member states.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The world is in great agony, distress and hopelessness due to moral decay, marginalization, religious strife and political tensions. Globalization in the disciplines of economy, technology, trade and labour markets has been accompanied with globalization of problems and thus there is an urgent need for an ethical principle that would provide a solution to the impending systemic collapse.

There is a worrying moral decline around the world to a level that humanity is "not morally disengaged, adrift, or alienated, but morally obliterated… not morally *illiterati;* but morally vacant" (Wells, 1998:13). This unfortunate situation is blamed on substituting the clarification of values for character formation – a trend that has resulted in losing moral consciousness altogether. In other words, emphasis has been placed on reason or making sense of life at the expense of enhancing or praciticing a virtuous behaviour (Kilpatrick, 1992:27). Character formation is a conscious effort to cultivate virtue by engaging the cognitive, affective and behavioural faculties with the resultant effect of moral knowing (judging what is right), moral feeling (caring deeply about what is right) and moral action (doing what is right) (Lickona, 1999:82).

Consequently, as humans began to concentrate on making sense of life rather than on character formation, right or wrong, good or evil are no longer dictated by religion and/or society, but by one's own self-interest. Part of the reason for this turn of events is the fact that cyberspace is now the place to hang out rather than community centres, parks, local dinners, etc. Besides, many young people fall prey to their peers and older people (or the so-called 'sponsors') who preach water and drink wine. Consequently, morality is quickly becoming a façade – people simply play religion and, by extension, moral values.

With regard to the above, the study explores the Golden Rule (GR) from a virtue-based perspective as a potential moral principle towards turning around the apparent global moral declension. Granted that the GR is widely acknowledged (though in different formulations) by many religions, cultures, ethical systems and secular philosophies, it has become evident that the interpretation of the maxim is not the same especially when applied to morality.

The study analyses the GR in contrast and/or in comparison with other formulations or maxims that have been associated with it. In that connection, some selected individuals and/or theories that recognize the GR in either the positive or the negative formulations have been examined in their respective contexts or traditions and in relation to the GR.

The study recognizes the uniqueness of the GR in that although it could have originated from a cultural setting, it went beyond the moral status quo of the community. Further, when juxtaposed with Hillel's (Jewish rabbi) GR formulation, the GR is positive while Hillel's ("What is hateful to you, to your fellow don't do" – Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a) is negative. Similarly, several traditions, ethicists and/or thinkers (e.g. Hinduism, Judaism, Humanism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Socrates, Aristotle, etc.) preferred the negative formulation of the GR.

Moreover, as part of the hermeneutical approach, the study investigates the implications of the constituent parts of the GR statement, "Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you". Therefore, the basic (common) human actions that the verb *do* denotes in the precept were highlighted. Besides, the identity and inferences of the agent, represented by the verb *you*, were explored. Further, the extent, in terms of universality or otherwise, of the verb *others* in the GR maxim was examined. A clear understanding of the threefold aspects (action, agent and recipient) of the GR would not only minimize the misinterpretations of the principle, but also lead to far-reaching implications of the GR especially with reference to morality.

The broad-based immigration patterns (through intermarriages, political asylums, etc.) in recent decades is increasingly shrinking humanity toward a global society or village with interaction among people in every conceivable way – economically, politically, socially, morally, culturally, technologically and religiously. Indeed, there is an emergence of a global consciousness – i.e. people seeing themselves as members of one family in an interdependent universe.

However, despite the close proximity of world communities through the above means, marginalization and suspicion still linger in the minds of many – marginalization because of the perception that certain groups are not recognized when matters of global concern are being discussed; and suspicion or fear because the concept of globalization is viewed by some as bearing hegemonic undertones. This is evident in Prempeh's concern that globalization has for a long time taken a 'top-down' approach or globalization-from-above (that is, from the developed world to the exclusion of the developing world) – a trend that has elicited counter-hegemonic reaction of 'down-up' or globalization-from-below in an effort to recognize the African and other Majority World voices (Prempeh, 2004:582).

Global consciousness has aroused interest among educators, humanitarians, social justice activists and religious adherents in developing a universal morality or what is now known as Global Ethic (GE). The aim of the GE project is to address issues of racism, violence, poverty, militarism, sexism, intercultural and/or religious strife among others in such a way that the product is a global citizen (with both rights and responsibilities) living in a global village (Küng, 1998). Küng[1], through the GE project based on the GR, presupposes mutual

[1] Hans Küng is a Swiss Catholic priest, theologian, philosopher and author. He is notable for his rejection of the doctrine of infallibility – a stand that made him suffer disownment by the church as Roman Catholic theologian although his priestly duties were not revoked. Küng has been the President of *Stiftung Weltethos* (Foundation for a Global Ethic) since 1995.

collaboration and unity among global citizens irrespective of race, religion, culture and/or political convictions.

One would, however, ask the question: Is not the global situation too polarized (religiously, politically, socially, culturally, morally, etc.) to allow for unity or commonality? Religiously, splits are evident both within and between major world religions – Catholicism has splinter groups[2] within itself and is constantly suspicious of other groups especially the Protestants; then there is the rather enduring tension between Islam and Christianity. Moreover, in the Roman Catholic Church, cases are rife of women and children suffering from sexual abuse committed by the priests who ostensibly enjoy the protection of the church hierarchy (Bruni & Burkett, 2002:65). For example, in 2018 a grand jury in the state of Pennsylvania (USA) upon receipt of a report on sexual abuse by the priests from six of the eight state's Catholic dioceses, confirmed that there were over 1,000 identifiable victims of sexual abuse but had been concealed by the church leadership (Otterman & Goodstein, 2018:14).

Politically or culturally there is the 'super power' mentality often fuelled by the insatiable desire for political and/or cultural supremacy. President Trump's political slogan, "Making America Great Again" in 2016 no doubt raised jitters among the African Americans and immigrants living in the United States of America. Questions around the implications of the slogan have been raised – e.g., which 'golden age' in the past was Trump hinting at? Could it be in reference to the time when blacks suffered segregation after slavery; or the time when women were denied both their voting rights and control over their bodies;

[2] For instance, the Austro-Hungarian, German, Swiss Catholics who, following the First Vatican Council in 1870, rejected the declaration of papal infallibility and left the Catholic Church to form their own churches, independent of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the pope. Also, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC) which in 1920 formed an independent church as a reaction to RCC's opposition to modernism – a doctrine which advocated for the rejection of traditional beliefs, philosophy and moral values and instead emphasized self-consciousness or self-reference. CHC ordained its first female priest in 1947 and consecrated its first female bishop in 1999. Then in 2009, a controversial splinter group of the RCC was registered in Jinja, Uganda. The group allows its priests to marry either before or after ordination.

or the period when the Japanese and Mexicans were objects of American brutality? In other words, illusions of cultural or racial superiority (or the notion of 'indispensability') and discrimination still preoccupy the minds of some western nations/races.

Akin to the political polarization, is the social division whereby certain groups look down on others, which results in dehumanization or removal of human-ness from other humans. For instance, European colonists dehumanized Native Americans; the Nazi dehumanized the Jews and, conversely, the Germans were dehumanized by their enemies. Consequently, the victims were perceived as creatures that seemed human – that is, having human-looking form, walking on two legs, speaking human language and acting in more or less human ways, but were nonetheless not human; rather, they were subhuman (Smith, 2011:11). Dehumanizing descriptions such as "dogs" or "sons of a bitch/whore" have been used in reference to human opponents (e.g., Arabs/Palestinians against Israelis) who in turn responded in a manner that resulted in the killing of the scoffers (Smith, 2011:12). Other slurs such as "nigger" for African American individuals, "wop" for Italians and "cockroaches" for Tutsis have also been reported (Carnaghi & Bianchi, 2017). Apart from racial dehumanization, there is another category of humans that is the object of dehumanization today – e.g., immigrants and persons with mental and/or physical disabilities.

Ethically, development ethicists are divided with regard to the global order – one side arguing that it is dominated by affluent countries and hence is unjustly tilted against poor countries, while the other side attributes the failure of global development to national and local causes such as rampant corruption and lack of democratic values. Thus, one would wonder if ever the GR and, for that matter, a global morality could be an option in a situation such as this. In any case, past attempts at uniting religious groups (e.g., the Catholic Church and the Church of England [Anglican] through Malines Conversations[3] and the Week of Prayer[4])

[3] Malines Conversations were a series of five informal ecumenical conversations held between 1921 to 1927 to explore possibilities of corporate reunion between the Roman Catholic Church

collapsed and one could easily conclude that attempts at producing a universal moral system, such as the GE, are going nowhere – they are destined to fail.

This study, however, acknowledges the fact that although the end of polarization (religiously, politically or otherwise) may not be in sight, there is a universal component that is shared by all humans irrespective of race, gender or religion. That component is the simple fact of being human or 'humanness' which upon recognition, through a virtue-based (beingness) approach to the GR, would enhance the maxim as a universal moral principle.

The Global Ethic (GE) project is about basic or minimum consensus on binding values, irrevocable criteria and personal basic attitudes that keep a community together (Küng, 1998:92). The basic values or common morality (CM)[5] include fundamental right to life, the right to equal treatment and the right to be free of physical and/or psychological torture, freedom, justice, mutual respect, and love for one another, truthfulness and integrity as enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights (1948:177). This study observes that these values can only be concretized through an unwavering observance of the GR as a basic principle.

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and the Church of England. The conversations were because of a cordial relationship between Charles Lindley Wood, the President of English Church Union, and Fernand Portal, the French Roman Catholic Priest. Unfortunately, the process ended abruptly in 1925.

[4] The Week of Prayer (also known as Octave of Christian Unity) – an 8-days long annual international Christian ecumenical observance between January 18th to 25th with membership from a wide range of religious groups especially those under the umbrella of World Council of Churches (WCC). Notwithstanding the many positives across the religious divide that were achieved through the Week of Prayer, moments of tension and/or suspicion were encountered over time especially around subjects like ordination of women, abortion, ordination of gay bishops, recognition of same-sex marriages, and homosexuality. Pope John Paul II was openly opposed to these issues and reprimanded those who held divergent views – including Hans Küng who argued against Papal infallibility.

[5] Other moral philosophers such as Bernard Gert, Tom Beauchamp, James Childress, Charles Culver and Danner Clouser use terms like "commonsense morality" and "minimal morality" in a similar sense as CM. They claim that certain norms (such as against murder and/or causing pain or suffering, being truthful, keeping promises, treating other persons as equals, being honest, etc.) are shared by all cultures and societies.

By insisting on the minimum level of consensus with regard to ethics, Küng is evidently indebted to Michael Walzer who divided ethics into two different but inter-related kinds of moral argument – "Thick Ethics" or a way of talking locally (at home) about the thickness of own history, culture, religion and/or politics; and "Thin Ethics" or a way of talking to people abroad, across different cultures about thinner life that humans have in common (Walzer M., 1994:ix). Taking the cue from George Orwell's quote, which says, "There is a thin man inside every fat man" (Orwell, 1950:11), Walzer argues that there are the makings of a thin and universalist morality inside every thick and localized morality.

Thus, Küng's *humanum* and Walzer's "Thin Ethics" both imply universalism. Küng believes this kind of concept provides a minimum possible basis for humankind's common life and conduct in the face of political, social, or religious differences (Küng, 1998:97). He contends that the GR suggests the equal worth of all humans and points to a humane (rather than inhumane) treatment of one another (Küng, 1998:90). It is this 'equal worth of all humans' that this study equates with the 'image of God' as espoused by the Judeo-Christian tradition. The image of God encompasses the physical and non-physical aspects of a human being. The physical dimension includes the colour, body size or stature, health and age (old or young); while non-physical is about education, and spirituality.

Further, Küng argues that laws are necessary but are insufficient guides for conduct (Küng, 1998:252) – President Kennedy (the 35th President of the USA) during his public address on 11th June 1963, made a similar claim, "…law alone cannot make men see right" (Kennedy, 1963). Küng maintains that laws and/or rights would be dysfunctional without morals and that ethics is superior to the law because it was there before the law, and thus for any law to stand, it needs a moral foundation (Küng, 1998:109). Actually, for Küng, ethics resides in the customs, conscience and especially in the heart of an individual and hence is not examinable like the law (Küng, 1998:102). Küng recommends that

responsibility and respect for the dignity and interests of others are paramount (Küng, 1998:252).

Walzer's "Thin Ethics" and Küng's *humanum* seem to resonate with Confucius' counsel on the conduct that transcends one's borders:

> Let his words be sincere and truthful, and his actions honourable and careful; such conduct may be practiced among the rude tribes of the South and the North. If his words be not sincere and truthful, and his actions not honourable and careful, will he, with such conduct, be appreciated, even in his neighbourhood? When he is standing, let him see those two things, as it were, fronting him. When he is in a carriage, let him see them attached to the yoke. Then may he subsequently carry them into practice (The *Analects*, Ch.15:6).

The study discerns that Walzer's "Thin Ethics" and Küng's *humanum* portray partial resemblances of the 'image of God' and, by extension, the GR especially when viewed from a virtue-based perspective. The concept of the 'image of God' has been used with reference to both the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) settings. However, emphasis was put on Jesus Christ who, according to the Christian tradition, is both the ideal 'image of God' and the author of the GR (Col.1:15, NIV).

The study perceives that the image of God, like the GR, transcends the physical and non-physical spheres and that true humanity overlooks racial and/or status differences. The physical or appearance is to the surface or superficial perception as the image of God (or the 'essence') is to the inner core of a human being. Although education may expose humans to common origins such as Homo sapiens or members of a single species regardless of colour, culture or religion, unfortunately, the dehumanizing impulse sometimes overrides intellectual convictions. The study concedes that the 'essence' or 'beingness' perspective of humanity, based on the GR, transcends the racial, ethnic and religious perceptions that have historically pitted humans against one another other.

Every community has its "dos and don'ts" that shape the behaviour of their members. With the increasing series of partnerships and other human

interactions (economic, political, religious, cultural, ethical), there is need for a moral principle that can unite the people from different persuasions for the sake of a caring and peaceful 'global village' to which we all belong. Moreover, inequalities witnessed in different areas such as physical, moral, economic, etc., raise concern for a response towards reversing (or, at least slowing down) the trend. Physical or natural inequality, which has to do with age, health (sometimes) or other physical characteristics, may not be so much of an issue because that is beyond human control. Moral inequality, on the other hand, results from human conventions or consent whereby the advantaged individuals enjoy privileges over (or take advantage of) those who are not. Other forms of inequality are associated with possessions or wealth, talents or skills. Granted that humans can never have the same amount of wealth, the concern is around the ever-widening gap between those who have a lot and those who do not have much.

This disparity has made some scholars to recommend economic egalitarianism or the 'doctrine of sufficiency' where everyone is having *enough* as opposed to everyone having the *same* (Frankfurt, 1987:21). The question, however, is: How much is enough? The society is so tilted towards the 'go-for-more' mentality that when one attains one level of achievement, there is an inner craving (often with external motivation) for more. Thus, it becomes difficult to qualify (or quantify) what is enough. Moreover, the push for the doctrine of sufficiency runs the risk of interfering with the right to own property, which does not place the limit of how much one should own and forbids arbitrary deprivation of one's property (UDHR, Article 17).

With regard to the inequality of talents or skills, the Parable of the Talents in Gospel of Matthew 25:14-30 comes to mind. The passage is often used to justify that people have different abilities and hence the 'masters' or 'employers' ought to divide the amounts unequally because of the different levels of skills or

abilities of their workers. This could be taken further to justify that God created us with different skills – not all of us have the ability to be marathon runners, neurosurgeons, or even comedians.

This study comes at the backdrop of moral, economic, political, and social imbalance. With the advent of postmodernism (or the view that rejects the absolutes) and the age of 'rights', what is good or bad (right or wrong), has become a matter of personal preference or taste. In other words, the moral or immoral is entirely at the individual's discretion. It is against this background that the study has explored the GR as a basis of universal morality.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The GR is acknowledged across cultures, religions and professions. The existing works on the GR are, in the main, action oriented. However, action-oriented or reciprocity interpretation of the maxim has proved untenable because humans are more inclined to breaking rules and/or promises rather than keeping them. Moreover, humans are prone to lead hypocritical lives by saying one thing and doing the other. Arising from human inability to sustain action-oriented posture as well as an unreliable reciprocal outlook on the GR, let alone the hypocritical aspect toward the maxim, the study sought to explore the GR from a virtue-based (beingness) perspective whereby the agent's character is pre-eminent.

Therefore, the study set out to investigate the virtue-based or 'beingness' aspect of the GR as a basis of universal morality. In pursuit of this aspect, the researcher takes into account the various views on the GR and related concepts of morality that have been advanced by different religions and/or philosophies in order to elucidate the place of the GR in terms of 'beingness' with respect to morality. It is the position of this research that a virtue-based ('beingness') perspective of the GR would be the most appropriate moral standard in a 'global village' which comprises diverse cultural, economic, political and religious backgrounds because it prioritizes a caring, loving and compassionate character

of the moral agent. Moreover, this approach would provide a better alternative toward resolving social ills such as negative ethnicity or racial descrimination and the general divide between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated; because it puts a premium on the virtues of mutual respect, equality, fairness, compassion and generosity.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at demonstrating that a virtue-based deliberation on the GR as a moral principle, premised on the concept of 'beingness', would enhance positive neighbourliness among humans from diverse ideological backgrounds.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study was guided by both the broad and specific objectives as follows:

1.3.1 Broad Objective

The study sought to explore the GR from a virtue-based (beingness) perspective in relation to the maxim's perception from diverse backgrounds in order to determine its potential as a basis of universal morality.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyse the constituent parts of the GR so as to determine the precept's implications for universal morality.
2. To explore the GR in terms of the commonness (personhood) of humanity in relation to the Judeo-Christian concept of the 'image of God'.
3. To examine the GR related principles advanced by different religions, traditions and philosophies in relation to the virtue-based teaching of the GR.
4. To evaluate the objections against the GR in order to establish their biases and thereby determine the universal significance of the maxim.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How would the interpretation of the constituent parts of the GR contribute to the implications of the precept for universal morality?

2. How does the GR in relation to the commonness (personhood) of humanity and related concepts compare with the Judeo-Christian teaching of the 'image of God'?

3. How do the GR related principles advanced by different traditions and philosophies compare with the virtue-based teaching of the GR?

4. How do the objections against the GR influence its potentiality as a universal moral principle?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study notes that the current widespread dynamic interactions among peoples from diverse backgrounds (cultural, political, ethnic, social, religious, and even technological) which have reduced the world to a 'global village' calls for the need for a unifying moral principle that transcends such varied upbringings.

The contemporary moral wave of postmodernism with its rejection of absolute truth, traditional logic or rationality and objectivity in favour of irrationality and personal opinion (Brown, 2013:185; Sclapentokh, 1995:179, 189), sound the death knell for traditional values. Similarly, extreme humanism with its emphasis on the adequacy of human reason and claiming that humans are both the expressions and masters of creation (Schiller, 1903:295; Bronowski, 1968:24), suggests detaching morality from religion. Thus, according to the postmodernism and extreme humanism, morality is a human (individual) affair. In other words, what is right or wrong resides in the feelings or thoughts of the individual.

In such a situation, and in view of the fact that humans are social beings that must interact with one another, postmodern and/or secular humanistic moral

inclination could lead to moral conflicts and chaos may be inevitable. Thus, in consideration of the potential moral clash pitting secular humanism and postmodernism against religion and modernism, the significance of this study cannot be overstated. The hope for a unifying moral principle, this study recommends, lies with the GR from a virtue-based or 'beingness' approach.

Moreover, this research takes into account the numerous moral issues besetting the society today such as domestic violence, wanton arson, institutional indiscipline, corruption, racism (or negative ethnicity) and nepotism. The popular solution to these vices is filing lawsuits against the perpetrators. This method has, however, proved ineffective especially when those charged with enforcing the law apply it selectively because of certain bonds that they may have with the culprits. To be moral is not about mere observance of rules and principles because then morality would be confused with legal system/s and hence becomes ineffective or even deficient.

Therefore, while acknowledging the legal process or external controls towards a just society, this study uses a virtue-based approach to the GR, which focuses on building the character or the inner being, which provides a holistic view of the precept that cuts across, and transcends, the philosophical, cultural and/or religious affiliations.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the GR as depicted in the scripture used by the Christian church. The perspective of the GR explored is based on the 'beingness' or the character of the moral agent. Other works or philosophies reviewed are those of Friedrich Nietzsche, Hans Küng, Immanuel Kant, Sigmund Freud, Paul Ricoeur, among others. Further, the religions or traditions reflected upon include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Ubuntuism. So, the study is neither an in-depth biblical exegesis on the GR nor a detailed cultural or religious examination of the precept; rather, it is an exploration of the GR with regard to the concept of 'beingness' of the moral agent.

1.7 Conclusion

The foregoing chapter constitutes the introduction of the study. The study observes that the moral condition across the world today is mainly based on self-interest rather than on religious and/or societal ethos. This situation has, regrettably, pitted individuals against individuals, communities against communities and nations against nations. In such a scenario, the study recommends the GR from a virtue-based or 'beingness' perspective as a unifying principle. This principle focuses on building the character of the inner being and hence would cut across and transcend the cultural, religious and/or traditional affiliations.

The next chapter focuses on the literature review in relation to the interpretation of the GR from a wide range of disciplines such as philosophy, religion and culture. Moreover, a few objections and support for the GR have been highlighted. This review is done in order to establish the gap in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the authoritative literature on the meaning of the GR from diverse disciplines such as religion, philosophy and culture. Further, the chapter highlights certain objections and support for the GR. Also, statements that relate to the GR from some world leaders have been assessed. This review is done in order to establish the gap in the study.

2.1 Meaning of the Golden Rule

The term 'Golden Rule' is common to almost all religions. It has been defined as "treating others as you wish them to treat you" (Hare, 1965:34; Wattles, 1996:3). The GR was described as 'golden' in the sixteenth century to indicate its invaluableness and superiority over all the other rules (Singer, 2013:56). The term 'rule' stands for model or measure for moral conduct (Wattles, 1996:78); hence the GR has been regarded as a short, one-sentence rule that summarizes ethical contents (Gensler, 2013:208). Therefore, based on this definition, it is incumbent upon humans to imagine the impact that their actions are likely to have on others, by imagining themselves in their positions, before carrying out those actions.

Mays (1988:14-15) claims that earliest GR-like statements are found in the Judeo-Christian Old Testament written between 1600 and 1200 BC. These statements include, "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 23:9; Lev.19:34 - NRSV); and its associate, which says, "… you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev.19:18 - NRSV), and "you shall love the alien as yourself" Lev.19:34 - NRSV). Leviticus 19 is a collection of diverse religious and ethical instructions for a godly or holy living as per the expectation a holy God who identifies himself as "I am the Lord" or "I am the LORD your God" (Lev.19:2,

3, 4, 10 ,11, 18, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37 - NRSV). Gertenberger (1996:262) claims that these instructions focused on good neighbourliness within the context of one's clan or immediate community. However, Wenham (1979:273) argues that the instructions to love the neighbour and the resident alien or stranger must be interpreted within the context of shared connection and mutual responsibility of humans living in a community of faith. Therefore, for Wenham, the specific mentioning of the resident aliens in Leviticus 19:34 is a clear indication of their inclusion in the faith community and that a new dimension is given to the old familial ethos (Wenham, 1979:273).

The Golden Rule (GR) can be stated positively ("One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself") or negatively ("One should not treat others in ways that one would not like to be treated" – also known as the "Silver Rule"). The positive formulation of the GR is associated with the words of Jesus Christ in the NT division of the Christian scripture, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you…." (Mat.7:12 NRSV) or "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Lk. 6:31 NRSV). On the other hand, the negative formulation (or 'Silver Rule') of the GR is linked to Hillel's injunction, "What is hateful to you, to your fellow don't do" (*Bavli Shabbat* 31a/1.12) and to Confucius' statement, "What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men" (*Analects* 5:11).

There are at least three formulations of the GR – the positive formulation, as already referred to in the words of Jesus Christ above; the negative formulation, according to Hillel and Confucius; and the inverse formulation, which says (positively), "Do unto others what they would have you do unto them" or (negatively) "Do not do unto others what they would not have you do unto them" (Mencius, 1970:122; Huang, 2005:405-406).

The different formulations of the GR have led to a protracted contest between the supporters of the positive version and those who are for the negative and/or

inverse versions respectively. The proponents of the positive formulation argue that it is superior because it is concerned with greater extension and higher quality of actions and/or desires than the negative form (Topel, 1998:479). These defenders of the positive version of the GR have renamed the negative formulation the Silver Rule (SR) because it only prohibits an action and nothing more – that is, it neither commands nor recommends any positive action, which an ethical agent ought to do (Topel, 1998:479). This interpretation, then, suggests that instead of being a mere rule of prudence when framed negatively so as to warn against hurting other people lest they retaliate, the positive GR exponents regard it not as prudential but absolute in that it entreats us to treat others positively regardless of how they respond. Prudence requires people to treat others in anticipation of repayment – good for good and evil for evil; that is, repayment in same manner and/or measure (reciprocity).

On the other hand, the supporters of the negative version (also known as 'prohibitive' formulation) of the GR argue that it is superior to the positive (or 'prescriptive') formulation because it is not difficult to tell what is bad for us but is hard to know what is good – or, as Allinson (2003:32), a supporter of the negative version, claims, "It is much easier to paint a picture of Hell than it is to paint a picture of Heaven." This line of reasoning implies that it is much easier to rally people along what they like or know than what they do not like or do not know. Then there is the middle-way lot that would not like to stretch the difference too much between the negative and positive formulations of the GR. This group regards the difference as merely rhetorical and psychological rather than logical or moral (Singer, 1963:304).

The inverse version (also known as "Copper" or "Platinum" Rule) of the GR has also been proposed. The proponents of the CR consider it as the 'reverse' of the GR in that it prioritizes the interests of others over one's own. Yong Huang, a supporter of the CR, regards Mencius' words, "Gather what they [people] want for them and do not impose what they dislike on them", as a perfect expression

of the CR (Mencius, 1970:122; Huang Y. , 2005:405-406). Through the CR, the focus of relationship shifts from "This is what I want, so I will give everyone the same thing" to "Let me first understand what they want and then give it to them". Thus, the CR calls for learning to see things through the eyes of others and providing leadership in a way that motivates them to want to follow.

The GR has also been defined as a reciprocal or a mutual two-way relationship between oneself and others; hence the rule is a basic concept of the natural law (Pannenberg, 2003:59). Besides, the GR has been regarded as the heart of morality because it requires of the agents to imagine switching places with the recipients of their actions (Gensler, 2012:1). Moreover, by taking it together with its sibling command "…love your neighbour as yourself" (Mat. 22:39 - NRSV), the GR would be a lifesaver for humanity in that it is an outstanding way of solving the deepening, complex global crisis, or at least stopping it from getting worse.

Hare (1975:208) proposed that an actual or 'past tense' form of the GR (that is, 'doing to others what we are glad was done to us') should be used because it is premised on actual event/s as opposed to the traditional formulation which, so they claim, is hypothetical and points only to the future. In applying this 'past tense' formulation of the GR to the problem of abortion, Hare says, "If we are glad that nobody terminated the pregnancy that resulted in our birth, then we are enjoined not, *ceteris paribus* ['other things being equal'], to terminate any pregnancy which will result in the birth of a person having life like ours" (Hare, 1975:208). For those who might not be glad they were born, Hare claims that the 'past tense' GR would still serve. He argues that such ones "[*would*] still have reason for not aborting those who would be glad; for even the former wish that, if they had been going to be glad that they were born, nobody should have aborted them" (Hare, 1975:209). Hare concludes that such a rendering of the GR would protect the abortion of any foetus which will, if not terminated, turn into someone who will be glad to be alive (Hare, 1975:209).

Gensler (2013:2) has introduced a 'same situation' clause to the GR so that it reads, 'Treat others only as you would consent to being treated in the same situation' (Gensler, 2013:2). He contends that besides the 'same situation' clause, the correct formulation of the GR requires a present attitude toward a hypothetical situation[6] (Gensler, 2013:2). This 'same situation' clause attached to the GR is similar to Samuel Clarke's understanding of the rule. Clarke (1738:3) claimed that the GR should be understood as saying that we should deal with others as in like circumstances we would reasonably expect them to deal with us; and that we should, by universal benevolence, endeavour to promote the welfare and happiness of all persons. He stated that "Whatever I judge reasonable or unreasonable for another to do for me; that, by the same judgment, I declare reasonable or unreasonable, that I in the like case should do for him" (Clarke, 1738:3). As concerns the general reluctance of humans towards practising the GR, Clarke blamed it on what he called "strangely and most unnaturally corrupted state by perverse and unaccountably false opinions, and monstrous evil customs and habits, prevailing against the clearest and plainest reason in the world" (Clarke, 1738:619).

Moreover, Gensler advocates for the principle of consistency along with the GR in order to avoid absurd implications or inconsistent combinations[7] and ensure coherence in terms of facts that inform one's beliefs, imagination and acceptance of like treatment when in the same situation as that of others (Gensler, Spurgin, & Swindal, 2004:11). Similarly, Carson (2010:131) argues that for the GR to be effective, consistency demands that whatever action we

[6] Gensler proposes **KITA** procedure for the GR – **K**now ("How would my action affect others?"), **I**magine ("What would it be like to have this done to me?"), **T**est for consistency ("Am I now willing that if I were in the same situation then this be done to me?"), **A**ct toward others only as you're willing to be treated in the same situation.

[7] The consistency principle would ensure logical consistency among our beliefs, consistency about our evaluations of similar situations and consistency between our ends and means.

consider morally permissible for someone to do to another, we must not object to someone doing the same act to us (or our loved ones) in relevantly similar circumstances.

Therefore, the meaning of the GR as reviewed above, is derived from three perspectives. Firstly, the 'past tense' whereby humans would be permitted to do to others what they themselves are happy was done to them. Secondly, the 'same situation clause' which is about accepting the same action done to us even in the event of situation/s swith. Thirdly, the consistency principle which points to impartiality or ability to make similar evaluations about similar actions irrespective of the individuals involved. The next section is a review of the GR related statements or concepts from different religions and cultures.

2.2 The GR and Religion

The GR-like statements are found in the Judeo-Christian Old Testament. As already indicated elsewhere in the study, these statements include, "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 23:9 - NRSV); and its auxiliary which says, "… you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev. 19:18 - NRSV). These verses prohibit cruelty towards others including strangers. Thus, the GR and the command to love are complementary.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ spoke of the GR on two occasions – (a) in Mathew 7:12 when he encouraged his followers to continuously and persistently seek God in prayer and thereby enjoy positive acts of love; and (b) in Luke 6:31 as he challenged his disciples to be generous towards all people, including enemies or persecutors, and to love them unconditionally.

Major world religions acknowledge of the GR. Judaism subscribes to the GR as attested by the words of one of the leading Jewish rabbis, Hillel, who upon being asked by a non-Jew to teach him the whole Torah, said, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is the

explanation. Go and learn it" (Talmud, *Shabbat* 31a). Islam equates belief with the GR – number 13 of Imam *Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths* states, "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself".

Islam is an Abrahamic[8] religion, whose statement of faith (*Shahada*) reads, in part, that "there is only one God, Allah, and that Muhammad is his messenger" (Quran 37:35; 48:29). Islam is the world's second largest religion, after Christianity, with over 1.8 million followers. It is believed that Islam originated in the early 7th century CE (Common Era) in Mecca (Watt, 2003).

With regard to morality, the Quran and the Hadith (the record of Prophet Muhammad's teachings) contain a comprehensive body of moral guidance. The two accounts are resources for personal, social, political, religious and moral life of Islam adherents. The Quran in 41:34 says, "Repel [*evil*] with what is best" – therefore, a Muslim is expected to act only in good manners because bad manners and deeds earn vices (Campo, 2009).

The Islamic principle that is similar to the GR was stated several times by Prophet Muhammad as reported by Anas ibn Malik, "None of you has faith until he loves for his brother or his neighbour what he loves for himself" (Sahih Muslim, Book 1, Number 72). An-Nawawi, commenting on this tradition said:

> It is better to interpret this as brotherhood in general, such that it includes the disbeliever and the Muslim. So, he should love for his brother, the disbeliever, what he loves for himself which is his entering Islam, just as he should love for his brother Muslim that he remains in Islam. For this reason, it is recommended to supplicate for the disbeliever to be guided. The meaning of love here is an intention for good and benefit, and this meaning is religious love, not human love. [Sharh Arba'een An-Nawawi, *Hadith Number 13*].

Therefore, according to Islam, religious (Allah) love is about good intentions and benefit for all other humans (Muslims or non-Muslims), which is not the same as

[8] Derived from Abraham in the Hebrew Bible. There are three main Abrahamic religions namely: - Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

human love that is often driven by ulterior motives and ill will. Besides, love and good wishes for others are fundamental determinants of a true Muslim believer. Prophet Muhammad actually said that the love intended in his GR-like statement is one that is done as a sign of belief and for Allah's sake, as featured in the following narrations:

> By Him in whose Hand is my soul, a servant does not believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself of goodness. [Musnad Ahmad, *Number 12734, Sahih*].

> None of you has faith until he loves for the people what he loves for himself; and until he loves a person only for the sake of Allah the Exalted. [Musnad Ahmad, *Number 13463, Sahih*].

There is an interplay of divine command, deontological and consequentialist theories in the use of the GR-related maxim by Islam. It is divine command because Islam takes Allah as the source of love and hence wants his people to exercise love and goodness toward one another.

Yet the GR-like principle in Islam is also deontological because it is the yardstick of one's faith – without which the individual's faith is futile. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Muslims to exercise the GR because that is the will of Allah.

The consequentialist dimension in the use of the GR-related precept by Muslims, which is about aiming to enter Paradise, is depicted in the following narration:

> Whoever would be delighted to be delivered from the Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then let him die while he witnesses that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger; and he treats people the way he loves to be treated. [At-Tabarani, Al-Ma'jam Al-Awsat, *Number 4881, Hasan*].

Buddhism is a religion of eastern and central Asia founded by Siddhartha Gautama who was born during the 6th century BC. Siddhartha was later called "Buddha" meaning "the awakened or enlightened one" after completing 6 years' (from age 29 to 35 years old) travel of the Middle Way (that is, a life devoid of both self-affliction and physical indulgence) (Yandell,1995:92-93). Buddha

devoted his life to teaching the ideas or *Karma* ('fruits of action') and *Samsara* ('wheel of rebirth') using ready-made Indian culture.

Buddha's teachings are in the *Dhammapada*, the primary collection of his teachings. Buddhist doctrine holds that at the core of human problem is desire or craving (for wealth, pleasure, power and continued existence), which fuels the flame of continued life. Buddhism's teaching about the GR emphasizes the virtues of compassion and avoidance of unhealthy desires. This is evident in Buddha's counsel that, "There is nothing dearer to man than himself; therefore, as it is the same thing that is dear to you and to others, hurt not others with what pains yourself" (*Udanavarga,* 5:18). Actually, Buddha's three sets of teachings (Dhammapada, Udanavarga and Sutta-Nipata) refer to the GR. Dhammapada says, "He who seeks his own happiness by oppressing others, who also desire happiness, will not find happiness in his next existence" (Buddha, 1985:131). Sutta-Nipata enhances inter-human relations, "As I am, so are these. As are these, so am I. Drawing the parallel to yourself, neither kill nor get others to kill" (Buddha, 1947:705).

Further, Buddhism teaches that the solution for craving is to follow the Eightfold Path: right speech (*samma vaca*), right action (*samma kammanta*), right livelihood (*samma ajiva*), right effort (*samma vayama*), right mindfulness (*samma sati*), right concentration (*samma samadhi*), right intention (*samma sankappa*) and right view (*samma ditthi*) (Bodhi, 1999:111-112). It is this Eightfold Path ('*Maggavagga*'), which contains Buddhist ethics. These intellectual, social and meditational virtues promote the overarching qualities of charity, non-craving, universal friendliness and compassion. Buddhism maintains that suffering ceases through metaphysical and moral selflessness.

Using a universalizability criterion analogous to the GR, Buddha preached that, "All men tremble at the rod, all men fear death. One should treat one's neighbour as oneself, and therefore one should neither slay nor cause to slay" (*Dhandavagga*, v.129). Thus, Buddhism acknowledges the GR albeit negative

formulation. Buddha was concerned about the overindulgence of people with wealth, pleasure, power and continued existence, which blinded them from achieving the highest good that was attainable by acting otherwise. He then sought to provide a solution, which he found in the GR related statements like the ones above.

Buddha, in his GR formulations, was convinced that if humans treated one another fairly and lived in harmony by avoiding anger or hatred, they would have no reason to fear either punishment or death; instead, they would live happily here and hereafter. In the *Four Noble Truths* (1. Life is suffering, 2. Suffering involves a chain of causes, 3. Suffering can cease, and 4. There is a path to such cessation), Buddhist worldview regards worldly existence as fundamentally stressful and punctuated with suffering and pain (*Dukkha*) due to craving; and that putting an end to craving (by following the Eightfold Path), leads to liberation (*Nirvana*) (Chakrabarti, 1995:107).

2.3 The Golden Rule and Philosophy

Gensler (2013:76) claims that the first philosopher to have used a statement similar to the GR was Thales (624-546 BC) who, upon being asked how to live virtuously, said, "By never doing ourselves what we blame in others". Works of other notable philosophers bear traces of the GR. Confucius (551-479 BC), whose thoughts have resulted in an ideology known as Confucianism, declared, "Don't do to others what you do not want them to do to you" (*Analects* 15:24). Confucianism maintains that treating others as one would wish to be treated is benevolence in action (Mencius VII.A.4). Plato (c. 428-347 BC) said, "I'd have no one touch my property, if I can help it, or disturb it without consent on my part; if I'm a man of reason, I must treat the property of others the same way" (Plato, 1967:913a). He also wondered, "If someone dragged another away by force up the rough steep path into the sunlight, wouldn't he be pained and irritated at being treated that way?" (Plato, Book VII, 1991:514a2-517a7)

Aristotle (384-322 BC) taught, "As the virtuous man is to himself, he is to his friend also, for his friend is another self" (Aristotle, 1999:151). Thomas Hobbes 1651:97) declared, "When you doubt the rightness of your action toward another, suppose youself in the other's place. Then, when your self-love that weighs down one side of the scale be taken to the other side, it will be easy to see which way the balance turns". John S.Mill (1963:1414, Letter 1257) claimed that our duty is to do whatever maximizes the sum-total of everyone's happiness. He argued that if the several 'happinesses' (e.g. of A, B, C, etc.) are rated 'good', then the sum of all the goods must necessarily be good (Mill, 1963:1414, Letter 1257).

C. S. Lewis (1952:47) asserted that the GR sums up what everyone had always known to be right and that truly great moral teachers would never introduce new moralities – only quacks and cranks would. Jean Piaget (1997:194) held that autonomy goes with reciprocity in that mutual respect has got to be strong enough to make one feel from within oneself the desire to treat others as one would wish to be treated; and Jean-Paul Sartre (1957:20) maintained that we should treat others as if they were going to follow our example and so treat us the same way. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2002:7) argued that the precept of the GR is based on pity which he understood as doing good to oneself with as little prejudice as one can to others. As he described economic inequality as a form of psychological inequality, Rousseau warned that the situation would lead to a false view of oneself in that one would end up *appearing* rather than *being* oneself. In other words, one would try to satisfy one's ego (by seeking the praise of others) and thereby lose one's authenticity and equality and, above all, lose the pity that one would have for others in the real state of nature – a condition which Rousseau described as 'avaricious, wicked and ambitious' (Rousseau, 2002:7).

2.4 The Golden Rule and Culture

Ubuntu, a Bantu word for a situation where the virtues of compassion and humanity are observed, correlates with the GR. Mojola (2019:8) puts the meaning of *Ubuntu* in two clusters. The first cluster defines *Ubuntu* as a moral quality of a person or something that one has to possess in order to be a person. The second cluster takes *Ubuntu* as a phenomenon in which people are interconnected (Mojola, 2019:8).

Ubuntu with stems '-ntu' to which when the prefix 'mu-' is added, it becomes '*muntu*' and refers to a human being or person. Then, when the prefix 'ba-' is added to the stem '-ntu', it becomes 'bantu' which refers to human beings or persons (Ogude, 2019:2). Bantu-speaking people are spread across at least 27 countries on the African continent. The word *Ubuntu* bears the stem '-ntu' and the prefix 'ubu-', which yields 'ubuntu'. Etymologically, *Ubuntu* conveys the concept of personhood or humanness of all humans universally.

In Kiswahili language, a person is *Mtu*, and the quality of a person is *utu*, which means 'humanness'. In other African communities (e.g., Kinyarwanda and Nguni), a person is *muntu* and the quality of humanness is *Ubuntu.* Someone who kills another person is said to have lost *utu* and has become like an animal; but someone who has *ubuntu* or *utu* feels and/or cares for others. Thus, *Ubuntu* is about acknowledging and applying the values that preserve the human community (Ogude, 2019:3).

The Bantu communities categorize reality in four segments: (a) *Muntu* (plural *Bantu*) refers to the human or rational being; (b) *Kintu* (plural *Bintu*) or the non-human being (e.g., monkey, stone, etc.), which is non-rational being; (c) *Hantu* in reference to place or time – that is, spacing or temporizing being (e.g., east, yesterday, etc.); and (d) *Kuntu,* which refers to modal being in connection with contingency or determination (e.g., beauty, laughter, etc.) (Ogude, 2019:4)

Mojola (2019:6-7) highlights seven principles on which *Ubuntu* ideology is based and which bear resemblance to the GR: (1) The *principle of synthesis*,

which is concerned with the interrelatedness of things; (2) the *principle of dynamism or life force* – that is, the personalization of the cosmos, which every human being possesses; (3) the *principle of gradation* or hierarchical structure of reality with God the Creator at the top followed by spirits and divinities down to the plants and inanimate objects; (4) the *principle of communalism* where every person is viewed in relation to the whole – thus, mutual sharing or natural socialism is critical; (5) the *principle of experientialism* or empiricism that begins with the human world and regards the universe as a unified and integrated system where humans and nature live in harmony; (6) the *principle of humanism* which states that the world revolves around humans and hence activities are organized either around the normal human life cycle (birth, maturation, marriage, procreation, death) or during difficult times – communal (through drought, famine or plague) or individual (through sickness, barrenness, etc.); (7) the *principle of circumscription* (or delimitation) which expresses that all the resources that benefit humans should be shared fairly and expended responsibly for the common good in order to enhance solidarity and egalitarianism.

Based on the aforementioned principles, *Ubuntu* has been described in written sources as a philosophy, an ethic, African humanism, or a worldview. The building blocks of *Ubuntu* are human nature, humanity, humanness, good moral disposition, virtue, sense of common humanity, true humanity, essential humanity, generosity, kindness, personhood, and the like (Gade, 2012:307-308). These are the traits of a virtuous person. According to Christian Gade 2010:307), the Nguni proverb, *Muntu ngumuntu ngabantu,* ("One is a human through other humans") was used between 1993 and 1995 with reference to *Ubuntu.* However, the proverb, and related precepts, must have been in existence long before this time. In fact, the first publication that captured *Ubuntu* as a philosophical concept and/or political ideology appeared in the 1980s (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:39). *Ubuntuism* or *hunhuism*, according to Samkange and Samkange (1980:39), espouses the virtues of kindness, courtesy,

consideration and friendliness in human relations. They claim that it is "a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations … [it] inspires, permeates and radiates … regulates well-planned social and political organizations" (Samkange & Samkange, 1980:34). However, Samkange and Samkange (1980:80) observe that *ubuntuism* or *hunhuism* entails much more than just biological and/or physical human being; rather, it encompasses the *soul*, or that indefinable yet identifiable entity that is apparent in the virtues of perseverance, empathy, compassion and peace. Later in the 1990s, *Ubuntu* ideology was used in South Africa as a guiding ideal for transition from apartheid to majority rule.

Ubuntu, being an African political ideology, resembles *Ujamaa* ('familyhood') philosophy, which has been attributed to Julius K. Nyerere, the former (late) president of Tanzania. The key concepts of *Ujamaa* include, among others, 'citizenship' (*uwananchi*), 'comradeship' (*undugu*), 'unity' (*umoja*) and 'freedom' (*uhuru*) against 'imperialism' (*ubeberu*), 'capitalism' (*ubepari*) and 'parasitism' (*kupe*) (Brennan, 2006:395, 404). Nyerere got so disturbed by social inequality and injustice in Tanzanian society that he undertook reforms towards an egalitarian society that portrayed typical African extended family. Mwalimu (the name/title by which Nyerere was known because of his profession as a teacher) observed that inequality was a vice which violated human dignity and he outlined measures for its elimination. Among such measures was overhauling of the education system which at the time exhibited class and economic inequalities.

Nyerere believed that inherited colonial system of education encouraged glorifying imported knowledge and despising home-grown knowledge – a trend which he feared would hold people captive to the colonialistic (divisive) past rather than equipping them with communitarian values for a better future based on *utu*/*ubuntu* (Ogude, 2018:123). Nyerere called upon his citizens, and African peoples in general, to resist colonialism and return to their original values and traditions by enhancing group work and team building (Thenjiwe & Mulvihill,

2009:18). As a thoroughgoing humanist (socialist), Mwalimu asserted that the one and only purpose of life and society is the furtherance and/or development or welfare of humanity (Ogude, 2018:125).

Central to Ubuntu is the enhancement of human interdependence or personhood. John S. Mbiti describes the notion of interdependence or *Ubuntu* as 'I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am' (Mbiti, 1969:108-109). This 'belongingness' can only be attained by connecting with other people both during sad or happy moments. This resonates with what Sartre calls 'transcended-transcendence' – meaning, one's being is the being-for-others as opposed to existence-for-oneself (egoism) (Sartre, 1957:20). This concept of personhood or interrelatedness of a human being and his/her community, runs counter to the European individualistic (Kantian) worldview which regards the individual as autonomous, rational and the source of all rights and responsibility in the society (Ogude, 2018:2). Thus, unlike the western view of personhood which is somewhat egocentric, the African personhood is so socio-centric that if one is found lacking in *Ubuntu*, one cannot be considered a person. So, like personalism, or the view that emphasizes the significance, uniqueness and inviolability of the person as well as the person's relational and social dimension, *Ubuntu* perceives personhood as intricately intertwined with community.

At the heart of *Ubuntu* or *utu* are human dignity, sharing and caring, community belonging and selflessness. In other words, practicing the ideals of a society in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Consequently, as Ogude (2018:30) contends, "to treat any person in such a way that their *utu* is degraded is to degrade one's own *utu*."

Ultimately, the force of *Ubuntu* is to become more fully and genuinely human by living in unity with fellow human beings as Archbishop Desmond Tutu's words reveal:

> The essence of being human…I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness; it speaks about compassion. A person with Ubuntu is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such people are open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, do not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole. They know that they are diminished when others are treated as if they were less than they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them (Tutu, 2000:31).

As such, *Ubuntu* is a moral principle that takes, as its point of departure, the strong inter-connectedness of human society. Louw (2002:9) points out that the bond of *Ubuntu* is so crucial that those who choose to live by the precept must undergo some initiation ritual; and whoever has not passed through the rite is regarded merely as an "it" – that is, sub-human.

Ubuntu takes unity in diversity seriously. It acknowledges the fact that unity does not mean uniformity. Rather, *Ubuntu* recognizes that humans can never fully see through the eyes of other humans. Thus, even as they chant "solidarity" or "consensus", Ubuntuists would at the same time appreciate "alterity", "autonomy" and "co-operation" rather than "co-optation" (Louw, 2002:11).

For unity in diversity to be achieved, *Ubuntu* recognizes the other person/s as they are without trying to alter or recreate them in one's own image. In that case, *Ubuntu* is about interfacing rather than defacing. Again, *Ubuntu* acknowledges the individuality of the person but not according to the Cartesian model in which the individual can exist independently from the community. On the contrary, *Ubuntu* regards the individual in terms of mutual interconnectedness in the society. Thus, instead of the Cartesian *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"), Ubuntuists would say something like *Cognatus ergo sum* ("I participate/belong, therefore I am" or "I dance with you, therefore I am") (McGann, 2002:19; Pobee, 1979:88). It can be said that through a relentless devotion to the dictates of *Ubuntu*, South Africa was able to defeat the apartheid regime.

As already indicated elsewhere in this study, Nelson Mandela epitomized *Ubuntu* by boldly intervening at a time when thousands of armed black factions in South Africa were about to face off against each other. By telling the warring parties to cast their weapons into the sea (Mandela, 1990), Mandela was proclaiming peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, harmony and unity which are the pillars of *Ubuntu*.

Yet Mandela's proclamation of *Ubuntu* was not limited to the black South Africans only. Rather, he reached out to the apartheid Africaners as well – some of whom (e.g. warders and prison guards) he had shared *Ubuntu* for close to 30 years during his incarceration on Roben Island. That Mandela was an ubuntuist par excellence is evident in his rejection of a conditional freedom he was offered in January 1985 arguing that only free people (not prisoners) could negotiate and that he could not engage in any negotiation as long as he and his people were not free; because his freedom and that of his people were inseparable – hence the kernel of *Ubuntu* (Mandela, 1994:523). When he finally accepted negotiation with the then oppressive minority government, Mandela assured the whites that they would not be driven into the sea (Mandela, 1994:539). In his resolute decision to spread the gospel of *Ubuntu*, Mandela said:

> … deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating one another because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite (Mandela, 1994:622).

Therefore, the spirit of *Ubuntu* propelled Mandela to not only fight for the freedom of his people (blacks), but for the freedom of all people, white and black – because both the oppressed and the oppressor needed liberation or else both are robbed of their humanity (Mandela, 1994:624). That the spirit of *Ubuntu* ought to be embraced by both the offender and the offended, is well articulated in the words of Desmond Tutu:

> …the central concern is the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence (Tutu, 2011:54-55).

The concept of *Ubuntu*, with its virtues of love, generosity, forgiveness, humaneness, compassion and sympathy, in many ways resembles the GR. Mandela's graphic explanation of *Ubuntu* captures the spirit of the GR:

> A traveler through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food [and] entertain him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu, but it will have various aspects. Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question, therefore, is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve? (Mandela, *Experience Ubuntu Interview*, 2006).

The traveler in Mandela's explanation brings to mind the man in Luke 10:31 who fell into the hands of robbers who beat him up and left him half dead; but was ministered to by a Samaritan[9] after being neglected by 'his own' people or 'neighbours' (a Levite and a priest) who had passed there before the Samaritan (Lk.10:31-32). The Samaritan's compassionate act towards the wounded 'alien' not only challenged the immediate community to put their religious ethos into practice, but also took the definition of a neighbour to another level. The act transcended the conventional view of 'my people' – which was actually being undermined by the Levite and the priest. It can be said that the Samaritan saw the wounded man in terms of his need rather than who he was or which community he belonged to, and responded to the need for the good of both himself and the victim – hence the GR in action.

[9] Samaritans claim descendancy from the northern Israelite tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh following the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans became so strong that during the time of Jesus, demon possession was associated with the Samaritans (Jn.8:48). However, Jesus used the Samaritans to shame the Jewish hypocrisy and bigotry – e.g., the Samaritan woman-turned-evangelist and the parable of the Good Samaritan episodes (Jn.4:1-42; Lk.10:25-37).

Mangena (2012:9) argues that *Ubuntu* ethics is hybrid or trans-human, unlike the western ethics that is basically lateral. He claims that this is so because *Ubuntu* ethics is the product of consensual and dialogical interaction between the Creator God and the ancestors and/or spirits. On the other hand, western ethics is lateral because moral principles and rules are solely derived from, and meant for, human interactions (Mangena, 2012:9).

The Bible upholds the ideal tenets of *Ubuntu*. In First Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul, using the analogy of the body and its members, talks about unity in diversity. He points out that every part (member) of the body (community) matters because God has ordained and arranged their existence. Thus, there is no reason for inferiority, superiority and/or despising one another (vv.14-24). Instead, all members (both of the immediate community and/or humanity in general) should cooperate and be concerned for one another because they are all important and none is more or less significant than the other/s (vv.24-26).

The Corinthian passage underlines four characteristics of *Ubuntu,* which echo the essence of the GR: (a) Unity in diversity, (b) personal significance in the body of Christ or in the human community, (c) interdependence as opposed to independence or self-sufficiency, and (d) humility/love – that is, the desire to put others first rather than oneself.

Thus, African word that best captures the spirit of the GR is *Ubuntu*, often expressed in the Zulu saying, '*Muntu ngumuntu ngabantu'* – meaning, "A person is a person through other persons" or simply "I am because we are" (Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013:34). This is echoed by the Venda people's proverb, *Munthu u bebelwa munwe*, meaning 'a person is born for the other' – therefore, a person is a person through, with and for the community (Kasenene, 1994:141-142). Poovan and Engelbrecht (2006:23, 25) argue that *Ubuntu* philosophy espouses the virtues of compassion, empathy, hospitality, dignity, respect, love, humanity and mutuality for the purpose of building and maintaining communities with justice and commonalities.

As already indicated above, Nelson Mandela, the first black President of independent South Africa, no doubt epitomized *Ubuntu*. On February 25th 1990 while addressing a huge rally of over 200,000 people in Durban, Mandela implored the warring factions among the black communities of South Africa to throw their guns, knives, *pangas* (machetes) into the sea. Further, he entreated them to close down the death factories because he believed that violence would not only get in the way of peace, but also a threat to unity (Mandela, 1990).

Other African cultural groups whose sayings correspond to the GR are the Yoruba, Moroccan tribes and the Ba-Congo. Ellis (1970:223) gives a Yoruba saying that resembles the GR: "He who injures another injures himself". Westermark (1931:234), refers to two Moroccans sayings that resonate with the GR: "He who sows good will reap peace"; and "What you desire for yourself you should desire for others". Claridge (1922:255) mentions two Ba-Congo proverbs that correlate with the GR: "If you see a jackal in your neighbour's garden drive it out [*because*] one may get into yours one day, and you would like the same done to you"; and "O man, what you do not like, do not to your fellows".

2.5 The Golden Rule and Some World Leaders

Some eminent world leaders esteem the GR. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), following the GR, emphasized equal treatment of humans, which would be realized through equal service. He pointed out that equality of all humans was hidden beneath the temporary inequalites of age, height, skin colour, and intellect. He called upon humans to resist inequality, which he said had a bad odour and had led to vices such as arrogance, inhumanities, and exploitation across the world (Gandhi, 1966:518). Gandhi (1966:519) counselled humans to promote the law of love (equality), which makes "no distinction between relatives and strangers, countrymen and foreigners, white and coloured, Hindus and Indians of other faiths, whether Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians or Jews."

Barak Obama, the 44th President of the United States, in his address at the National Prayer Breakfast in 2009 remarked that though the GR is a simple and ancient rule, it is one of the most challenging rules (Phillips, 2009). Obama holds that the GR is a call to love one another, understand one another and to treat other people with dignity and respect (Phillips, 2009). Pope Benedict XVI in his Pontifical message to American Roman Catholics in 2008 observed that the GR is given in the Bible and that it is a law written on the human heart and is valid for all people, believers and non-believers. Charles Darwin (1871:71, 106) acknowledged the GR and described it as the foundation stone of morality and that it would be most appropriate especially during the rude times of the love of praise and the dread of blame.

2.6 Objections to the Golden Rule

The GR has, however, been criticized on a number of fronts. According to Sidgwick (1981:380), the GR fails to give a complete moral guidance because one might wish for another's cooperation in sin and be willing to reciprocate it. Nietzsche (2002:153) took exception to the GR claiming that it was suitable only for slaves because exploiting others and dominating the weak is part of human nature and that compassion would frustrate how humans are built. Freud (1961:30) objected to the GR for suggesting that there is a rule which applies to everyone. According to Freud (1961:90), the instinct of self-preservation naturally makes the neighbour suspect for we do not know the neighbour, nor his/her intent towards us. He concluded that the GR is psychologically unrealistic, devalues love, is unjust and utterly impractical.

Further, the GR has been censured for assuming that people's tastes are the same and yet they may not (Shaw, 2014:5). Apparently Shaw (1903:330), in his distaste for the GR, sneered "The golden rule is that there are no golden rules", because he believed that the attempt at asserting any moral principle would deprive individuals the chance to form their own morality. In fact, contrary to

the GR's sibling rule of 'loving one's neighbour as oneself' (Lev.19:18; Mk.12:31), Shaw advised, "Do not love your neighbor as yourself. If you are on good terms with yourself it is an impertinence: if on bad, an injury" (Shaw, 1903:330). Thus, Shaw was concerned about himself (solipsist) and could not care less about his neighbour/s.

Another criticism against the GR is that it does not offer clear guidance regarding right and wrong behaviour (Marks, 2005). The GR has also been accused of allowing for logical absurdities such as masochism. A masochist would be obligated to treat others sadistically since that is what he desires for himself. Similarly Gewirth (1978:133, 134) expressing his distaste for the GR argued that a thief might, upon being sentenced to serve a prison term, challenge the judge not to throw him in jail because the judge would not want to go in there himself.

The above review of the GR in terms of its recognition across cultures, religions, and professions demonstrates, albeit the objections, the worth of the precept as a moral principle. The GR is Küng's preferred basic principle for the GE project because it is found in all the great religious and ethical traditions and thus points to the moral worth of all human beings (Küng, 1998:229). Apart from the criticisms against the GR as outlined above, the support for the precept is also worth noting as presented in the next section.

2.5 Support for the Golden Rule

Amitai Etzioni (1996:1) observes that a number of mores especially those concerned with gender roles which were considered normal in the 1960s and late 1980s have today been either stretched, challenged or altogether abandoned. Etzioni (1996:4) argues that a good society ought to apply the notion of the GR and that such society requires a carefully maintained equilibrium of social responsibility and individual rights and the excesses of either must be avoided. This echoes Küng's assertion that rights entail certain ethical responsibilities (Küng, 1998:99).

Arthur J. Dyck, during an interview with Paul Massari on 12th December 2014, maintained that the GR is the hallmark of what makes a community possible. Dyck claims that unless there is basic respect for one another there can be no society. He argues that the GR is not just a moral code; rather, it is the way we are wired for compassion. Further, Dyck proposes that we have to be even-handed in our moral dealings and uphold impartiality and consider how others would be affected by our actions in order to do the least harm to them.

Underlining the importance of observing the GR in the context of reviewing articles or papers, Charles C. Fischer (2011:2) implores reviewers to "treat authors as they would want to be treated as authors." He, however, cautions that in the real world of manuscript reviewing, the GR may be sabotaged by the culture of reviewing, which is largely a gate-keeping culture, and what he terms as 'land mines' and 'slippery slopes'. The 'gate-keeping' situation happens when the editor accepts the manuscripts but the reviewers reject them. The 'land mines' is a situation whereby even a well-meaning reviewer may unknowingly manipulate the author and in the process breach the ethic of reciprocity – hence a 'slippery slope' in that the small ethical breaches could lead to larger ones (Fischer, 2011:3). Fischer (2011:3), therefore, warns reviewers against holding authors hostage by putting pressure on them to write papers in their (reviewers') own image or preference – an act which they would not want to happen if it were their own papers.

Jeffrey Wattles (2009:3) argues that the stages of moral reasoning[10] outlined by Kohlberg (Kohlberg, 1981) would be incomplete without the GR which, based

[10] The *pre-conventional* level (stages 1&2 or Early Childhood stage) deals with acting so as to either avoid punishment or gain rewards – action is based on expected consequences; the *conventional* level (stages 3&4 or Late Childhood stage) involves acting within the immediate social/group norms and thus what is right or wrong is dictated by public opinion; and the *post-conventional* level (stages 5&6 or Adulthood stage) which is concerned with acting according to one's conscience and within the framework of universal moral principles. Kohlberg held that persons at various stages of moral reasoning have different conceptions of the golden rule.

on *agape* or responsible love, transcends the dictates of justice and duty. In his paper, "Philosophical reflections on the golden rule", Wattles (2009:3) argues that the GR moves us from egoism to sympathy so that we find fulfilment in a spontaneous, loving service.

Moreover, Wattles (2009:3) maintains that the GR cannot be fully grasped unless the agent is willing to not only embrace a process of growth or change whereby egoism gives way to sympathy, but also to find satisfaction in a life that transcends the moral status quo. In this new moral disposition, which Wattles calls "divine paradigm", transformation ensues resulting in a bright future both for the individual and the planet (Wattles, 2009:3). He, however, contends that this higher perspective of morality can only be attained with the help of God and asserts that without God as the foundation, moral reason cannot flourish (Wattles, 2009:12).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study took cognizance of the theories that have been advanced especially within the moral sphere and in relation to the GR. Among such theories are deontological theory, the divine command theory, Kant's theory, and Human Rights.

2.5.1 Deontological Theory

Deontology or 'duty theory' (from Greek *deon*, meaning 'duty' or 'obligation') holds that morality is a matter of duty. It operates on the principle that humans have moral duties to do things that are right and also not to do things that are wrong. Thus, according to deontological theory, the rightness or wrongness of an action is not dependent on its consequences. Rather, an action is right or wrong in itself. Therefore, for a deontologist, the concern is about compliance with duty rather than looking for the greatest good or happiness.

Unlike the teleological theory which determines rightness or wrongness of an action by its end (Greek, *telos*) or consequences, deontological theory is

concerned with duty for duty's sake – whether it makes people happy or not. Neither does deontological theory operate like utilitarinism which, like teleological theory, situates the rightness or wrongness of an action solely on its outcomes or consequences. Utilitarians believe that morality is really about making life better by increasing the amount of good things (e.g., pleasure and happiness) and reducing the amount of bad things (e.g., pain and sorrow). Utilitarians resist moral codes or systems that consist of commands based on customs, traditions or orders from leaders or supernatural entities. Hence, utilitarians are opposed to divine command perspective.

However, John Stuart Mill (2003:288), who is credited as the founder of utilitarianism, proposed that the GR could either be reformulated or replaced with the utilitarian greatest happiness principle. In fact, Mill (2003:288) invoked the GR in support of the greatest happiness principle – that is, the happiness of the collective society as opposed to individual happiness. He argued that the love of one's neighbour allows one's altruism and self-sacrifice to take place and claimed that the GR of Jesus of Nazareth is the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.

2.5.2 Divine Command Theory

Divine command theory is the view that morality is dependent on God and that the morally right action is the one that God commands. In other words, an action is right because God commands it rather than that God commands an action because it is right. The latter rendering would remove God from being the source or author of morality. Divine command theory is a form of deontological theory because according to it, the agent of an action is duty bound to do it without regard to its consequences. However, concern has been raised that this theory is exclusive in that it applies only to those who subscribe to the existence of God who is the infallible source of morality.

2.5.3 Kant's Theory

Readers of moral philosophy are divided with regard to the relationship (if any) between the GR and Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative (CI). The CI states that, "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (Kant, 1993:30). Through this formulation, also known as the 'Formula of Universal Law', the test of rightness or wrongness of an action consists in seeing whether or not we are prepared to ensure that everybody else should adopt the rule on which we base our action/s. This CI formulation claims that an effective moral proposition should rise above any particular conditions (religious, racial, ethnic, etc.), including the identity and desires of the person making the moral deliberation.

The other CI formulation, also called 'Formula of Humanity', says, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1993:36). This formulation entreats humans to treat all other rational beings including themselves, always as ends (that is, in recognition of their intrinsic value or inherent worth) and never as means. It discourages one from using others as mere means or stepping-stones to one's selfish or subjective end. Subjective ends would infringe on the possibility of freedom in the general or universal sense.

Therefore, in the above formulations of the CI, Kant is essentially stating that the individuals are duty bound not to allow their humanity or those of others as mere means to some end. Instead, all humans are under obligation to advance the ends of both themselves and others.

As will be seen in detail later in the study, a section of the readers of moral philosophy thinks that the GR and the CI are similar, while another section treats the two as opposites.

Moreover, the GR has been linked to the love command of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and that the precept can only be understood and properly practised in the context of the love command (Stanglin, 2005:357). Further, the GR has been correlated with the principle of reversibility or reciprocity especially when viewed as a methodological guide for how one should treat others (Mou, 2004:1). Albrecht Dihle (1962:37) located the GR in the category of retribution or "repayment thinking" and claimed that it operated on the same principle with *lex talionis* – any action, good or bad, necessarily calls forth an equivalent action. Kohlberg (1981:64) saw the GR as operating on the reversibility principle or role switching within a particular situation.

2.5.4 Human Rights

The GR has been associated with human rights. Bornstein (2002:36) and Paden (2003:58) regard the GR as the most essential basis for the modern concept of human rights in which every person has a right to just treatment. However, Damrosch (2008:48) argues that the notion of equating the GR with "rights" is a contemporary thinking and has nothing to do with the origin of the GR. Damrosch (2008:49) claims that "human rights" is a modern political ideal that began as a philosophical concept, which politicians adopted and used it to advance their political agendas.[11]

2.8 Conclusion

As evidenced in the works reviewed above, the focus with regard to the GR is action-oriented rather than the 'beingness' or character of the bearer of the GR. This is, therefore, the gap that this study seeks to bridge. The following chapter explains the methodology applied in the study. The methods applied are

[11] The French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau is credited with originating "human rights" – a concept that attracted the attention of Thomas Jefferson (the 3rd President of the United States of America) such that he slotted the notion of "inalienable rights" (right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness) into the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776.

pesented and works of selected writers on the GR have been studied, analyzed and interpreted together with the literature of sampled religions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the methods applied and proceeds with the study itself. This being a conceptual study, the second order discourse of clarifying and/or explicating concepts or arguments, has been used rather than empirical data gathering. Therefore, the chapter first interprets the GR from the Christian scriptures and continues to explore the teachings of the precept in terms of the commonness (personhood) of humanity in relation to the concept of the 'image of God' using the Christian text and related primary and secondary literature.

The study then goes on to reflect on the GR-like principles as advanced by different religions, traditions and philosophies in relation to the virtue-based teaching of the GR. The sources referred to here are the works of Immanuel Kant, Hans Küng, Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, among others, which are studied, analyzed and interpreted along with literature of the sampled religions. The section further deals with objections raised against the GR using the available secondary literature.

3.0.1 Hermeneutical Method

Through hermeneutical method, the study established the interpretation of the GR in relation to morality from different contexts and traditions. The hermeneutical method adopted in the study is Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics which transcends what we do or what we ought to do, and dwells on what happens to us over and above our mere wanting or doing (Gadamer, 1982:xxviii). It is what 'transcends' the doing or wanting to do that this study calls 'virtue-based GR' or action based on character. For understanding to take place, Gadamer (1982:353) argued that the reader of the text must 'get involved' rather than merely 'reason' his/her way into the past. Further, the hemeneutical

method was used in the study to explain the relation and/or difference between the OT commands against commiting adultery (Ex.20:14) and to "love your neighbour as yourself (Lev.19:18 NRSV)" and Jesus' NT teaching that "…every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already commited adultery with her in his heart" (Mat.5:28 NRSV) and "…love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mat.5:44 NRSV).

Besides, the study employed the principle of compositionality whereby the meaning of the GR was derived from the meaning of its structure and constituent parts – that is, the verbs 'do' and pronouns 'you' and 'others'. The study established that the meaning of the GR maxim is built from the meanings of its parts. Moreover, the study engaged the worlds (horizons) of the reader and the author with reference to the GR (Gadamer, 2004:370). The study noted the importance of the 'fusion of horizons' method in that it spells out the meaning of the GR through the eyes of both the author (i.e., agent of an action) and the reader (recipient of an action) and thereby determine the maxim's application in terms of the universal moral landscape.

3.0.2 Logical Method

By use of logical method, the study endeavored to establish the coherence, consistency, cogency and/or absurdness of the GR. The charge of absurdity and/or banality which Kant used against the GR in favor of his CI was explored. Thus, by this approach, the validity (or invalidity) of the GR was determined.

3.0.3 Virtue Ethics Method

The study applied the virtue ethics method to establish the improtance of virtue in understanding the GR. The word 'virtue' is derived from Latin translation of the Greek word *aretē* and has the stem word 'vir', which means 'human' and hence connotes human excellence. The term 'aretē' (moral excellence) dates back to before the civic ethics and has its etymological roots in the Homeric ethos of a heroic worrier society (Redner, 2001:77). According to that society,

aretē defined good (*agathos*), which in turn determined the good person in the context of military or war. However, with the passage of time, the association of *aretē* with military prowess was gradually transcended following the ethicization of the term itself but the core component of *aretē* or virtue (that is, 'human moral excellence' or 'good') was preserved. Thus, virtue is that quality which enables humans to achieve goods that are internal to practices and whose lack of which prevents them (humans) from achieving those goods (MacIntyre, 1984:191).

Accordingly, virtues are the goods that define our relationships to other people who subscribe to the purposes and standards that inform the practices. Moreover, our goods (virtues) ought to be the same as the goods of those others with whom we are bound up in human community, and it would be wrong to pursue conflicting goods because they (goods) are not meant to be private property (MacIntyre, 1984:229).

Consequently, virtue-based ethics is neither deontological nor teleological (or utilitarian) in orientation. Unlike the teleological and deontological ethics, whose key question is, "What ought we to do?", virtue-based ethics asks the question, "What ought we to be?" (Louden, 1984:227). In other words, virtue ethics is concerned about the kind of people we are in light of our responses to situations. A virtue-based moral agent perceives and effortlessly acts on situationally unique moral requirements.

Forms of virtue ethics predominated ancient philosophy, most notably the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. Plato identified four cardinal ethical virtues: temperance (self control), justice (rectitude), courage (fortitude) and wisdom; to which Aristotle added three auxiliary ones: friendship, liberality and high-mindedness. Aristotle distinguished between *intellectual virtues*, which could be developed by instruction, and *moral virtues*, which are cultivated through habit or practice.

Intellectual virtues are derived from teaching through experience and time. The intellectual realm is contemplative while the moral one is practical. Aristotle, however, maintained that the two virtues complement each another. For instance, when it comes to choice, which is the origin of action, both intellectual and moral virtues are required (Aristotle, 1999:20, 92).

Good deeds and right actions produce right habits and lead to the development of a good character. To act in accordance with virtue requires consistency through time. Virtuous acts can only be attained not just by learning but by actually doing those acts; so that upon learning to build we truly become builders by building, and harpers by harping. Thus, true virtues must represent a habit, and a habit is a continuing character trait (Aristotle, 1906:35). Therefore, if someone is usually stingy with money and suddenly gives generously for a worthy cause upon listening to a moving speech, then relapse into his/her stinginess afterwards, such a person would not pass the test of a virtue ethicist. Similarly, if a person with a criminal record gives money to build a children's home, but does so out of a desire to win the praise the local population, the action may be what a virtuous person would do but in this case it is not done out of virtue. In other words, acting from virtue is not the same as acting in accordance with virtue; because, as seen from the above two examples, an action might not necessarily be a true reflection of a well-established character trait of the individual (Harris, 2002:184).

In order to maintain a good character based on virtue ethics, Aristotle proposed the observance of the golden mean or moderation. Through the *Golden Mean theory*, virtue would be the solution (golden mean) for the extremes of moral deficiency (under-doing) and moral excess (over-doing), both of which are vices. For instance, the virtue of courage is the mean for the vices of fear and confidence while the virtue of liberality (generosity) is the mean for the excesses (vices) of prodigality (extravagance) and stinginess or miserliness (Aristotle,

1893:48-49). Saint Francis of Assisi later, in consideration of the golden mean principle, summarized virtues and vices as follows:

> Where there is charity and wisdom there is neither fear nor ignorance, where there is patience and humility there is neither anger nor worry. Where there is poverty and joy there is neither cupidity nor avarice. Where there is quiet and meditation there is neither solitude nor dissipation. Where there is the fear of the Lord to guard the house; the enemy cannot find a way to enter. Where there is mercy and discretion there is neither superfluity nor hard-heartedness (Francis, 1906:19).

In the Middle Ages, Christian philosophers added three theological virtues: faith, hope and love.

In an attempt to classify virtues according to different dispositions, C. E. Harris (2002:186) has come up with four groups: (1) *Virtues of Conscientiousness with respect to others* – fairness or justice, honesty, gratitude, trustworthiness, obedience, loyalty, honor and discretion; (2) *Virtues of benevolence* – kindness, generosity, compassion, caring, sympathy, forgiveness, mercifulness; (3) *Virtues of self-discipline* – courage, temperance or self-control, patience, humility, prudence and integrity; (4) *Virtues of self-assertion and self-discipline* – creativity, pride, ambition, perserverance, independence of thought and action and competitiveness. Harris claims that the first two groups are oriented towards others, while the last two are toward oneself. Morever, groups (1) and (3) are rather negative in that they focus on fulfilling obligations and disciplining oneself; while groups (2) and (4) are more positive in nature because they are concerned with benefitting others and promoting one's own self-realization. While this categorization of virtues is indeed impressive, it is nevertheless not exhaustive in that there are many more virtues that have been left out – e.g., love, joy, peace, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, hope, fidelity, etc.

Virtues in the ancient times were treated as inner dispositions rather than skills or capabilities. Thus, for instance, whoever would be able to control his/her appetites yet in fact does not, could not be regarded as having the virtue of temperance or moderation. For Plato (1992:435e), virtues could never originate

in the state, but in the individual and on to the state. Thus, virtues must be inculcated in the individuals from their earliest years.

Medieval philosophy endorsed virtue ethics that focused on developing character that befitted a virtuous person; hence a virtuous person was one with dispositions that were morally desirable or promoted human flourishing. The flourishing to which virtue is tied may either be that of the moral agent or that of the moral patient/recipient of the virtuous conduct. Therefore, if a person was materially successful and/or contended with life but lacked virtue, he/she would not be leading the best sort of life and would not flourish in the relevant sense.

Alasdair MacIntyre, a distinguished virtue theorist in modern moral philosophy, raises issue with philosophy in general for emphasizing the power of reason at the expense of people and their contexts in which they live their life. Following Aristotle's corpus of moral philosophy, MacIntrye explores the historical narrative of morality and declares that, "Man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal…a teller of stories that aspire to truth" (MacIntyre, 1984:216). As the 'story-telling' of beliefs and traditions continue, social institutions get established and these practices enable the virtues (the good) for oneself and for others to be realized. Ideally, the virtues sustain the practices, and the practices continue to sustain the virtues just as a soccer club is sustained by the players who know the worth of the game, and the worth of the game is both ensured and enhanced by the traditions established by the club.

This study employed a virtue ethics approach to the GR and has demonstrated that it is not about how nice the precept sounds, nor even about the wording, but it is all about the agent who, on his/her own volition, embraces and practices the virtues that go with the GR both for one's own good and for the good of the other/s. In other words, through a virtue ethics approach, the GR basically becomes a way of life for the moral agent. Therefore, through a virtue ethics approach, the GR transcends other moral principles in that it is essentially trans-religious, trans-cultural, trans-ethnic and even trans-political.

3.0.4 Phenomenological Method

The study applied the phenomenological method to portray the essence of the virtues that are central to the GR. The phenomenological is among the most important approaches in the twentieth century. It was founded by German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Phenomenology is derived from the Greek word *phenomena* ('things as they appear') and is concerned with essences or universal properties. The starting-point for the phenomenological method is one's consciousness – one has to be conscious of something. Husserl introduced *epochĕ* ('bracketing off' or 'suspension of judgment') for the purposes of validating the phenomena as well as determining the actual knowledge of the external or real world. As the stream of consciousness flowed into the mind from perceptions, the mind would reduce the variety to general forms through eidetic (from Greek word *eidos*, 'what is seen') reduction. Thus, for a phenomenologist, a general term like 'chair' or 'person' would not refer just to a particular piece of furniture or particular individual; but rather to a type. Therefore, essence is what one is concerned with by considering 'chairness' or 'personhood', as opposed to considering a particular chair or person. Ideally, phenomenological method is a transcendental approach to human experience as it is, without regard to its psychological origin and/or the casual explanations available in science, history or sociology.

A phenomenologist grasps the meaning through intuition for which it has been criticised as lacking discursive evaluation. However, the criticism is rather misplaced because strictly speaking our most important kinds of knowledge are intuitive. For example, we would intuitively know that we feel happy or sad or tired; and we have intuitive knowledge of other people.

The phenomenological approach was used in this study to show the universal aspect of love in connection with the GR. *Agape* ontology ('essence') of love is a complex and spontaneous phenomenological act that involves emotion sanctioned by the will that recognizes and responds to the intrinsic value of the 'other'. Thus, as a virtue with an essence or 'beingness', love has a nature that

transcends both the passion, as portrayed in the romantic (libidinal) ideal, and the relative or subjective experience. Moreover, the ontological definition of love transcends the cultural, historical, scientific or psychological interpretation of the virtue itself.

3.1 The Analysis of the Golden Rule.

The Bible or the Christian Scriptures is the authority of the Christian church. Within the Christian church, however, the authority is viewed from somewhat differing perspectives. In the Roman Catholic Church, the authority constitutes 66 books of the Bible, the Apocrypha and the church tradition; The Eastern church has 66 books and the church tradition. On the other hand, the Protestant church accepts only 66 books[12] as the authority. However, it is important to note that all the three aforementioned branches recognize and teach the GR.

The GR is recorded in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 respectively. In both passages the GR words were spoken by Jesus Christ. In Mathew, the text comes as the epilogue of Jesus' discourse which has been referred to as the 'Sermon on the Mount', which covers chapters 5 to 7. the GR reads, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Mat.7:12 NRSV). In the Sermon on the Mount address, Jesus dwelled on the primacy of the inner righteousness as he warned against improper performance of religious duties (by the Pharisees and scribes) such as prayer and fasting which had been turned into public display or show off (hypocrisy). Therefore, through the GR, Jesus taught his followers that what they ordinarily wanted others to do for them should be what they practice toward those others (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983:34). However, unless one is righteous, he/she cannot consistently practice the GR principle. Therefore, only those who embrace the righteousness that Jesus prescribed (that is, shunning the hypocritical or mere

[12] The Roman Catholic Church Bible include the Apocryphal writings because the Church's Fathers believed in the inspiration of the writings. The Protestant Church Bible, on the other hand, omit the books of the Apocrypha because the Church's Fathers did not believe that the books were inspired.

outward righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes – Mat.5:20) would satisfy the demands of the GR principle. Thus, the GR prioritizes the inner predisposition of the moral agent which, upon being fully settled, will be naturally and consistently applied outwardly in the service of others.

The GR in Luke 6:31 reads, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (NIV). The verse is part of the Sermon on the Plain discourse of Jesus Christ. It has been observed that the Sermon on the Mount dwells on the internal or personal traits of the agent; whereas the Sermon on the Plain deals with the external conditions (Danker, 1988:416). Jesus refers to the GR in Luke chapter six as the climax of the seven aspects of unconditional love that he recommended to his hearers – (a) love for their enemies (v.27a), (b) doing good to those who hate them (v.27b), (c) blessing those who curse them (v.28a), (d) praying for those who mistreat them (v.28b), (e) not retaliating (v.29), (f) giving freely (v.30a), and (g) treating others as they themselves want to be treated (v.31).

The GR principle teaches that we are to deal with others as we would like them to deal with us. The assumption here though is that we know what is good or right and that we are committed to doing it to others so much so that if they wish to reciprocate, we would not complain. This is the understanding that the GR writers and readers have had all along, which is based on the principle of reciprocity or the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. The central thought in this study, however, is that the GR should be grounded on the 'beingness' or building the character of the moral agent, because then the moral agent would not be anxious about the outcome of his/her actions. Instead, the moral agent would be doing nothing but his/her noble duty regardless of whether it is reciprocated or not.

That a reciprocal thinking should not be read into the GR is evident in Jesus' counsel which he gave earlier in the sermon as recorded in Matthew 5:42 and 44 respectively – verse 42 says, "Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you" (NRSV), and verse 44 reads, "…

love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (NRSV). A reciprocity reading of these verses would be problematic because 'everyone' in verse 42 implies all without exception, not just those we imagine as having the potential to give back to us or who we think we can go to in case we may also want to borrow. Then verse 44 gives the impression that it would be unheard of or almost impossible for our enemies to love us back; likewise, it is unlikely for our persecutors to pray or mean well for us.

The principle of compositionality requires that the meaning of an expression or concept should be derived from the meanings of its constituent parts. The next section, therefore, focuses on the meanings of the constituent parts of the GR maxim (especially the verbs 'do' and the pronouns 'you' and 'others') with a view to establishing their contribution towards understanding the GR precept itself.

3.2 The Meanings of the Constituent Parts of the Golden Rule

This section deals with the interpretation of the constituent parts of the GR. The meanings of the parts are developed in view of the universal call of the GR precept.

3.2.1 The pronoun 'you' in the Golden Rule

The GR requires the moral agent ('you') to do to others whatever he/she would like them to do to him/her. Who, then, is this moral agent? The simple definition of the word 'you' is, "the person or people being talked to". Another term that is used interchangeably with 'you' is 'self'. They point to the 'inner' (unseen) or psychological dimension of personality rather than the outward bodily form. Thus, 'you' or 'self' refers to a conscious, thinking, moral and emotional being that is capable of entertaining first-person thoughts such as 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'myself', etc. Egoism is the act of being engrossed in one's own interests at the expense of the interests of others.

Altruism (from French *altrui* and Italian *alteri*, meaning 'of or to others'), on the other hand, is concerned with the well-being of others, often at the expense of one's own interests. Altruists believe that the well-being of others is as important as (or even more important than) their own. Blood and/or kidney donors to save patients in need, are examples of altruists.

In Judaism, humans possess two drives – a *yezer ha-ra* (evil impulse), which they are borne with, and *yezer ha-tov* (good impulse), which comes with adulthood (Spero, 2004:134). *Yezer ha-ra* is associated with aggression and natural forces, which may, however, sometimes not necessarily be evil. According to the Talmudic Rabbis, the two impulses originate from God. While *yezer ha-ra* is responsible for energy and passion (including emotions), *yezer ha-tov* is concerned with direction, which is the obedient service to God (*Berakhot* 61a &b; *Sanhedrin* 91b; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* 16). Thus, human drives such as hot temper, arrogance and violence are outcomes of *yezer ha-ra* but must be controlled, because they alone do not portray the complete 'self'. Cain, the first human born of a woman according to the Hebrew Scriptures (Gen.4:1), had to be taught that even though hate and envy were part of him, he needed not to be his emotions. Rather, his true self had to rule over his emotions (Gen.4:7).

Yezer ha-tov, on the other hand, has been associated with reason or the positive force that enhances living within the confines of the will of God as embodied in the Torah and the tradition. Further, *yezer ha-tov* reflects the image of God in humans, which guides them towards doing good (Pinker, 2002:271). The crucial task for humans, therefore, is to balance or unite the two impulses.

The Rabbis emphasized *lishmah* or doing good for its own sake, and hence challenged individuals to examine their motives and determine what actually was beneficial to them. In the event that *yezer ha-ra* outweighed *yezer ha-tov*, the individual would be free to invoke the help of God and/or the Torah, which superseded both impulses (*Kiddushin* 30b).

Some thinkers, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), struggled to connect (and even disconnect) the subject 'I' with the body and ended up describing the process as 'deeply mysterious' (Wittgenstein, 1979:80). Wittgenstein (1979:80) acknowledged that the body (physical) and the mental (metaphysical) belong to different language games[13]; but the inner process ('I') stands in need of outward criteria. Therefore, there is a 'mysterious' linkage between utterances such as 'my arm is broken' (physical) and 'I am in pain' (metaphysical). Wittgenstein's explanation of reaction to pain in oneself and in others captures the spirit of the GR:

> …it is a primitive reaction to tend to treat the part that hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely when oneself is – and so to pay attention to the pain-behaviour of others, as one does not pay attention to one's own pain-behaviour (Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 1981:540).

The point that Wittgenstein is making is that there are certain situations that do not require the 'language-game' of reason – for example, we smile back at someone who smiles at us; and we back off from an angry or threatening look. These are pre-rational, pre-linguistic actions and reactions. Moreover, Wittgenstein is underscoring the importance of imagination with regard to the feelings either of oneself or of others. When imagination is combined with reason, humans begin to see the world through the eyes of others and thereby gain a more practical approach to the issues of life. However, imaginative role reversal has its shortcomings. For instance, mere imagining oneself in the other person's situation may not necessarily lead to sufficient understanding of him/her. Further, the more the other is a stranger to the agent, the less information about his/her situation and hence reluctance or disinterest in terms of imagination.

For Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein, 1969:28^{e} ♯204), acting or doing is most critical in one's language-game. For instance, in the language-game of religion, it is not

[13] 'Language-game' is a term that Wittgenstein used to highlight the fact that language use is a form of human-governed activity (game), which is integrated into context-dependent human transactions.

the affirming of creeds, nor even prayer and worship that is most important; but rather, doing good deeds – helping people in concrete ways, treating their needs as though they were one's own, opening one's heart to them, not being cold or scornful, but loving (Malcom, 1993:92). In the context of the GR, Wittgenstein is saying that it is not about how appealing or logically sound the precept is but actually putting it into practice.

It can be said that Wittgenstein understood 'self' in the relational sense – that is, acting appropriately towards others and towards oneself. The Greek philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle took self or soul as the core essence of a living being and could not be separated from the body.

Other thinkers like René Descartes (1596-1650) maintained that the subjective knowledge of self is the most reliable. He claimed that for him to doubt or think, he must necessarily exist – hence his famous dictum *cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"). In his application of the 'self' or 'soul', Descartes described himself as a thinking thing that he knew existed and that he could not have caused his existence because he was imperfect; neither were his parents responsible for his existence because they were the cause of his body only. He claimed that the cause of his existences was either self-caused or was caused by another cause but there could not be an infinite sequence of causes. He concluded that there must be an ultimate cause that causes its own existence who is the cause of Descartes existence – and that uncaused cause for Descartes, is God (Descartes, 1993:15-16).

Descartes' concept of self as solitary was contrary to that of Wittgenstein and the Greek philosophers who interpreted self in the context of societal (communal) existence. Greek philosophy viewed the individual (self) in the context of community, whereas Descartes and Modern Age Philosophy developed a concept of self or individual that disregarded any reference to society and instead focused exclusively on what the self is in itself – an

approach that led to solipsism (or self-existence) and hence inability to recognize and/or relate to the outside world.

The communal understanding of 'self' by the Greek philosophers' and Wittgenstein's resonates with the implication of the pronoun 'you' in the GR maxim. The subject 'you' is required to act in a manner that enhances the good of 'others' or the community. This Schopenhauerian[14] view of 'self' looks outside of oneself and takes interest in the welfare of other individuals – thus enhancing benevolent and charitable attitude. Schopenhauer claimed that it is through the recognition of other beings, in their suffering or otherwise, that one could attain one's own true and innermost self. In his counsel to 'live and let live', Schopenhauer (2010:117) contended that humans should not discard others (including the wicked, foolish, contemptible or ridiculous) for any reason. Instead, they should allow everyone the right to exist according to their character without hoping to change or condemn them because people have their own peculiar individualities.

Apparently, Schopenhauer rejected Kant's CI which regarded compassion or empirical expereince as antithetical to morality. Kant (1883:7) argued that ethics must be based on *a priori* of 'pure practical' reason rather than experience because the latter would lack the rational necessity which he considered indispensable. Schopenhauer (1896:501), however, differed with Kant by insisting that moral actions could only have significance if they were derived from human experience. He stated that, "moral laws, apart from human institution, state ordinance, or religious doctrine, cannot rightly be assumed as existing without proof" (1896:501). Schopenhauer held that compassionate actions were morally justified. In an open rejection to any attempt to compare the CI with the GR, Schopenhauer said:

[14] Used after Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the German philosopher who claimed, probably under the influence of Buddhism, that the will is an ideal metaphysical principle that is attainable at sainthood whereby the individual grasps it's full import – that is, being compassionate toward all other humans by recognizing that all are, fundamentally, one.

> …this rule, *Quod tibi fieri*, etc [Do not do to another what you do not wish to be done to you], is again only a circumlocution or, if it is preferred, a premise of the proposition that is laid down by me as the simplest and purest expression of the mode of conduct unanimously demanded of all systems of morality, *Numinen laede, imo omnes quantum potes, juva* [Injure no one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can]. This proposition is and remains the true and genuine substance of all morality (Schopenhauer, 1915:92).

Thus Schopenhauer, in pursuit of his supreme principle ("Injure no one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can"), argued that it was morally right to help or be compassionate toward others and that it would be morally wrong to pursue one's own interests. He advocated for mutual respect among individuals whereupon no one injured another nor allowed others to injure oneself. In other words, Schopenhauer (1915:163) believed in respecting the rights of everyone; and he claimed that the cardinal virtues that formed the bedrock of this interaction are kindness, charity or compassion and *agape* love.

Schopenhauer (1915:166) proposed that the bearer of compassion (agent) should identify with the recipient of the act of compassion – an event which he thought would replace egoism with self-giving love or compassion. That way, according to Schopenhauer, the experiences of the recipient would be felt by the agent. He admits, however, that this occurrence is mysterious because the faculty of reason cannot grasp it; neither can it be discovered by experience.

Karen Armstrong, a British author and former Roman Catholic nun, advocates for compassion as critical for the attainment of the GR. She observes that the meaning of compassion is much deeper than the ordinary dictionary definition of 'piteous' or 'pitiable'(Armstrong, 2011:13). For Armstrong (2011:13), compassion is derived from the Latin word *patiri* and the Greek word *pathein,* meaning 'to suffer, undergo, or experience'. So, compassion means 'to endure [something] with another person', that is, to put ourselves in other people's shoes, so as to feel their pain as though it were our own, and to enter generously

into their points of view. She defines compassion as ‘an attitude of principled, consistent altruism’ (Armstrong, 2011:13).

This study recommends that the identity of the moral agent determines the kind of action (or the ‘do’) that is likely to follow; and that the agent’s action should correlate with the virtue/s within. At the very core of the GR is decentering of the ‘self’ in order to attain a compassionate and/or loving (*agape*) self, which is willing to suffer for the sake of nothing but love. This, however, is easier said than done because humans are programmed to be selfish (egoistic) for survival purposes; and the mechanism for survival is aggression. We are used to tearing down others either by talking ill about them or denying them what is rightfully theirs, as if such a conduct guarantees our survival. For instance, in the political realm, the agent must outsmart the opponents including fabricating lies about them or maligning them. This happens because the agent presumes that the opponents are doing the same for him/her.

Thus, the obsession with the ego is so strong that humans feel insecure among members of a different community and/or political affiliation. For the GR to work, dethronement from the center of one’s world and placing the other person there has to take place – and this should happen not just when one feels like it, but always. Loving and praying for the enemy is a good example of a decentered and loving self.

Consequently, the ‘you’ in the GR, should be interpreted in the context of self-giving (altruistic) love or compassion towards others, or else the GR structure will be a mere play-acting and hence cannot survive the test of time.

3.2.2 The verb ‘do’ in the Golden Rule

The verb ‘do’ in the GR maxim presupposes what is ‘good’ or ‘right’ or what Utilitarianism would call ‘happiness’ or ‘pleasure’ or ‘well-being’ as opposed to ‘bad’, ‘wrong’, ‘sadness’ and ‘pain’. Philosophers and ethicists have for centuries wrestled with the concept of good. Questions have been raised such as:

What does the term ‘good’ mean and/or signify? What things are good and how do we know them to be so? Is there the ‘highest good’ and how is it determinable?

Philosopher G. E. Moore (1873-1958) argued that the term ‘good’ is a simple, non-natural and indefinable quality that is known just by intuition and any attempt at defining ‘good’ using natural means would amount to committing naturalistic fallacy. He concluded that ‘good’ is indefinable (Moore, 1959:14-15). Granted that ‘good’ may be beyond definition as Moore claims, it can then be treated as that aspect which satisfies human interests or desires directly or indirectly. ‘Good’ designates divine or human commendation or approval of something.

Concerning how we know what items are good, this will be influenced, to a large extent, by one’s disposition of what it means to be good. If, for instance, one’s understanding of ‘good’ is about approving or being favorably disposed towards something, then ‘good’ is a matter of one’s feelings.

On the other hand, if goodness is a relational property with respect to meeting human interests, then what is good ends up being subjected to informal inquiry. The idea of goodness as being subjective usually follows either from a personal view of good or from a confusion of the question of whether some good is to be preferred to another. ‘Good’ may also be viewed from the perpective of the complete good or that which will wholly satisfy the complete need and destiny of humans, the *summum bonum* or the highest good – a notion that is often obscure because it does not specify if it is one good that is better than any other good or one good that is better than all the other goods put together.

‘Goods’ may be categorized as hedonistic, or dependent on pleasure, and utilitarian – derived from usefulness. Further, ‘goods’ may be distinguished as intrinsic (that is, in and of themselves) or extrinsic – that is, as means to an end. Whether the moral goodness of humans, their character and action is a

distinctive type or is derived from their goodness in other ways (e.g. in producing happiness from others as envisaged in utilitarian moral theory), is a matter of controversy. Besides, the relations between what is good to do and what is right to do are also intricate and obscure as far as philosophical debate is concerned.

Generally, humans naturally seek a good life – whether determinable by happiness, pleasure, the desirable, or that which is right. According to Aristotle, the goal of thought and action is *eudaimonia* or happiness, which pertained virtues, material goods, long satisfactory and meaningful life, and even a good death. The Thus, it is assumed that whatever is good in itself is worth choosing and pursuing. This, however, could easily lead to subjectivism, egoism and relativism.

St. Augustine of Hippo, however, stated that God is the source and essence of happiness and that happiness based on the love of God and one's neighbour is what human beings were created for (*De doct. Chr. Vol.3:10*). Similarly, Thomas Aquinas (1969:562) held that limited (imperfect) happiness is achieved by cultivating intellectual and moral virtues, but ultimate (perfect) happiness consists in beatitude or supernatural union with God, which is attained through knowing and loving him and thereupon exemplify virtues of faith, hope and charity.

From a religious (Christian) perspective, the 'good' in the GR's words, '*do* to others as you would have them *do* to you', should not be left to egotistical arbitrariness, but rather be in conformity with the will of God. The will of God in relation to the GR is to be understood in light of the image of God as already discussed elsewhere in this study. It is about subjecting our wills to divine will so that we are able to do to others what we would have them do to us. It is divine will to do good even if by doing so may involve suffering in the process (1Pt.3:17).

Yet it is also the will of God to demand, or what ethicists call 'divine command', which humans may choose to obey or disobey. These 'wills' of God include holiness, sanctification, sexual purity (1Thess.4:3 NRSV) and being thankful in all circumstances (1Thess.5:18 NRSV). True recognition of the image of God and apprehending his will is contingent on what the apostle Paul calls being 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Rom.12:2 NRSV), without which humans will distort the GR with its cardinal virtues of love, self-denial, compassion, generosity, forgiveness and patience.

Accordingly, Jesus' followers are called upon to, first and foremost, imagine what God wills and how he acts; and conduct themselves accordingly. This confirms the petition in the Lord's prayer, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mat.6:10 NRSV). Taken this way, the GR does not presuppose divine or human retaliation as its foundation but God's initiative of generosity, forbearance and forgiveness. Thus, the GR adherents ought to embrace this divine initiative in the hope that the recipients will respond in kind.

However, the GR demands a willingness to take considerable risks. There is no guarantee that people will respond in kind when approached with generosity and goodwill. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that humans can be unfair, ungrateful, exploitative and even brutal no matter how kindly they are treated. Apparently, such risk taking is a constitutive element of everything worthy of being called ethical. As already pointed out elsewhere in this study, God himself takes such risks by letting the sun shine upon both the evil and the good, and sending rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous (Mat.5:45).

3.2.3 The Pronoun 'others' in the Golden Rule

If 'self' is to 'inward-looking', then, 'other/s' is to 'outward-looking'. Secular philosophy is concerned about satisfying oneself before (or without) others. On the other hand, most religious teachings focus on putting the interests of others before one's own. While philosophy would contrast 'other' with 'self', religion

would treat the two as relational. For instance, phenomenology claims that 'other' and 'self' are opposites while 'constitutive other' is concerned about the relationship between the personality or the essential nature and the person or body of a human being. This distinction between 'self' and 'other' has resulted in 'othering' or labeling and subsequent exclusion of a person who does not fit in the norm of a given social group. Thus, during the colonial era for instance, the 'self' and 'other' were represented as the 'colonizer' and the 'colonized' and the distinction has spread to other areas – e.g. rational and irrational, masculine and feminine, good and evil, master and slave, dominating and dominated, First World and Third World, civilized and savage, human and sub-human, etc.

The concept of 'other' was introduced to philosophy in the late 18th century by George W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) as a constituent part of self-consciousness (Hegel, 1894:53), which corresponds to Johann G. Fichte's propositions about self-awareness or introspection (Fichte, 1982:97). Hegel maintained that self-knowlege could not be achieved by mere introspection into one's own feelings, foibles, habits, likes and dislikes, etc. but by examining one's relationship with those of others (Hegel, 1971:I). He reasoned that the good for oneself has greater possibility of usefulness to others because one's reality consists in one's life and existence in connection with others – that is, one's enjoyment ultimately and essentially means putting what is one's own at the disposal of others; hence helping them secure their own enjoyment (Hegel, 2001:237). In other words, for Hegel self-consciousness exists in the recognition of, and in relation with other consciousnesses. Such relation is reciprocal or what O'Neil (1996:88) calls "the self-apprehension of the one in the other".

The question of how to deal with the other/s has always been with us although it became more apparent during the colonial and post-colonial (or post-human) eras. The question one would raise in the attempt to reconcile the rather irreconcilable rift between 'self' and 'other' could be: "How should I confront the other and what if that 'other' were myself?" The current human rights

concept is based on humanism or the notion that we all share the same human nature and thus we must treat each with fairness. Fairness in this study is about mutual social care for one another. Those who have the most contribute to help those who have the least and the latter should appreciate and work toward self-sustenance.

Thus, fairness is founded on the notion that humans have obligations to one another because we are social beings and belong to a variety of communities. There can never be an end to being needy – for instance, today I am helping the less fortunate but tomorrow, I may need that help myself. This humanistic approach resembles the GR but the latter is superior in that it transcends the cognitive and cultural limitations and is unconditional – that is, it goes beyond the *quid pro quo* or the proverbial "I will scratch your back and you will scratch mine" (reciprocity) thinking to "I will scratch your back whether your scratch mine in return or not".

Basically, the constituent parts of the GR point to persons who are human enough to not only be concerned about their own interests or 'goods', but also to the 'goods' of others. Indeed it is a call to move away from egoism (or one's comfort zone) towards altruism (or prioritizing the needs of others – hence the essence of being human. There is, however, a quality or attribute that ties all humans together irrespective of diversity of backgrounds; which if cherished, could enhance the interpretation of the GR in the manner advanced in this study. This quality is the 'image of God' which has, to some degree, been portrayed as 'thick' and 'thin' ethics, and *humanum.*

The next section deals with the GR in relation to the Judeo-Christian concept of the 'image of God'. However, before considering the concept in detail, some two preliminary concepts which are affiliates of the 'image of God', will be examined.

3.3 The GR in Relation to the concept of the 'Image of God'

Before focusing on the above topic in detail, some two other concepts that have been associated with the 'image of God' will be considered, because they also address the issue of the commonness of humanity. These two concepts are the 'Thick' and 'thin' ethics of Michael Walzer, and the *humanum* of Hans Küng.

3.3.1 Walzer's 'Thick' and 'Thin' Ethics

Michael Walzer is a prominent American philosopher and political theorist. In his *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (1994), Walzer describes two different but interrelated kinds of moral argument. One (which he calls 'thick ethics') is a way in which people talk among themselves in their localities where they appreciate their own history and culture; and the other ('thin ethics') is a way of talking to people abroad or across different cultures about the thinner life (moral minimalism) that humans have in common. Echoing George Orwell's statement, "… there's a thin man inside every fat man just as there's a statue inside every block of stone" (Orwell, 1950:11), Walzer argues that there are the makings of a thin and universalist morality inside every thick and particularistic morality (Walzer, 1994:xi). However, unlike Orwell who works from the stone to the statue, Walzer prefers to start with the finished statue (which he equates with ancient principles or values) then work towards abstractions that only allude to the original (Walzer, 1994:17).

Citing an incident that occurred in the city of Prague (Czech Republic) in 1989 when marchers thronged the streets with signs marked "Truth" and "Justice", Walzer says that although he was a foreigner, he could straight away understand the signs upon seeing them. Besides, he did recognize the values that the marchers were defending as, hopefully, did everyone else who was around. Walzer observes that the marchers were not defending either the coherence or correspondence theories of truth, nor some particular interpretation of justice in their protest. He argues that the various views on 'truth' or 'justice' were irrelevant to the marchers at the time – rather, what mattered to them was

upholding the truth (not lies) and administration of justice (not injustice) by their leaders (Walzer, 1994:1).

Consequently, Walzer contends that moral terms bear minimal (thin) and maximal (thick) meanings. However, he points out that the thinness of morality is about a common (universal) understanding of a moral issue while the thickness is concerned with the detailed application of morality in a particular context. Referring to the Prague episode, Walzer argues that the words 'truth' and 'justice' could have further meanings (thickness) for the marchers, which they would argue among themselves and which people from far away would not understand (Walzer, 1994:2).

Similarly, Walzer claims that people everywhere begin with some common (thin) idea or principle or set of ideas or principles, which they then work up in many different ways as the context/s may demand. By minimal morality, Walzer does not mean minor or shallow morality; rather he means morality that is 'close to the bone' (Walzer, 1994:6). He associates thinness with intensity or respect to morality; and thickness with qualifications, compromise, complexity and disagreements (Walzer, 1994:6).

Walzer maintains that minimal morality involves rules of engagement that bind all parties; while maximalism is the never-finished outcome of their arguments. Minimalism concerns the principles and rules that are reiterated in different times and places, and that are seen to be similar even though they are expressed in different idioms and reflect different histories and versions of the world (Walzer, 1994:6).

Walzer's thin or minimal morality is similar to T. Beauchamp's and J. Childress' (2001) common or commonsense morality by which they mean an ordinary ethical standard that corresponds to the minimal moral sentiments of every morally serious person anywhere in the world. This kind of morality

defies, or rather transcends, any procedures of moral justification in that it is pre-theoretical, undisputed and self-evident moral truth.

In other words, commonsense or minimal morality constitutes that natural power with which humans can penetrate what is right and wrong. It is an ethical predisposition that is ingrained in common collective moral consciousness inherited from predecessors in the human community. Therefore, according to Walzer, Beauchamp and Childress, minimal or common morality is universalistic in nature.

One might ask: But what does Walzer's minimal morality or commonsense morality have to do with the GR? Apparently the protesters in Prague were united upon realizing that their dignity as humans was under threat by the falsehoods and injustices from the leadership, and 'something' in them could not allow the state of affairs to continue unchallenged. It is this 'something' that Walzer referred to as 'thin ethics', while others (Beauchamp and Childress) call it 'common morality' that the marchers in Prague came together in solidarity to ensure that it is safeguarded because they themselves would not uphold falsehood and injustice if they were in leadership. Thus, in essence they were fighting for the cause of the GR.

Walzer's 'thick' and 'thin' ethics approach to human relationship, however, does not reflect the true situation on the ground. The political, economic, cultural and even religious factors have a huge influence on matters of morality such that the actors/agents get so preoccupied with the 'thick' aspect of ethics almost to the exclusion of the 'thin' element. Yet it is the 'thin' component of ethics that is supposed to unite the world of diverse cultures, colours, politics, traditions and religions. Often, humans who are 'politically and/or economically strategic' are the ones who determine both the 'thick' and 'thin' ethics. In other words, the definition of the 'thick' and 'thin' ethics is determined by the economically and/or politically mighty of this world.

3.3.2 Küng's *Humanum*

Hans Küng was a Swiss Catholic priest, theologian/philosopher and author. Küng used the concept of the *humanum* to denote human dignity, worth and value. He defines it as "What is given and what is given to do; it is both the essence and the task of humanity" or to be truly human (Küng & Ching, 1989:114). Through the concept of *humanum*, Küng demonstrates a paradigm shift in theology in consonance with the *libertas personae* (personal freedom), which was a shift from *libertas ecclesiae* (church freedom). Through observance of *humanum*, Christianity and religions in general can provide reasons why morality and ethics are more than just matters of private judgment or social norms. Religion can show that morality and ethical values are binding and applicable to all persons. Küng believes that a society without norms of behavior or moral values, a minimum of binding values, cannot survive – people need basic norms of behavior because they cannot live in a spiritual void.

In *On being a Christian* (1976), Küng argues that being a Christian should not erase humanity from a person. Instead, Christianity is for the benefit of the human person. In other words, Christian faith elevates the human person, preserving and surpassing the human; and to be a Christian means other humanisms are transfigured and are affirmed as the human reality with all its positive and negative aspects. Faith in Jesus makes us truly human when we respond to the needs of our neighbour.

Reacting to the claim that not all religions speak with one voice and that the models given for peaceful living are rather poor, Küng (1976:90) argues that it is possible to find certain basic values endorsed by religions which centre around the concept of the *humanum*, the desiderata of what is 'truly human'.

Thus, the *humanum* is the central moral criterion by which, according to Küng, we ought to evaluate and determine what is good and bad, true and false, right or wrong, useful and useless in life. In other words, if something promotes and protects human dignity, value and worth, then it is true, good and valuable; but

if it compromises human dignity, value and worth, then it is false, bad and valueless.

Through the *humanum*, Küng believes that there is continuity between being a Christian and being human. While he does not indicate that being a Christian is interchangeable with being human, Küng argues that true humanity is the presupposition for true religion and true religion is the fulfillment of true humanity (Küng, 1991:42). Küng takes the *humanum* as a universally binding and unconditional moral criterion. For him, Jesus Christ exemplified supreme *humanum* by demonstrating the concrete aspect of the abstract notion of the *humanum*.

Admittedly, Küng's *humanum*, which takes the spiritual and human dignity as fundamental to being truly human, sounds quite impressive but given the diverse interpretations of the spiritual, not to mention the anti-spiritual proponents, along with the postmodern predisposition of denouncing the absolute truth and negating objective human dignity, the *humanum* concept may no longer sound convincing to many. Besides, Küng's understanding of ethics comes to an abrupt stop especially when he claims that ethics resides especially in the heart of an individual (Küng, 1998:102) – he does not state who or what planted it in there, and how we can establish that it is actually there.

Thus, as presented above, the 'thick' and 'thin' ethics of Walzer and Küng's *humanum* bear resemblance to the 'image of God' in that they point to the commonness of humanity. However, the 'image of God' as depicted in the Judeo-Christian religion is superior because it goes beyond the horizontal (human to human) relationship to the vertical (God-human) relationship.

The concept of the 'image of God' (Latin, *imago dei*) is traced, in the Hebrew Scripture, to Genesis 1:26, "…Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness…." (NRSV). The interpretation and/or distinction of the two terms, 'image' and 'likeness', has given rise to different theological positions.

For instance, Tertullian (in Luiselli ed., 1960:166) took the 'image' as referring to the human bodily nature, while 'likeness' concerns the spiritual or eternal nature that was lost at the Fall but restored at baptism (Tertullian, 1960:166). Origen (in Crouzel & Simonetti eds., 1980:20) drew a distinction between the 'image' and 'likeness' of God by equating the image with the status of humanity, and the likeness with the final perfection of humans at the resurrection.

This study views the distinction of the two terms, 'image' and 'likeness' as unnecessary and that it is simply synonymous parallelism that is being applied in the use of the two terms and for that reason, they are similar and could be used interchangeably. Besides, to equate the image of God with human bodily form entails doing serious injustice to the anthropomorphic nature of the biblical language about God who is invisible and hence immaterial.

There are, however, at least three important implications of the image of God in humans. Firstly, humans are not to create God in their own image – this would encourage extreme humanism and/or naturalism. Extreme humanism rely on human intellectual and/or cultural achievements in matters of morality almost to the exclusion of any divine reality. Similarly, naturalism, with its emphasis on reason rather than revelation or religious authority takes human welfare as the end of moral action.

Secondly, humans are to learn their true nature from God and not vice versa. God is eternally before humans and is the ultimate source of morality. Thirdly, for the Christian tradition, Christ being the express image of God, is the true original human, so that even apart from the fall and restoration, humans would still have borne the image of God. It follows that the divine image was not destroyed by the sin of Adam and Eve, or by the guilt of Cain or the violent death of Abel but was passed on from Adam to his son, and so on into the rest of the human race (Sawyer, 1974:421-422).

The question as to whether the apostle Paul, in 1Corinthians 11:7 ("A man… is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man" – NIV), violated Genesis 1:26-27 or not, is beyond the confines of this study. What is of significance is that by being made in God's image, humans, in contrast to other creatures, are intelligent – that is, they, like God, have the power to reason, to know, to understand, and to make choices. Therefore, humans are endowed with the ability to discern right and wrong, truth and falsehood and are able to choose a good course rather than a bad one. In this way, humans are moral beings who are responsible for their conduct.

Possession of the image of God is by resembling or portraying him in our dealings with other human beings. That is, by loving all without discrimination just as God would love even the enemies and cause the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and the unjust (Mat.5:45 NKJV). In essence, this is the GR in the virtue ethics perspective– that is, doing good for its own sake, without any conditions and/or expectations as would be the case with reciprocity, retributory and/or consequentialist approaches.

Concerning human dealings, the image of God presupposes dignity, worth, unity and personhood. Expounding on the image of God, Bishop Desmond Tutu, says:

> *Ubuntu* recognizes that human beings need each other for survival and well-being. A person is a person only through other persons, we say. We must care for one another in order to thrive. The impulse to care, the instinct for goodness, is a shining thread woven into the fabric of our being. As human beings we may tarnish the sheen or rend the fabric of our own goodness. We can act in cruel and heartless ways. But because we are human, we cannot completely rip out and destroy every vestige of the godliness by which and for which we were made. We cannot alter our essence. We are made by God, who is goodness itself. We are made like God. We are made for goodness (Tutu & Tutu, 2010:15).

This study endeavors to steer clear of any racial, political and even religious overtones with regard to the image of God. In other words, the study restricts itself to the spiritual or metaphysical sense of the concept as opposed to the

corporeal interpretation. Strictly speaking, then, the image of God is about humans viewing one another as equals before God and treating themselves with respect and fairness. Further, all humans (irrespective of their geographical or racial origins) by virtue of simply being humans (the unborn, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the literate and the illiterate, the rich and the poor) bear the image of God and thus have inherent worth, value and dignity.

Accordingly, this study transcends movements such as black theology[15], which are inclined towards racial images of God. Black theology, inspired by black power, is militant in its aspiration and tends to encourage negative ethnicity by portraying Jesus as the black Messiah who has come to liberate the black people from the white Christianity. In other words, Black Theology presumes that the interpretation of the Christian gospel by the whites is dehumanizing and that a new and humane interpetation is necessary where there is a black apprehension of Jesus as the liberator of black people.

The sense of marginalization and/or racial discrimination has led the African Christian theological ethicist, Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, to write the article, *Ethics Brewed in an African Pot* (2011), which demonstrates that the core of African Ethics is life and community. Orobator argues that whatever does not promote life and/or puts community living at risk must be rejected because life represents the ultimate good and is the "guarantee of wholeness of harmony and universal harmony within and between the material and the spiritual realms" (Orobator, 2011:4-5). He insists that theology should not be a preserve of western academic professionals who concentrate on sophisticated arguments and/or complicated analyzes of the nature of the Christian faith. Rather, it (theology) should be about the 'brewing' (experiencing) theology (God) in an African context. In other words, it is letting Christianity speak to the African situation (culture) in African terminologies without patronizing the latter –

[15] Black theology is used in reference to the North American Christian movement that arose in the 1960s against the white Christian dominance in the church.

hence Orobator's concept of inculturation, which is about recognizing both the richness (greatness) and uniqueness of each religious tradition (Orobator, 2008:134).

For Africans, community not only provides values and beliefs that shape life, but also establishes the deepest and most enduring relationships and gives the members a sense of identity (O'Donovan, 2000). For life and community to prosper, Orobator recommends an all-inclusive (global) participatory dialogue among the concerned parties, suspension of patriarchal hierarchy and more involvement of women in the construction and execution of moral norms (Orobator, 2011:6). He points out that the church has for too long paid no attention to the dignity and ministry of women and yet they would play a central role in the church and/or family (Orobator, 2008:90). Further, Orobator contends that dialogue, forgiveness and reconciliation are essential towards enhancement of complimentarity and mutuality in an ethnically diverse community (Orobator, 2008:91).

This study has established that for the GR to work, there is need for a spirit of give-and-take with regard to moral norms so that a westerner does not despise an otherwise useful moral practice on account of its being African in origin and vice versa. This collaborative outlook will not only minimize racial discrimination but also enhance global development in matters of morality, religion, and even politics.

While the 'image of God' has attracted different interpretations and hence different theological positions, it is based on the assumption that all humans (believers and non-believers alike) acknowledge some Supreme Being who is the creator and sustainer of the universe, including humans. Ideally, the 'image of God' is somewhat related to what the Greeks and Roman Stoic philosophers call 'divine spark'.

Divine spark is the idea that all human beings contain within themselves a portion of Supreme Being or God. Thus, the purpose of life is to release the divine spark that has been held captive by matter and reconnect it with its source, that is, God. Humans, on realizing the presence of divine spark in their own lives as well as in the lives of their neighbours, and by committing themselves to treating one another fairly because of the divine spark, which is the equalizer, then the GR, would be attained (Phelps, 2002:22). Therefore, before the Supreme Being who is selflessly generous and unconditionally loving, and whose image all humans bear, it is only prudent for human beings from all walks of life to practice the GR within an environment of mutual respect and fairness.

That being said, this study has established that the knowledge and/or belief in God would be an added advantage with respect to the GR rather than a requirement because it is possible to acknowledge the principle with or without any religious affiliation. In other words, we do not have to embrace any religion or theological frame of reference to recognize that the GR makes sense. The principle can function in several ways depending on the content with which it is filled. That is why a masochist could use the GR to justify cruelty; and the arrogant or the timid might use it to justify being left alone to mind their own business and not bother to minister to the needs of others.

Thus, there is nothing distinctively religious and/or Christian about the GR in and of itself. It can be said that the belief in God places the GR at both the autonomous and heteronomous levels – autonomous because it leaves the individual to freely choose either to live by the precept or not; and it is heteronomous because practicing the GR is compatible with the will of God. In the Christian tradition, the GR actually liberates the church from the reign (or rather, exploitation) of experts. In Jesus' time, people were often advised to consult the rabbis or seers on what to do. However, Jesus, through the GR, counseled that in matters of interpersonal relations, people needed to consult

their own feelings – that is, how they would like to be treated in particular situations.

This section affirms that all humans, irrespective of their cultural, and/or religious backgrounds, have elements of the image of God in themselves and hence the concept of morality as embodied in the GR. In the next section, the focus is on the GR related expressions as evidenced in other religions and/or philosophies.

3.4 GR-related Principles in Different Religions, Traditions and Philosophies.

As already indicated earlier in the study, many religions, traditions and philosophies acknowledge the GR in the positive and/or negatives formulations. Either way, the spirit of the GR is present and being practiced. The following section deals with the GR-like principles as advanced by different religions, traditions and philosophies.

3.4.1 GR and the Abrahamic Religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

Judaism is the religion of the Jews (Hebrews or Israelites) based on the teachings of the Torah. Torah (Heb. *tôrâ*) is a Hebrew word meaning 'to instruct' or 'to teach/guide'. Torah is used in reference to the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books (the Pentateuch) of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Torah is the law on which Judaism is founded. Since Torah means instruction or teaching, the traditional Jewish world uses it in a broad sense to include the Talmud (that is, the authoritative compendium of the oral law) which was communicated to Moses on Mount Sinai along with the written Torah. The oral communication was preserved and transmitted orally through generations until Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi (also, Rabbi Judah the Prince) was granted authority to inscribe it by the end of the 2nd century AD. His edition of Oral Torah is called The Mishnah (Heb. *mišnâ* meaning 'repetition').

Jewish ethics are guided mainly by *halakha*, which is the collective body of Jewish religious laws drawn from the written or oral Torah. *Halakha* provides the substance of rabbinic ethics that focus on a person's duty towards self and others in the community. For the Jews, morality serves to strengthen the bonds of community and point to a value that is beyond personal needs.

The Jews were captives in Babylon for many years, which explains why the Torah bears elements of the Egyptian precepts and the code of Hammurabi[16]. For instance, the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy refer to the principle of 'life for life', 'eye for eye' and 'tooth for tooth' (Ex.21:23, 24; 24:20 NIV) – that is, tit-for-tat or *lex talionis*.

In contemporary normative research, *lex talionis* is interpreted more broadly as a rule of equal recompense. In theoretical analysis, *lex talionis* is permissible as a general idea of a special type of control of human interrelations. *Lex talionis* dates back to the primitive custom of blood vengeance whereby, according to the law of retribution, a kinsman had to vindicate the rights of a relative whose blood had been shed. In the ancient Greece, for example, every act of bloodshed, even when committed in self-defence, amounted to a form of defilement that required purification. Therefore, in accordance with the law of retaliation or *lex talionis*, the Greek culture avenged the blood of slain kindred. For instance, a son who, in a fit of passion, slayed his father would himself be slain at some time or other by his own children (Plato, *Laws*, Book IX, 2014).

The Jewish community, in conformity to the Torah, took blood very seriously because life resided in it. Therefore, blood being the seat of life, belonged to Yahweh and consequently any wanton shedding of blood would be replaced with the life of the person by whom it was shed (Gen.9:5-6). Blood spilled to the

[16] Hammurabi (2123-2081 BC) was the sixth king of the 1st Babylonian dynasty. Hammurabi was an outstanding statesman and lawgiver. Though not much is known about Hammurabi, his code, which he received from Shamash, the sun god, reveals that he was a person with a strong sense of justice. He protected the weak and defended the oppressed; and granted justice to orphans and widows.

ground would cry to heaven for vengeance (Gen.4:10; Job 16:18; Ezek.24:6-8) and an account would be demanded from the one who shed it (Gen.4:11; 9:6; 2Sam.4:11; Ezek.23:37, 45) by a near relative or avenger acting in the name of Yahweh.

Israel, however, restricted the evils connected with blood vengeance – only the murderer, not the family or clan, was punished for the crime (Deut.24:16; 2Kgs.14:6; 2Chron.25:4). The Deuteronomic Law[17] allowed someone who killed another unintentionally to seek asylum in certain designated cities of refuge (Ex.21:13; Num.35:9-29; Deut.19:1-13; Jos.20:3-9). However, if after fair trial, the slayer was judged guilty, the punishment would still be the prerogative of the avenger of blood (Deut.19:12-13) who was not free to pardon or have mercy on the slayer or accept any form of compensation in exchange.

The *lex talionis*, as bizarre and/or barbaric or even primitive as it may sound, served to enhance co-existence in the community during its time. Interestingly, *lex talionis* has for long been recognized by secular and rabbinical authorities, the Mosaic Law, the Church Fathers[18] and most modern scholars. Today people, knowingly or otherwise, apply the *lex talionis* in the name of natural law or proportionate justice. In fact, *lex talionis* is viewed as a vital regulative tool for resolving conflicts and restraining excessive and/or destructive aggression. For instance, we often hear of people being lynched by mob (jungle) justice for killing others regardless of whether the crime was committed on account of self-defense or intentionally.

[17] Deuteronomic Law refers to the reinterpretation or revision of Deuteronomy Chapters 12 to 16 based on historical conditions as understood by the 7th century historians or the "Deuteronomists".

[18] According to the Ancient Epitome of Canon IV, any bishop who extorted gold or silver, or anything else from his fellow bishops or clerics under his jurisdiction; or prevented them from accessing venerable temples for purposes of worship, would be subjected to the *lex talionis*.

It can be said that whereas the GR appeals to a person's feelings or intentions, *lex talionis* appeals to the law of retribution with reference to an action done by another person. In other words, the GR assumes an initiatory action in that it determines how a person should interrelate with others. *Lex talionis*, on the other hand, assumes a reactive action in the sense that it indicates how to act in relation to rules established by others.

The code of Hammurabi, which was basically *lex talionis* in orientation, was, however, applied discriminatively and sometimes incommensurably. It discriminated against the patrician class, the commoners and the slaves[19]. The tit-for-tat rule was applied as is if the original victim were a noble who, say, blinded another noble; but if it were a noble who blinded a slave, the punishment would be a fine of half the slave's value paid to the owner of the slave, not to the injured slave (*The Code of Hammurabi*, 2011:25 laws nos.200,199,202).

Similarly, the rights were exercised according to one's rank or class. The free class or patricians had higher authority over the other classes and the crimes they committed against the classes were easily settled with money. On the other hand, the plebeians or commoners had little rights and little power compared to the slaves. Their punishment for breaking the laws was more severe than that of the patricians. For instance, law #202 said, "If anyone strikes the body of a man higher in rank than himself, he shall receive sixty blows with an ox-whip in public" (*The Code of Hammurabi*, 2011:25 law no.202).

Slaves were the property of their owners. That is, they did not have any rights in the laws, and would be punished for anything they did wrong. One of the laws (#282) said, "If a slave says to his master: 'You are not my master', "If they convict him, his master shall cut off his ear."

[19] The Babylonian society was broken into three categories – the patricians or the high/free class; the plebeians/commoners or the middle class; and the slaves or the low class.

Apart from its discriminative nature in terms of application, the code of Hammurabi had incommensurability and/or inconsistency issues. It frequently prescribed death penalty for offences that did not themselves cause death – for example, robbery and accepting bribes.

Some critics of the Bible have charged that the Torah borrowed or copied from the code of Hammurabi. While it is evident that there are overlaps between the two documents, it would be unfair to assume that Moses (who himself was not exiled to Babylon, though he might have heard or even read about the code of Hammurabi) relied on the document to write the Hebrew law. Such an assumption sounds not only farfetched, but also underrates the inspiration of Scripture. Further, the charge fails to recognize that although the two laws are similar in many respects, they are addressing issues that are common to all societies and it would be preposterous to presume that one society should not prosecute a crime simply because another society is using a similar law.

In addition, it is important to note that the differences between the Torah and the code of Hammurabi are more significant than the similarities. The Law of Moses surpassed the code of Hammurabi by its being monotheistic in orientation rather than polytheistic as the Babylonian law. Thus, the moral principles of the Old Testament are based on a righteous God who required humans, who bore his image, to live righteously.

In effect, the Law of Moses is more than a legal code – it speaks of sin and responsibility to God, the Lawgiver, of which the code of Hammurabi is silent. Besides, while the code of Hammurabi dwelt exclusively on criminal and civil laws and outlined harsh and brutal consequences for the criminals, the Torah not only provided justice but also addressed the spiritual laws as well as personal and national holiness. Consequently, the Law of Moses did not just deal with the effects or symptoms of the crime (as the code of Hammurabi) but, more importantly, its root cause, which is sin itself. Thus, the spiritual component of

human life is central to the Torah – an aspect that is missing in the code of Hammurabi.

Although the Jewish law did not differentiate between classes (as the code of Hammurabi) in the application of the *lex talionis,* it discriminated against foreigners and women. For instance, only Hebrew slaves would be freed without ransom in the seventh year. With regard to women, the Jewish social system is patriarchal and hence women are less important than men. It is said that if a couple fell into a river and it were possible to rescue one of them, the choice would be the man. Hebrew women are accused of stubbornness and rebelliousness; and are feared for enticing men to sin (*Tractate Sanhedrin: Chapter VIII).*

What is more, the Jewish law applies preferential treatment with respect to promiscuity – man's adultery hardly carries any legal consequences, but a married woman's adultery is met with harsh consequences. The consequences included summary divorce without any monetary rights and no provision for later marriage either to her former husband or to the man with whom she had committed adultery. Then, any child born out of the adulterous union was considered a bastard (*mamzer*) and would be barred from marrying within the Jewish community unless to a proselyte or another bastard (*Halperin-Kaddari*, 2001).

In other respects, however, the Hebraic law and morality developed a humane concern for the poor and less fortunate; care for widows, orphans, and persons with disabilities (Ex.22:21; Deut.14:29; 26:12; Lev.25:39-43). The Torah prohibited mistreatment of orphans and widows:

> Do not take advantage of any widow or orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children orphans (Ex. 22:22-24).

The spirit of this humane call was summed up by the injunction to "Love your neighbour as yourself" – an appeal that has casually been referred to by some ethicists as 'the reciprocity principle'.

Hillel (from Heb. *Hillēl*, meaning 'he greatly praised'; and *hazzākēn*, meaning 'the Elder') was an eminent Jewish scholar and rabbinic leader in Jerusalem in the early Herodian dynasty (ca. 60 BC to 20 AD). Hillel studied biblical exegesis in Jerusalem under two prominent expositors, Shemaiah and Abtalion (Bromiley, 1988:716). Hillel excelled in the elucidation of legal rules (*halakoth*) from Scripture and had such a great zeal for Torah study that he became a role model for later students.

Shammai (Judean expositor, ca. 50 BC to 30 AD) who insisted on strict adherence to the law opposed Hillel's exegesis, which favoured a freer interpretation of the biblical text. An example of the difference between the two schools (Hillel and Shammai) is the interpretation of divorce in Deut.24:1 especially with regard to the phrase, "something indecent" or "some indecency", which Shammai school would restrict to illicit sexual conduct, while the Hillelites would extend to include any indecent thing such as spoiling the husband's food (Bromiley, 1988:716).

Hillel's broad interpretation of the law resonates with Christ's view on adultery (Mat.5:27-28) whereby while those who subscribed to the Shammai school (that is, the Pharisees and the scribes) would limit the subject to physical sexual conduct, Jesus took it further to include lustful desires toward women.

The rigidity of the Shammai school and the rather liberal stance of the Hillel school was further evident when on one occasion a Gentile, while standing on one foot, approached Shammai wanting to convert to Judaism; but Shammai doubted his sincerity and chased him off with the builder's cubit. The 'standing on one foot' has a metaphorical connotation of an ethical or fundamental principle upon which a system (in this case, the Torah) stands. Probably the

young Gentile, according to Shammai's thinking, wanted just a single principle on which the Jewish ethical system is founded. That rabbi Shammai chased off the Gentile shows disapproval of reducing the Torah to a single foundation because it extends to all other commandments.

Then the Gentile went to Hillel who, on hearing his request, said to him, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour, that is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary" (*T. B. Shabbath* 31a). In other words, Hillel expressed the GR, albeit negatively, to the proselyte.

Some writers, such as Albrecht Dihle, claimed that Hillel's GR did not arise in the Jewish province, but originated first among the sophists in the second half of the fifth century BC and that it had come into Judaism in the second century BC, whereupon it rapidly became a "solidly naturalized innovation" (Dihle, 1962:95-96). In his encounter with the Gentile, Hillel, unlike Shammai, did not have to define Judaic ethics nor drive away his student with a dogmatic stand. This was in line with his interpretation of the biblical text, which was generally liberal as opposed to Shammai's straitjacket adherence to the letter of the law. Hillel's treatment of the young heathen corresponds to the position of many moral philosophers who hold that ethics, by its very nature, must apply universally to all people. Therefore, there should not be any such thing as 'Jewish ethics' or 'Christian ethics'; rather, ethics should apply to all humans in their common humanity without discrimination.

Jewish ethics has a dynamic of its own, and Hillel points to that dynamic in his GR, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour (Heb. *haver*)" (*T. B. Shabbath* 31a). The meaning of *haver* has puzzled many commentators. In the traditional Jewish sense, it refers to an in-group member – that is, a fellow Jew or Pharisee. The requirement that ethics imply universality, however, militates against such interpretation, both here and in the related phrase in Leviticus 19:18 – "Love your neighbour as yourself" (NRSV). Apparently, Hillel does not give the meaning of the term *haver*.

The issue of the identity of *haver* could be resolved by taking Hillel's statement as religious rather than ethical so that *haver* points to God and the prohibition refers to disobedience, neglect and disloyalty. This being the case, then, the individual in Hillel's GR is expected to imagine God being his/her immediate neighbour and treat those around him/her as fellow 'image of God' bearers regardless of their culture and/or nationalities. This is where *haver* takes on a universal meaning. Therefore, Hillel counsels the would-be convert that the entire Torah consists of taking care not to ignore the demands of the divine, just as one would not like the divine to abandon providence over humanity. The Torah entails acting with an awareness of the reciprocal interaction of the divine and the human. Whatever Hillel himself might have meant, the dynamics of Jewish ethics implied by his teaching distinguishes itself by its divine referent.

Hillel clarifies his GR with a practical corollary – the need for *perusha* or commentary. The religious principles of Jewish ethics require concretization in real life situation. While the essence of the Torah lies in its teaching on obligation to God, its fullness lies in the actions the adherents take to translate that obligation into daily living.

Thus, Hillel's response to the Gentile underlines four dimensions: (a) Ethics addresses all humanity and begins with the given of each person's condition; (b) Jewish ethics depends on a religious principle, based on the assumption of divine concern for human conduct; (c) Jewish ethics moves from abstract principle into specific moral injunctions as a response to concrete situations and demands of life itself; and (d) the completion towards which Jewish ethics aims transcends practical, social, or individual goods to seek the perfection of the world as a whole.

This transcendental component in Jewish ethics is probably what made Herschel characterize the theological teaching of Judaism as an indubitable 'sense of obligation to answer for our conduct' (Herschel, 1955:158-159).

Acknowledgment of God's interest and concern for human behaviour calls for dedication to right action.

As concerns the GR formulations of Jesus (positive version) and Hillel (negative or 'silver' version), commentators are divided. There is the 'liberal camp' or those who are for reconciliation or harmonization of the two formulations, and the 'conservative camp' who view the two formulations as completely unrelated. The negative formulation of the GR or, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour" is found in Tobit 4.5; Philo, *Hypothetica* 7.6 and *Shabbath* 31a in the name of Hillel. Jesus put it the other way around (positively): "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Mat.7:12 NRSV). The 'liberal camp' claim that the negative GR users have no intention to exclude the positive version. For instance, Philo followed the negative formulation to give positive admonitions such as, "If the poor or the cripple begs food of him, he must give it as an offering of religion to God (*Hypothetica* 7.6). Similarly, when Paul showed knowledge of the negative rule by saying, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour" (Rom.13:10 NRSV), he did not limit behaviour to the avoidance of evil.

Moreover, there is the issue of the appropriate wording of the commandments. A negative law is usually stronger than a positive one. For example, "Do not kill" is weighted quite differently in law from the implied positive, "Help people live". Then the negative is also explicit; we know what it means to let cows invade a neighbour's cornfield, but we do not always know how to 'love'. Incidentally, more than half of the Ten Commandments are negatively stated (Ex. 20:1-17). Thus, according to the liberal wing of the GR, if one wanted to give a specific and more-or-less observable rule, one would go for the negative version.

Robert E. Allinson, who describes the negative GR as 'proscriptive' while the positive is 'prescriptive', claims that the negative formulation would effectively represent the fundamental understanding of ethics and that the other GR

understandings (including the positive formulation) are derivatives of that (negative) understanding (Allinson R. E., 2003:32). Allinson argues that it is easier to know what is harmful or bad (negative) than to know what is beneficial or good (positive). He contends that the positive GR amounts not only to epistemological immodesty because it presumes that the agent of the action is confident about extending the knowledge of oneself to others, but also to moral *hubris* (exaggeration) because there are no moral qualms in the extension of the good for oneself to others (Allinson R. E., 2003:33).

Further, Allinson thinks that the proscriptive formulation of the GR enhances benevolence in that it is against causing pain or suffering; and hence is a clearer directive to action and a more effective stimulus to ethical action than a commandment to act out of positive feeling. In an effort to illustrate his point, Allinson (2003:34) gives an example of a boy who pulls his younger sister's hair and the parent in turn pull's the boy's hair to make him feel the pain and as a result learns that it is wrong to do such an unpleasant thing to his sister. He concludes that it is easier for the boy to understand what is ethical by drawing attention to what he should not do than by focusing on what he should do such as commanding him to act lovingly toward his sister. Further, Allinson (2003:39) argues that humans are more governed by prohibitions than by counsels of goodness. To support his claim, Allinson (2003:39) states that out of the 613 commandments in the Jewish tradition, 365 are in proscriptive form and only 248 are framed in the prescriptive form. Thus, more ethical behaviour can be generated by prohibitions than by positive injunctions.

Clearly Allinson's explanation assumes that an act of benevolence can only be well understood by being subjected to some inhuman action. Nevertheless, Allinson's explanation does not cater for situations like when the agent of the action is a sadist, masochist or even a suicide bomber. Masochists and/or suicide bombers find pleasure in causing or receiving pain/suffering without any sense of guilt. Further, Allinson's elucidation does not accommodate a religious Jew

who believes that suffering is either for God's sake or for a predecessor's misdeeds – hence in such a context, suffering is not necessarily bad or meaningless. Moreover, Allinson does not provide room for virtue ethics theory or the choice to concentrate on the good life or character rather than dwelling on the right and/or wrong actions. Virtue ethics is about pursuing virtue (doing good/right) for its own sake – that is, without regard for all impulsions or adornments of reward and/or punishment. Although it may be difficult to measure the motive of the agent of an action so as to determine with certainty whether indeed the action is being done to advance good life or character, a benefit of doubt may be used, or establish if consistency is maintained over time.

On the other hand, the 'conservative camp' argue that the positive statements such as, "do to others" or "love your enemy" which are attributed to Jesus, have great force and penetrating impact. Davis and Allison (1988:506) put it so graphically: "… the succinct, arresting imperative, 'love your enemies' is undoubtedly the invention of Jesus' own mind, and it stands out as fresh and unforgettable". Moreover, the proponents of Jesus' version of the GR claim that he turned it into a great imperative of moral enthusiasm, which allows it to permeate all teaching and life. They maintain that the positive formulation of the GR takes humans into the region of generosity or grace, while the negative version confines them to the region of justice. In that respect, the negative version falls far short of the positive formulation which has been associated with universal morality, respect and regard for another person. Edersheim, in support of the positive GR formulation against the negative version said:

> The nearest beginner in logic must perceive that there is a vast difference between this negative injunction, or the prohibition to do to others what is hateful to ourselves, and the positive direction to do unto others as we would have them do unto us. The one does not rise above the standpoint of the Law, being as yet far from that love which would lavish on others the good we ourselves desire, while the Christian saying embodies the nearest approach to absolute love of which human

> nature is capable, making that the test of our conduct to others which we ourselves desire to possess. (Edersheim, 1953:856).

Thus, to the supporters of the GR against Hillel's negative GR, the positive version surpasses the negative just as far as 'to help and to benefit' surpass 'not to injure'. Jesus' ethic, seen in Christianity as altruistic, denies the objective moral value of an individual and dwarfs the self for the sake of the other. In other words, the disparity of 'self' and 'the other' in the ancestral faith of the Jews is abolished in the new faith in Jesus upon which, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28 NIV). This may well explain the words of Jesus on retaliation and on love for one's enemies (Mat.5:38-42; Lk.6:29-30), as well as on forgiveness at the crucifixion (Lk.23:34).

On the contrary, Hillel's moral code as understood within Judaism eliminates the subjective attitude. It is objectively involved with abstract justice, which attaches moral value to the individual as such without prejudice to self or other. In effect, Hillel's argument is that no one has the right to ruin another person's life for the sake of one's own and equally, one has no right to ruin one's own life for the sake of another – both are human beings and both lives are of equal value before the heavenly throne of justice.

As already shown above, Hillel and Jesus share a number of similarities. For example, Hillel and Jesus did not discriminate in terms of ethnicity or social standing when it came to matters of faith or religion – both welcomed, and spent time with those whom the society or religious elite had rejected. They both encountered opposition from the religious establishment of their days. Hillel's main opponent was rabbi Shammai as already indicated above; Jesus often clashed with the Pharisees and scribes who, when they could not stand his piercing words anymore, would refer to him in derogatory terms such as, "illegitimate child" or "child born of fornication" (Jn.8:41 NASB), "blasphemer" (Lk.5:21) or "Samaritan and demon-possessed" (Jn.8:48 NIV).

With regard to the GR, either in Hillel's version (negative) or Jesus' formulation (positive), this study has established that the distinctions that readers have drawn are overstated. Marcus Singer (1963:304) argues that there is just a rhetorical and psychological difference between the positive and negative versions of the GR, but there is no logical or moral difference. Although we may only speculate what happened next after Hillel shared the GR to the young heathen, it is most probable that the proselyte took the counsel to heart, aligned his behaviour to the command and influenced others. Jesus epitomized the GR by his love toward the unlovable or the scum of the earth as shown above.

Actually, the negative form of the GR did not originate with Hillel; it existed long before and after his time. For instance, the book of Tobit[20] 4:15 says: "What you yourself hate, do to no man". Also, the Hebrew text of the Testament of Naphtali (2nd century CE) says: "One should not do to his neighbour what he does not desire for himself" (Charles, 1908:139).

Incidentally, some ancient writings, such as the Letter to Aristaeus 207, combine both the negative and positive versions of the GR: "What is the teaching of wisdom? …. As thou desirest that evils should not befall thee but to partake of all that is good, thou shouldst act in this spirit to thy subjects and to offenders, and shouldst very gently admonish such as are virtuous" (Thackeray, 1917:243). Further, both the positive and negative formulations of the GR seem to lie behind Romans 13:9-10, "…you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbour, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (NKJV).

Thus, the GR was known outside the Jewish writings except that it was mainly in the negative form. The fact that the negative version of the GR was retained

[20] The date for the book of Tobit is set at 8th century BC, though most scholars now date it between 225 and 175 BC, that is, after the time of Ezra the scribe.

in the literature related to the Didache[21], such as the Egyptian Apostolic Church Order, the Apostolic Constitutions, etc. is enough proof that the difference between the positive and negative versions of the precept was not a big deal.

Actually, to regard Hillel's or the negative version of the GR as inferior and hence is of less value compared to the positive formulation, is to engage in trivialities. Although modern psychology claims, and rightly so, that humans should glorify the good and demonstrate its reasonableness and beauty, rather than ruminate on evil and its badness, it may not be representative enough – what happens to the non-psychologists whose 'good' and/or 'bad' may be different? The 'good' and, for that matter, the 'bad' may either be relative or absolute depending on who is declaring it. Relative good refers to the good as different people say or see it. For instance, serving the society or nation even at the expense of one's family is often seen as a good act, but in the eyes of the family it is a bad act to neglect one's family. On the other hand, an absolute good is something that is good because of 'that thing' in itself – that is, good is good even if there is no one around to see or say it.

Concerning the distinction between the negative and positive versions of the GR, which this study considers to be negligible, it is important to note that on occasion, Jesus gave his teachings in the negative form – e.g., "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned" (Lk.6:37 NIV); "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal" (Mat.6:19 NIV).

Admittedly, the positive version of the GR makes the principle much broader. It is like the difference between not breaking the traffic rules and doing something positive such as stopping to rush accident victims to hospital. In other words, under the positive formulation of the GR, we would be obliged to help someone in need, on the assumption that if we ourselves were in need we would want to

[21] Also known as "The teachings of the Twelve Apostles" is an early (c.50 CE – c. 70 CE) Christian document on Christian ethics, practices and order.

be helped. In the final analysis, the positive version of the GR imposes a burden on us to bring others up to whatever standard of well-being we would wish for ourselves. The challenge, however, is the meaning of 'others' – this has been dealt with in detail in this study under the constituent parts of the GR. For the moment, suffice it to say that the GR transcends the cultural, religious, traditional and even political boundaries to include people of other cultures, religions, traditions and political inclinations irrespective of whether they are friendly or sympathetic to our own or not.

Further, the GR, in its strictest sense surpasses reciprocity (*equity* – that is, 'give-and-take' or 'giving in order to be given' situation) in that it involves the principle of sacrifice (altruism) or *equanimity* – doing something even when there is little or no hope of any return (Armstrong, 2011:50). That the good according to the GR bears a sacrifice tag is evident in the marriage life where partners make sacrifices without expectation of return and children certainly cannot fully repay the sacrifices that parents make in raising them. Accordingly, the GR is based on selfless love and serves for the sake of the recipient/s in the way it likes being served – whether reciprocated or not. Such level of service, however, can only be achieved through resolute commitment to being a virtuous person.

On the whole, Hillel and Jesus espoused a universal scope or a paradigm shift with respect to the GR as evidenced in the proselyte incident and the parable of the Good Samaritan respectively. Hillel, unlike Shammai, welcomed the young non-Jewish religious seeker and explained the GR to him. Similarly, Jesus through the parable of the Good Samaritan, extended the Jewish limited understanding of neighbourly compassion to include their perceived enemies and/or 'lesser' humans. The rather uncordial relationship between the Jews and Samaritans[22] has been traced to the return from the Babylonian exile in 536 BC.

[22] Samaria (or Samaria Confederacy) refers to the Northern kingdom of Israel and was made up of the Northern tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh that broke ranks with their Southern

The exiles (Jews) were received by the Samaritans, but the Jews despised them as outcasts and renegades. So, in display of their self-centredness, the Jews rejected the Samaritans' offer to assist in rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:1-3). This brought political hostility and bad blood between the Jews and Samaritans. Consequently, the Samaritans tried to undermine the Jews during the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple. Moreover, the marriage of Eliashib, the Jewish high priest, to the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of the province of Samaria (Neh.13:28-29) whereupon Nehemiah drove him away, worsened the tension between Jews and Samaritans.

The long-standing hostility between the Jews and Samaritans was faced up to by Jesus during his earthly ministry. This was evident on a number of occasions – (a) when he passed through Samaritan towns instead of crossing the Jordan in a bid to avoid them (Jn.4:4-5); (b) when he spoke with a Samaritan woman – an act that was contrary to the Jewish custom (Jn.4:9); (c) when he proclaimed that a time would come when worshipping either in Jerusalem (Jews) or Mount Gerizim (Samaritans) would no longer be desirable (Jn.4:21-24); and (d) when he told the story of the Good Samaritan to reprimand Jewish bigotry and to demonstrate to them, in the spirit of the GR, the true compassion and neighbourly love.

Rabbinic and philosophical ethics differ in their orientation towards human perfection. The rabbis focus on a broad social consciousness, while the philosophers are after a utilitarian good for the individual. Thus, as the philosophers concentrate on this world as a means of achieving self-perfection, they downplay the intrinsic worth of daily activities.

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counterparts when Rehoboam, David's grandson, took the throne. However, the Samaritans were the descendants of mixed marriages between the Israelites (Jews) and the peoples whom Assyrians had imported to take the place of those who were exiled after Assyria captured Northern Israel in 722 BC (1Kgs.17:24).

On the other hand, rabbis with their communal concentration, emphasize on the responsibility of meeting the economic needs of others. Therefore, for the rabbis, ethical decision-making is about resolving sociological dilemmas and, in the process, improve the quality of life for all. Jewish moral practice is typically understood to be marked by values such as justice, truth, peace, loving-kindness, compassion, humility, and self-respect. Specific Jewish moral practices include chastity and refraining from telling lies.

Apart from focusing on the good of the society rather than personal self-perfection, another Jewish ethical perspective is on cosmic redemption. The great Jewish mystical movement, the *Hasid*, which flourished in Germany in the 12th and 13th centuries, is an example of cosmic concern. The leaders of this movement not only "agreed with one another that the ideal Jew or *Hasid* must pursue a personal goal of other worldly salvation in a particular way, but they also differed about the social implications of their shared vision" (Marcus, 1981:11). A section of the leaders felt that self-development was a private affair, while others maintained that individuals could only develop spiritually and morally by engaging with the community and its needs.

Judaism does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah; and the Jews who would dare to believe in Jesus or Christianity, ceased being members of the Jewish community. In fact, they would at some point be regarded as apostates and thus faced the social stigma from friends, family and the larger Jewish community. Among the consequences of abandoning the Jewish faith in favour of Jesus or Christianity included exclusion from the synagogue and not having a rabbi to bless one's marriage.

There has been a protracted tension between Christians and Jews (or the church and the synagogue) with the one (Christians) claiming that the other (Jews) were under God's wrath because they rejected and killed the Messiah, the Son of God. Augustine, in his exposition of Psalm 59:11, wrote, "Jews have been scattered throughout all nations as witnesses to their own iniquity and to our

truth [*Christ*]. They have themselves writings, out of which has been prophesied Christ, and we hold Christ", and he prayed, "Scatter them abroad in thy virtue, take away from them virtue, take away from them their strength; and bring them down O Lord" (Schaff, 1888:1801).

Other anti-Semitic reactions include the 1096 massacre where over 600 Jews perished in Mainz; and the 1492 order by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain to banish the Jews from Spain unless they converted by sword point to Christianity (Green, 2014:3). Similarly, Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, had no kind words for the Jews in Germany. He said, "First, set fire on their synagogues…, second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed" (Luther, 1971:290).

Many historians believe that the acrimony between Christians and Jews over many centuries laid the foundation for the worst atrocity that befell the Jews – the Holocaust. These many atrocities and tragic legacy make one ask the question: Is this really what Jesus taught or expected his followers to do? Apparently, no single New Testament writer advocated for violence or called for war against the Jews. Jesus himself declared, "… all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Mat.26:52 NRSV). Moreover, Jesus declared, "… salvation is from the Jews" (Jn.4:23 NRSV) and encouraged his disciples to "obey them [*scribes* and *Pharisees*] and do everything they tell you" (Mat.23:2 NRSV). In fact, Jesus confessed that he had not come to put an end to the Torah and the Prophets, rather, he had come to fulfil them (Mat.5:17-18). This he did by obeying God and thereby fulfilling the law – something that the Jews would not and could not do. On this, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Jesus, the Son of God, who alone lives in perfect communion with him, vindicated the law by coming to fulfil it" (Bonhoeffer, 1976:138).

So, in effect, Jesus by obeying God the Lawgiver and hence fulfilling the Law, was indeed significant in that the Jews needed to turn their attention from superficial observance of the Law to the Lawgiver himself and Jesus had come

to show them how to do it. The Easter faith message of "God so loved the world" (Jn.3:16 NRSV) is a blessing and not a curse for the Jewish people. Therefore, Jesus, like the Jews upheld the divine authority of the Torah and the prophets (Mat.5:17-20) and encouraged respect for the presenters and preservers of the code (Torah).

The apostle Paul, unlike the Church Fathers, taught that God had not rejected the Jews. He asked, "… has God rejected his people [*Jews*]? By no means! I myself am an Israelite…." (Rom.11:1 NRSV). Then in reference to the Jews, Paul said, "To them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Rom.9:4 NRSV). In addition, Paul said to the non-Jews or Gentiles "Do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You [*Gentiles*] do not support the root [*Jews*], but the root supports you" (Rom.11:18 NIV).

However, on the negative side, most noteworthy are the charges of deicide (murder of God/Christ) and misanthropy (hatred by humankind) against the Jews as shown in passages such as Mat.27:11-26; Mk.14:1; 15:11-15; Lk.23:1-25; Jn.8:42-47; 19:1-16 Ac.2:22-24; 7:51-53; 1Thess.2:14-16. It is important to note that although Jesus acknowledged his Jewish upbringing and observed certain rites, such as circumcision, his originality of thought (or divinity) made him transcend his Jewishness in a radical way – a characteristic which when he exercised at the age of twelve, astonished the teachers and everyone in the temple courts (Lk.2:46-47). Later, Jesus' 'weird' way of doing things like performing signs/miracles (Mat.8:28; 9:32-34; 12:22-28; Mk.1:40-45; 4:35-41; Lk.8:22-25; Jn.9:1-34, etc.) and associating with the 'outcasts' (Jn.8:1-11; Mat.8:1-34; Lk.15:1-32; etc.), elicited mixed conclusions from the crowd – such as reliance on Beelzebub (the prince of demons) to cast out demons (Mat.12:24); that he was a prophet (Jn.9:17); or that he was the Christ (Messiah), Son of the living God (Mat.16:13-16; Mk.8:27-29).

Matthew in his gospel (5:21-47) presents six revolutionary contrasts between Jesus and the Torah. These are: (a) the Torah prohibits murder (vv.21-26), but Jesus teaches that even anger and hate are to be avoided; (b) the Torah forbids adultery (vv.27-30), but Jesus extends the prohibition to include lustful thoughts/looks; (c) the Torah teaches about regularization of divorce (vv.31-32), but Jesus teaches about permanence of marriage; (d) the Torah relies on oaths as evidence of truth telling (vv.33-37), but Jesus emphasizes on integrity as evidence of the truth; (e) the Torah follows *lex talionis* (tit-for-tat) or equal retaliation as the way of resolving disputes (vv.38-42), but Jesus encourages reconciliation through forgiveness; and (f) the Torah teaches about loving one's neighbour and hating one's enemy (vv.43-47), but Jesus teaches about loving all, including one's enemies.

Thus, in the GR statements made in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Sermon on the Plain respectively (Mat.7:12; Lk.6:31), Jesus drew the attention of his audience to the 'love your neighbour as yourself' command of Leviticus 19:18, but gave it an unprecedented interpretation – that is, extending the love gesture to the enemies or the unlovable. Hitherto (and even afterwards), love was restricted to the 'insiders' or members of the inner circle such as brothers or one's tribe (Lev.19:17, 18). The 'outsiders' (the enemies, the persecutors and the like) were excluded and/or destined for punishment supposedly by God (cf. Rom.12:10, 16, 19).

The first two contrasts above, between the Torah and Jesus, represent advance beyond the law, while the other contrasts represent annulment of the old laws and taking morality to a new level. Given Jesus' rather ambivalent attitude toward the Torah as shown above, certain conclusions may be drawn. First, Jesus held the Torah in high regard as evidenced by his selective reference to the moral code as shown above. However, he exercised moral sovereignty toward the Torah by rejecting legalism in favour of the principle of *agape*, which refers to unconditional love.

Second, Jesus demonstrated superiority over the Torah as witnessed in his frequent Sabbath breakings (Mat.12:2; Mk.2:24; Lk.6:2; Jn.5:10; etc.). This serves to show that Jesus indeed wanted his followers to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees without rendering the Torah useless; yet at the same time, he championed a movement that raised the bar with regard to its moral and spiritual demands. What distinguished Jesus from the Pharisees was the degree of religious intensity and power. Jesus was not out to found a new religion, but to renew and purify the old which had been corrupted by heartless and lip service observance of the Pharisees. Actually, Judaism was a good religion, but went downhill to the point that at the time of Jesus, it was a mere appearance.

Jesus transcended the Jewish particularism through interpretation of the Law and his claim to special relation to God above other humans. He said, "But I say unto you" (Mat.5:21, 22, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 39, 43, 44, etc.), while the prophets would say, "Thus says the LORD" (Ex.5:1; 7:17; 9:13; 1Sam.2:27; 10:18; 15:2; 2Sam.12:7; 24:12; 2Kg.13:2, etc.). That Jesus took morality to a new level, in the spirit of virtue-based GR, is evident on a number of occasions including when he said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery' (Ex.20:14), but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mat.5:27-28 NRSV). Again, Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' (Ex.21:24), but I say to you, do not resist an evildoer… if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also…." (Mat.5:38-39 NRSV). In effect, Jesus took his audience from their ordinary day-to-day level of moral relationship to an extraordinary level where morality would no longer be a lip-service exercise or mere outward show, but a matter of beingness or character. Jesus had an unbroken communication with God, in contrast to Judaism where God was rather distant and remote. He presented God as the Father and the Kingdom as at hand, present already in his own person as could be witnessed in exorcisms (Mat.12:22-23; Mk.1:29-31; Lk.4:33-37; 8:26-39).

As evident in the referred sources in the study, the meaning and application of the GR is generally restricted to the in-group or immediate community. God's instruction to Israel, through Moses, not to oppress a resident alien (Heb. *gerim*) because they also were aliens in Egypt but to love him/her (Lev.19:34), was a paradigm shift in Israel's attitude toward strangers. Prior to this, the foreigners were barred from participating in any Jewish ceremonies primarily on account of their uncircumcision. In fact, it reached a point where resident alien laws had to be made that were different from the Jewish ones (Ex.12:49).

Moreover, the laws of Israel blocked foreigners from ascending to the throne (Deut.17:15). Because of the paradigm shift, Solomon later pleaded with God to hear and answer the prayers of the foreigners or the non-Jews (1Kgs.8:41-43). Apart from the instruction to be fair to both the resident alien and the foreigner, the Jews were called upon to be concerned for the weak and the vulnerable (children, the poor, orphans, widows and slaves) in their midst – they were not to be abused nor molested (Ex.22:20; Deut.24:14) but rather to receive equal treatment with the Jews before the law (Deut.1:16; 24:17; 27:19).

However, the Jewish-foreigner tension, especially around the issue of circumcision, persisted until the Apostolic Age when a dispute arose between the pro-circumcision wing of the disciples that required the non-Jewish converts to undergo circumcision and the anti-circumcision section that saw no need for the non-Jewish proselytes to undergo the rite (Gal.2:11-14). The age-long ethnic chauvinism of the Jews in terms of religion and moral obligations was, to some degree, resolved by the GR as articulated by Jesus during the 'Sermon on the Mount' (Mat.5:1-7:29) and the 'Sermon on the Plain' (Lk.6:17-49) discourses respectively (details of the discourses are on pages 134-5 of this study).

This realignment of relationship or neighbourliness in Israel to include the non-Jews or foreigners and Jesus' call, through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:25-37), to treat everyone including enemies as neighbours, resonates with the spirit of the GR as advanced in this study – that is, letting the rule apply

to all humanity irrespective of age, race, religion, social status, and geographical location. It is by making the GR part of one's life or beingness that the precept can have a transformational and lasting effect on both the individual and the neighbours; else it may end up being a lip-service or a mere public relations exercise.

In Islam, keeping the moral virtues as stipulated in the Quran and the Hadith (the central religious texts of Islam) is an evidence of one's faith in God. The primary virtues of Islam include forgiveness, kindness, patience, justice and fairness, brotherhood, good will, promise-keeping, honesty and love for God and for God's creatures including humans. The emphasis is on exercising the virtues in a way that the agents desire the greater good for others as they desire the same for themselves.

Abu Hāmid Ghazzālī, and influential Muslim jurist, ethicist, theologian and mystic, locates the GR within God's loving nature as expressed in the Quran: "My Lord is merciful and most loving" and, "He is the most forgiving and most loving" (*The Quran, Sūrat Hūd* 11:90). Ghazzālī explains that God through his attributes of mercy, love and forgiveness:

> Wishes all creatures well and accordingly favours them and praises them. In fact, love and mercy are only intended for the benefit and advantage of those who receive mercy and are loved; they do not find their cause in the sensitiveness or natural inclination of the loving-kind one. For another's benefit is the heart and soul of mercy and love and that is how the case of God – may he be praised and exalted – is to be conceived: absent those features which human experience associates with mercy and love yet which do not contribute to the benefit they bring (Ghazzālī, A. H; Burrell, B; Daher, N, 2011:118-119).

In other words, God is entirely and selflessly benevolent towards his creatures, without any need or desire for repayment. God does not benefit from the worship of his creatures, nor does he take pleasure in punishing the wicked; rather, he prescribes worship and righteous deeds for the benefit of their souls. In emulating God's desire for his creatures, believers (Muslims) should

unconditionally desire for others what they desire for themselves, including enduring harm for them for their own good:

> One is loving-kind among God's servants who desires for God's creatures whatever he desires for himself; and whoever prefers them to himself is even higher than that. Like one of them who said, 'I would like to be a bridge over the fire [of hell] so that creatures might pass over me and not be harmed by it.' The perfection of that virtue occurs when not even anger, hatred and the harm he might receive can keep him from altruism and goodness (Ghazzālī, A. H; Burrell, B; Daher, N, 2011:118-119).

The obligation of righteous action is a central theme in the Quran, which is associated with faith, "Man is in loss, except those who believe, do good deeds… (*The Quran, Surat al-'Asr* 103:2-3). The good deeds, however, ought not to be restricted to fellow-Muslims only because then it would contradict God's desire for 'all creatures' as indicated in Ghazzālī's words above. That there is a shortfall in the exercise of good deeds or neighbourly love by Muslims toward non-Muslims is evident in the perennial tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims for instance in the coastal and north-eastern parts of Kenya. It is reported that the militant Islamist group, al-Shabab, has been responsible for the on-going deadly attacks against Christians or non-Muslims. For instance, in December 2014, al-Shabab murdered 38 non-Muslims at a quarry in Mandera after separating them from Muslim workers. Then in April 2015, al-Shabab massacred 148 people in an attack on Kenya's north-eastern Garissa University College where the militants reportedly singled out Christians and shot them while freeing many Muslims. Although it can be argued that this is a wayward group of Muslims, the fact that they spared the Muslims in the attack could raise a lot of suspicion.

Consequently, the rather discriminative neighbourly love or concern that is evident in the above examples not only limits God's benevolence and love to the Muslims, but also heightens religious animosity and negative ethnicity. The solution to this crisis is to take God's love for what it is (that is, love for all humankind) and to embrace that love for oneself and extend it to those around

us without bothering which faith they belong to or whether they will reciprocate that love or not. That way, the GR as per the approach taken in this study (that is, virtue-based or beingness perspective) would be attained and consequently there will be neighbourliness without limit and love without conditions and/or hypocrisy.

3.4.2 The GR and other Religions and Philosophies

Buddha admonished his followers not to hurt anyone with what pains them; instead they should seek their happiness in this life and the life to come by seeking their own happiness as they make others happy rather than oppressing them (Buddha, 1985:11). This, Buddha claimed, would enhance communal (Buddhist) well-being (Buddha, 1947:705).

Both the Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism are directed at dealing with the vice of craving so that the victims may be delivered and clothed with virtues of charity, friendliness and compassion. By upholding these virtues Buddhism, through the Sutta-Nipata doctrines, would enrich inter-human relations. It is in this enhancement of human relations that Buddhism compares with the GR. However, the GR as brought out in this study transcends Buddhist interpretation of inter-human relations because it takes the precept beyond the Buddhist community to include the entire humanity.

Ubuntu philosophy has been a remarkable milestone in terms of restoring and boosting peaceful co-existence among the otherwise warring people groups in southern Africa. An *ubuntu* devotee has *utu* (feelings and/or caring spirit) for other people because he/she believes that there is an intricate web of inter-relationships among humans that generates a deep sense of common humanity such that one can only be human through other humans. To this extent, *ubuntu* and the GR, through the virtue of beingness, are related.

Despite the richness and noble intentions enshrined in *Ubuntu* and the gains of the philosophy thereof, the recent occurrences in South Africa are disheartening and a sign of a drift away from *Ubuntu* to *Into* (‘things’) – people treating one

another as ‘things’ rather than as humans. This unfortunate turn of events is evident in the alarming crime rates as captured by the 2017 South African Police Service (SAPS). For example, murder cases increased from 18,673 in 2015/16 to 19,016 in 2016/17, which is a 1.8% increase; robbery recorded a steady increase from 132,527 to 140,956 in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively, which is a 6.4% increase (Crimestats, 2018). Besides, not long ago incidences of Xenophobia have plagued South Africa whereupon at least 50 people were killed and about 25,000 were forced to flee for their lives despite having refugee status or being legal immigrants. Surely all such instances would be unheard of if *Ubuntu* were still binding – regretably, this is *Ubuntu* reversed.

Granted that the GR and *Ubuntu* are idealistic philosophies, a surface impression of *Ubuntu* (especially the ‘I am because we are’ aspect) is that it is a great principle, but it conceals egoistic tendencies. The extent of the “I am because we are” may mean members of the blood relatives, tribe mates, clan mates, political camp mates, social camp mates, etc. In other words, the dilemma sets in when it comes to determining who is “our person” and “who is not one of us”.

The moment *Ubuntu* is interpreted in a narrow and/or ethnic fashion, it becomes corrupted and ceases to be a universal moral principle; and turns into a system of patronage that is used to pursue power and money (Naude, 2013:245). The effects of a corrupted *Ubuntu* are dire and diverse – the weak and vulnerable are trampled upon, the old suffer loneliness, people living with HIV/AIDS are stigmatized and neglected, and foreigners become targets of violence (Naude, 2013:246).

Further, a tarnished *Ubuntu* and, for that matter, the GR, would lead to the evils of dictatorship, corruption, sexism, rape, etc. Indeed, the embrace of *Ubuntu* by the black community of South Africa made them win freedom from the minority rule, but chances are that it could be used (misused) to win other ‘freedoms’ – which explains the recent Xenophobia uprising. Again, a tainted *Ubuntu*, just like the GR, would view love as contractual rather than as agape or

unconditional love. Love that is unconditional reaches out to those who have wronged us and forgiving them without stipulating what they should give us in return. Besides, a stained *Ubuntu* is utilitarian – that is, it is based on the question, "What is in it for me?"

Philosophers generally espouse either the negative formulation of the GR and/or the Cooper Rule. They put more emphasis on the personal (inward) disposition (egoism) than on the 'neighbour' or community (outward) perspective with regard to morality. In other words, for philosophers the 'I' precedes, and exceeds, the 'other/s'. This is evident in Plato's GR-like statement as referred to earlier in the study, "I'd have no one touch my property, if I can help it, or disturb it without consent on my part; if I'm a man of reason, I must treat the property of others the same way" (Plato, 1967:913a).

Confucius, the name by which English speakers know Kong Qiu, was a Chinese teacher and philosopher who lived from the sixth to fifth century BC. He was born in 551 BC in a small state in Shandong Peninsula. He later founded the Confucian school of thought.

Confucius advocated for the restoration of traditional values and norms as the solution for the social and political degradation of his day. His teachings are recorded in the *Analects* – a collection of sayings (divided into twenty books) by him and his disciples as well as conversations between him and his disciples.

Concerning good governance, Confucius maintained that rulers were responsible for making their subjects virtuous not by imposing and enforcing laws and punishments, but by first being virtuous themselves. He argued that a subject whose virtuousness is through laws and punishments is not as good as the one who is virtuous by observing and identifying with a virtuous person/leader (*Analects* 2:3). The former relies on fleeting external motivation while the latter relies on internal motivation, which is genuine and lasting. Confucius was persuaded that if the nation's leaders (from princes and ministers to fathers and

sons) embraced the proper rules of conduct by practising *li* (virtue or ritual propriety), social order would be assured. This counsel is well captured in his reference to the rulers of old:

> The ancient rulers who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout their kingdom first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their own states, they first regulated their own families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts (Confucius, 2009:357).

In the *Analects* the GR appears twice – first, when Chung-Kung, one of Confucius' disciples asked him about *jen* or 'benevolence' / 'compassion' towards other humans and Confucius answered, "When you go abroad, behave to everyone as if you were receiving a great guest. Employ people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice. Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you. Then there will be no complaint against you in the state or in the family" (12:2). On being asked about the meaning of *jen*, Confucius said, "It is to love men" (12:22). Thus *jen,* like the GR, is about empathy with, and consideration of, others.

The second time that the GR appears in Confucius' teachings was during a dialogue he had with Tzu-Kung, one of his disciples, who asked him, "Is there one word that may serve as a rule of practice for all of one's life?" To which Confucius replied, "Is not 'RECIPROCITY' [*shu*] such a word?" (*Analects* 15.23). Confucius held that such virtue is the key to inner peace and tranquillity; and the basis of true feelings toward others – hence the source of right behaviour.

For Confucius, a virtuous person or *junzi* ('gentleman') is one who manifests *ren* ('humaneness', 'benevolence' or 'goodness') whereupon displays the quality of *yi* ('rightness' or 'righteousness') of *Tian* ('heaven' or 'deity') in his actions – a posture which is attainable through exercise of *zhong* ('other-regard') and *shu* ('self-reflection') (*Analects* 6.18; 10.6; 14.1,4,6; 14.35; 5.23). When one

reflects upon oneself, one realizes the necessity of concern for others. Thus, the self as conceptualized by Confucius is a deeply relational self that responds to inner reflection with outer virtue. Moreover, the self that Confucius wishes to cultivate in his own person and in his disciples is one that looks within and compares itself with the aesthetic, moral and social canons of tradition.

For Confucius, mutual interrelatedness of human beings was an integral aspect of moral life. He taught that a life that is totally independent and isolated is meaningless and unacceptable (*Analects* 18:6). He emphasized '*shu*' (reciprocity) as an expression of one's mutual responsibility in a relationship: For one to live a Confucian life, one has to respond appropriately to those within one's relationship – 'appropriately' in the sense of 'likeness' or 'equivalence'. It would, however, not be easy to establish the 'appropriateness' of one's action toward others because, for example, in a teacher-pupil relationship, it would look odd for a teacher to expect to be taught by a pupil let alone the difficulty in determining (measuring) the equivalence of the action.

Confucius advocated for practising rather than legislating the GR because internalization of the principle far exceeds reliance on external pressure through laws and/or punishments. In chapter 10 of *The Great Learning,* Confucius put the GR in a geometrical manner:

> What a man dislikes in his superiors, let him not show it in dealing with his inferiors; what he dislikes in his inferiors, let him not show it in serving his superiors; what he dislikes in those in front of him, let him not show it in preceding those who are behind; what he dislikes in those behind him, let him not show it in following those in front of him; what he dislikes in those on the left, let him not apply it to those on the right. This is the principle of the measuring square (Confucius & Legge, *Confucian Analects: The Great Learning, & the Doctrine of the Mean*, 1971 Commentary 10.2).

While this study supports Confucius' claim that the effect of GR is felt through practice rather than by legislation, it is worth noting that the GR, from a virtue-based ('beingness') perspective, surpasses the dictates of Confucian reciprocity. Certainly reciprocity would work in a situation where there is equality in terms

of possessions, social standing and even religious affiliation but the reality is that inequality and/or discrimination is prevalent.

Yong Huang, drawing from Daoism (especially Zhuang Zi) and Confucianism (especially Mencius) has developed an alternative to the GR, which he calls the "Copper Rule" (CR)[23] – "Do unto others what they would have you do unto them" (positive form) or, Do not do unto others what they would not have you do unto them" (negative form) (Huang, 2005:403). He reasons that instead of focusing on our desires as agents of the action/s like in the case of the GR, the CR concentrates on the uniqueness of the desires of others as patients or recipients by observing, communicating and even living with them (Huang, 2005:404). Huang's point is that by paying attention to the desires of the patients according to the CR, it will be clear that people are uniquely different and it would be foolhardy to regard our likes or dislikes as the same as those of others – an occasion for which he faults the GR. To support his point, Huang uses the story of the "Ultimate Happiness" told by Zhuang Zi:

> Of old, when a seabird alighted outside the capital of Lu, the Marquis of Lu went out to receive it, gave it wine in the temple, and had *jiushao* music played to amuse it, and a bullock slaughtered to feed it. But the bird was dazed and too timid to eat or drink anything. In three days, it was dead. This was treating the bird as he [Marquis] would like to be treated, and not as a bird would like to be treated. Had he treated it as a bird would like to be treated, he would have put it to roost in a deep forest, allowed it to wander over the plain, to swim in a river or lake, to feed upon fish, to fly in formation with others (Huang, 2005:404).

Thus, according to Huang, the seabird would not have died if Marquis had followed the CR and treated it as it would have liked to be treated.

Daniel Rönnedal, another supporter of the CR though he prefers to call it the 'Platinum Rule' (PR), thinks that the GR and the PR are complementary because sometimes certain circumstances would favour the use of the GR. He gives an example of a drunk friend whose car keys you have:

[23] The Copper Rule as Huang puts here, is what other writers, such as Daniel Rönnedal, Karl Popper and Tony Alessandra, call "Platinum Rule"

> You and your friend are at a party and your friend is drunk while you are sober. Your friend wants to drive home. You have her car keys and now she wants you to hand them to her. PR seems to imply that you should hand her the car keys and let her drive home, which seems counterintuitive since driving drunk is reckless, dangerous and illegal. According to the GR, however, you shouldn't hand her the car keys and let her drive home given that you (now) want it to be that if you were in her situation and she were in your situation she wouldn't hand you your car keys and let you drive home. Even though your friend now wants you to let her drive home she may later thank you for stopping her (Rönnedal, 2015:235).

Thus, from the above example, Rönnedal, admits that sometimes the PR can be problematic and that the GR would be a better alternative. Further, the above example serves to demonstrate that the basic reference point of the GR is the agent rather than the recipient of the action and thus the agent is allowed to 'do' what he/she believes to be good 'to others' whether they (others) want it or not, because they (agents) would want that good 'done' to them if the roles were to be swopped. Thus, it is within the confines of the GR to sometimes act against the wishes of others because their wishes might be irrational, inconsistent, foolish, or based on false belief.

History, however, has it that the GR has been used (or rather abused) by some of the clergy to justify certain viewpoints. For instance, in the 18th and 19th centuries a debate arose between the abolitionist preachers and pro-slavery clergy in the USA. The abolitionist preachers invoked the GR to argue that slavery should be eliminated; while the pro-slavery clergy who did not see anything wrong with slavery used the GR to support the practice. As a matter of fact, schism was rife in 1845 between the Southern and Northern Baptist churches in the USA over the subject of slavery.

The Northerners considered slavery sinful while the Southerners saw nothing wrong with it. It took the efforts of the moderates to divert the attention of the diehard parties to the need to keep the church together and, through consultation and mutual agreement, explore ways of gradually bringing slavery to an end. Name calling was, however, traded between the two camps – the Southerners

perceived the abolitionists as hypocrities, ignorant and self-righteous deceivers who wanted them (Southerners) to free their slaves yet they (abolitionists) were not ready to give them jobs if they migrated to the North. Then they (abolitionists) were ignorant because they neither understood how the system of slavery worked nor had any knowledge of whether or not the slaves were happy being slaves or would accept freedom if it were offered to them (Jeansonne, 1971:511).

The Southerners, on the other hand, were seen by the abolitionists as people who trusted their own conscience and idolized economy. They held on so much to their own conscience that they could not trade it with any other. Moreover, they were so concerned about their economic welfare that they viewed abolition of slavery as sounding a death knell for the economy.

Given the two extreme positions (Northerners versus the Southerners) that used the GR to justify their claims, it is the view of this study that if a temperate understanding of the GR whereby the virtue of love and concern for humanity were exercised by the Northerners in the emancipation process, and the same virtue were applied by the Southerners towards slaves (rather than towards economy), a lasting solution to the issue of slavery would have been achieved. Today, the rather enduring tension between the blacks and the whites in the USA could be because of the hovering 'slave' (black) versus 'master' (white) mentality with piecemeal and rather misleading doctrines. In fact, the Southern Baptist defenders of slavery claimed that the institution (slavery) was ordained by God and allowed segregation in their churches – the Blacks (Negros) could not sit with the whites and they (Blacks) were treated as underlings. One of the Southern Baptist sources is quoted to have said that:

> God's providence has laid upon the superior race [*white*] to provide for the wants, both temporal and eternal, of the inferior one [*black*]; and to accomplish this end, the white race must exercise a certain amount of control and authority over the black; and that, as a natural consequence, negro slavery, in some form or other, is part of the harmonious system,

> established by God, in his good pleasure, for man's government (Jeansonne, 1971:518).

This study views the above claim as not only using (misusing) the sacred writings to advance an inhuman system, but also an attempt to render the GR ineffective as a moral principle. The 'image of God' speaks of humans of all races bearing the image of God, in equal measure, and so there should be no room for superior and inferior humans. Similarly, the New Testament declares that believers are one (equal) in Christ (Gal.3:28) – that is, there should be no distinctions and so no one is spiritually superior or inferior to the other. A believing Jew (white) is no more privileged before God than a believing Gentile (Negro); a believing slave does not rank higher than a believing free person; neither is a believing man superior to a believing woman. The gist of both the 'image of God' and the GR is equal (fair) treatment of humans across all races, colour and nationalities.

Rönnedal thinks that the PR may be the better option than the GR under certain conditions and he illustrates this using a broccoli dish:

> Suppose that I am a waiter and that I hate broccoli. Becky orders broccoli, which she likes. Should I serve her broccoli? GR seems to entail that I shouldn't. For, since I hate broccoli, I want Becky not to serve me broccoli, it ought to be the case that I don't serve her broccoli. And this seems counterintuitive. According to the PR however, I ought to serve her broccoli. For, since Becky likes broccoli and orders it, she wants me to serve her broccoli. And from the PR it follows that Becky wants me to serve her broccoli, I ought to serve her broccoli (Rönnedal, 2015:231).

Gensler's 'same situation clause' would, however rescue the GR from Rönnedal's censure. The 'same situation clause' says, "Treat others only as you consent to being treated in the same situation" (Gensler H. J., *Ethics and the Golden Rule*, 2013:2). Hence, without resorting to the PR, the GR would still hold by imagining oneself as a waiter (who does not like broccoli) in Becky's situation should the roles be switched – that is, the waiter becoming Becky and vice versa. In such 'imagined' situation, the waiter would gladly serve broccoli

to Becky. Thus, the problem with Rönnedal's statement is that he has literally applied the GR.

As concerns the virtue of love which the GR proclaims, Huang claims that there should be 'different kinds' of love rather than the 'degrees' of love. The latter, Huang contends, is the GR approach while the former is the position of his CR. Through the different kinds of love approach, Huang adopts Mencius' distinction among three kinds of love: "a superior person loves things but is not humane (*ren*) to them. He is humane to people in general but is not affectionate (*qin*) to them. He is affectionate toward his parents, humane to people and loves all things" (*Mencius* 7a45). Huang concludes that what is happening is not three different degrees of the same love, but three different kinds of love to three different kinds of moral patients – things, other humans and parents. Huang maintains that because these kinds of love are different in kind, we cannot compare them and say which one is strongest or most superior.

The Copper Rule of Huang, being an inverse of the GR, proposes paying attention to the likes and/or dislikes of others in order to relate with them accordingly. It may not be easy, however, to understand or interpret the wishes of others, and sometimes their wishes might be either too inconsistent or too irrational to be accepted.

Huang's emphasis on 'different kinds' rather than 'degrees' of love may be compared to the four main types of love in the Greek language: (a) *Phileō* or compassionate love, is concerned with affection, fondness or liking – it embodies culture and beliefs; (b) *Storgē* or familial love between parents and children – it is fondness often born out of familiarity and dependency; (c) *Eros* or sexual, sensual or romantic love – often based on self-satisfaction (egoism); (d) *Agapē* or *Agapaō* or the self-giving, unconditional love and universal love – love for strangers, nature and God. *Agape* love encompasses altruism and selflessness and hence is ranked supreme; it is the glue that holds the other loves together and gives humans the wisdom and patience when the other loves fail.

Thus, for the GR to stand the test of times, it must be founded on *agape* love – an aspect which Huang's project of 'different kinds of love' fails to capture.

The way the CR works is that it requires that we first find out what 'others' want and thereby do so unto them. For instance, if the other person wants me to surrender my vehicle to him/her, then the rule implies that I should do it. Further, if the other person so wishes to sleep with my wife, the rule would allow. Therefore, under the inverse GR or CR, no woman would be safe from the desires of an importuning male. As a matter of fact, rape would be morally acceptable under the Copper Rule because no one would have a right to resist. Apparently, such requirements as implied by the CR are absurd and morally untenable.

Moreover, the CR would give the moral agent the freedom to do as he/she so wishes with other people. For instance, if I want you to give me your property and/or be my slave for life, then you have to comply. Thus, according to CR, if A wants you to do X, and B wants you to do Y, and X and Y are incompatible with each other, the rule would still require that you do both. In effect, the CR is saying, "Always do what anyone else wants you to do", which may lead to ridiculous extremes such as supplying drug addicts with illicit drugs or letting rapists get away with their act. In the final analysis, the rule encourages lawlessness and consequently becomes impossible to apply.

The study observes that although it could be the case that the positive version of the GR is more inclined towards the good rather than the bad deeds as would be implied by the negative version, both versions are necessary. Even the Ten Commandments in the Hebrew Scripture have both the positive and negative statements – only two of them are positive (Ex.20:8, 12), while eight are negative (Ex.20:3, 4, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17). Therefore, the debate as to which of the formulations is to be preferred over the other is insignificant. In fact, the negative reinforces the positive and vice versa. For instance, the command "You

shall not murder" (Ex.20:13 - NRSV) is meant to accentuate the sanctity of human life and ensure that no one attempts to take it away by violence.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher whose contributions to metaphysics, epistemology and ethics have had profound impact on philosophy over the years. In the field of ethics, Kant defended the deontological (or duty based) theory because of his conviction that the only feature that gives moral worth to an action is the motive (intention) behind it (Kant, 2002:45). He insisted on the consideration of reasons for acting and argued that the most fundamental reasons are those that are based on the highest ends attainable rather than on some presupposed ends (Kant, 2002:163). Therefore, Kant proposed that a moral imperative ought to be 'categorical' as opposed to 'hypothetical' – hence his principle of morality, which he dubbed "Categorical Imperative" (CI), which says, "Act in accordance with that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, 2002:55).

While the hypothetical imperative operates on some presupposed end/s, CI is about an absolute, unconditional requirement that must be obeyed under all circumstances and is justified as an end in itself. Kant was dissatisfied with utilitarianism, or any other consequentialist doctrines, that focused on maximizing the good for the number involved to the exclusion of the individuals who might just want to maximize the positive outcomes for themselves.

Kant brought the concept of autonomy into ethics. He claimed that all historical moral principles had failed because a person had to be duty bound to laws (heteronomy); and that time had come for each person to know that he/she is subject only to the laws given by himself/herself (autonomy) but still universally relevant and is answerable to his/her own will (Kant, 1997:4.433). Therefore, under the notion of autonomy, the concern with human dignity is combined with

the principle of universalizability to produce a conception of the moral law as self-legislated by each and for all. On this, Kant said:

> A rational being must always regard himself as lawgiving in a kingdom of ends possible through freedom of the will, whether as a member or as sovereign. He cannot, however, hold the position of sovereign merely by the maxims of his will but only in case he is a completely independent being, without needs and with unlimited resources adequate to his will (Kant, 1997:4.434).

Thus, Kant's idea of autonomy with reference to morality is about 'my will' as opposed to 'your will' or 'our/their will'. For Kant, 'kingdom of ends' meant a systematic union of rational beings through common laws of absolute necessity – it is a union ('kingdom') in which all humans are treated as ends rather than as mere means to an end (Kant, 1997:4:433).

Kant defended his CI against the historical or hypothetical (heteronomous) moral imperative that lacked freedom and was end-oriented (teleological or consequentialist) with regard to the action. For instance, a hypothetical imperative would take the form of: "Do A in order to achieve X" or, in other words, "Give and it shall be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over…."(Lk.6:38 NKJV). Kant's CI, by contrast, would simply declare: "Do A", or "Give" or "You ought to give" without needing to state any future condition to be realized by your being generous or mean.

Thus, Kant suggested that the principles of morality should be given categorically by each rational agent to himself/herself. Readers of moral philosophy are divided on whether Kant's CI and the GR are related or not. On the one hand, are those who think that Kant through the CI proposed an ethical principle that is strikingly similar to the GR in that it is based on the same fundamental realization that self and others are similar (Ichthus, 2009:2). For instance, Helen Simons (2006:245) thinks that the GR and CI are one and the

same thing as evidenced in her remark that, "the Golden Rule is a Categorical Imperative that often guides our actions and enables us to know we have done the right thing." S. B. Thomas (Thomas, 1970:199) claimed that the CI and the GR are two sides of the same coin – one side (CI) is responsible for the rational scope of the other, and the other (GR) is responsible for the spiritual basis for the correct application of the other (CI). Similarly, Küng viewed Kant's CI as a modernization, rationalization and secularization of the GR (Küng, 1991:59).

On the other hand, are those who think that the CI and the GR as two different moral principles. E. W. Hirst (Hirst, 1934:334) argued that the "will" of the CI is by far inferior to the "love" of the GR. Hirst (1934:334) maintained that the GR is universal in its appeal rather than sectional as could happen in the case of the CI. Peter A. Carmichael (1973:412) held that the difference between the GR and CI was like that between egoism or solipsism and high-mindedness – the GR enjoins everyone to make his/her ways a standard for everyone else whereas the CI requires everyone to submit to universal standards. Carmichael (1973:412) insisted that the motive of the GR is extended self-satisfaction; whereas of the CI is a nascency of mind – that is, an imperative towards pure understanding and a life accorded with it.

Apparently, Kant objected to the GR for not specifying what should be done and he took issue especially with the GR's love command – the element that Kant ruled as pathological or a matter of feeling rather than of will or volition and concluded that there is no such thing as duty to love (Kant, 1889:340). In his attempt to strip love (and all feelings or emotions) from the GR in favour of reason or good intentions for ethical action, Kant (1797:450) preferred terms such as 'disinterested benevolence' or 'philanthropy'. Kant (1797:450) reasoned that feelings, desires and emotions are subjective and would lead to ethical relativism. He claimed that only reason, which to him is universal, would rescue ethics from relativism that was proclaimed by utilitarianism and religion

(Christianity). Moreover, Kant believed that reason is the ground of the dignity of humans and the source of their moral worth.

Kant's distinction between inclination/s (emotions, feelings or sympathy) and morality has something to do with his dualistic stance that humans belong to two worlds – that the emotional (or inclination) component in humans is ordered in such a way that is contrary to the demands of the moral law, which is based on reason. For Kant (1956:75), human emotions are oriented toward self-regard, which is a combination of benevolence toward one's self (or what he regards as selfishness) and self-satisfaction (self-conceit).

Through the CI, Kant rejected the GR as a universal law because it lacked the ground for duties to one's self as well as benevolent duties to others. He concluded that the GR was both vague and absurd. In contrast, the CI, based on reason, forbids any reference to feelings or wants be they one's own or those of others; instead reason demands that an act is our duty and we must do it regardless of the individual's feelings or those of others.

With regard to Kant's Categorical Imperative, it should be pointed out that by stripping emotions or feelings from morality and insisting that the project should be made up of only the thinking or rational beings, is to do a disservice to the human person, which comprises both reason and sympathy or emotions. To talk of happiness as the highest good, in form of thought/reason, without feelings or emotion is a contradiction in terms because love loses meaning the moment it is severed from feelings. A human being is mysteriously linked to mysteries and there should be allowance for feelings and emotions in the event that pure reason fails.

These feelings and emotions are what John Wesley referred to as "light shining in [*human*] hearts" (Wesley, 1964:184). For Wesley, someone with such a 'light' is one who is turned outward (selfless) to others as opposed to one who is turned inward (selfish or self-centered) to themselves. He argues that upon

rediscovering of themselves by rekindling emotions and feelings toward others, humans acknowledge the image of God in their lives and thereupon the GR comes into effect (Wesley, 1964:184). Wesley's view of the GR correlates with the Lutheran Church of Finland's understanding of the precept as the principal element of the law of love (compassion) deposited into the hearts of humans by the Creator who is the source of all that is good; and such good is to be shared with others (instead of keeping it to oneself) in order to advance the common good, which is the parameter upon which all actions are judged (Arola, 2006:207).

If morality were to be driven only by duty through reason minus empathy or love, it would sound intuitively wrong (if not, hypocritical) for many to hear a CI adherent telling a friend after paying him/her a visit at the hospital that, "I have done it out of duty" – meaning not necessarily out of love. To shun one's feelings or emotions especially when situations would demand, egoism becomes the necessary result, which is inadequate for developing a morality that may require sympathy towards humans in need. The GR is much more universal in scope than the CI in that it does not limit itself, like the CI, to a few selected individuals (rational minds) in terms of moral interaction. Rather, the GR is all-inclusive because it focuses on treating all humans as we would have them treat us.

Moreover, the coherence of the GR is not the same as coherence with the 'wills' of humans as proclaimed by the CI. The 'wills' suggest actuality and concretion, which implies the historic instead of the ideal aspect of volition. The object of coherence transcends the mere 'wills' of humans, which is too abstract. If we substituted 'love' for 'coherence' it would be immediately evident that we cannot love a 'will' – rather, we can only love persons, which is by far more than just agreeing with his volition or will.

Further, the GR and the CI differ with regard to the nature of their view on religion. The CI is an autonomous principle based on reason and wills which we impose on ourselves. The GR, on the other hand, is based on religion or belief in God who is the Creator of humans and the ultimate source of morality; and that the love of self and neighbour ought to be a reflection of the love of God. Lilliane Lopez has accurately observed that the GR would have little impact on individual behaviour unless it is backed up with belief in God (Lopez, 2013:2). Similarly, Alfred Taylor claimed that, "…if there is no more profound and ultimate reason for my reverence for the good will than that it is my own will, does not absolute reverence for the good will and its law of duty degenerate into self-worship [solipsism]?" (Taylor, 1930:152). In the main, the CI with its emphasis on duty and reason at the expense of feelings and consequences, ultimately results in egoism.

Kant's Categorical Imperative (CI), which has been viewed by some readers as a secularized version of the GR because they both are universal in their emphases except that the CI is rational in orientation while the GR is spiritual, tends to overlook the benevolent or compassionate component in the formulation of a universal rule. Kant's notion of autonomy, however, runs counter to the GR's emphasis on love – moral autonomy is 'inward looking' (selfish or solipsistic) while the GR is 'outward looking' (selfless).

Popular world leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln (the 16th President of the USA), Barak Obama (the 44th President of the USA), Mahatma Gandhi (the Indian lawyer and political ethicist), have made reference to the GR – however, whether they practiced it themselves or they were simply using an acclaimed precept to gain certain mileages (political, personal, social or religious), is neither here nor there. Nonetheless, their recognition of the precept is in itself proof that the GR is a principle that stands out among many. These leaders viewed the GR as a call for love and/or equality among humans across the

political, social or religious divides. Love and equality are among the core virtues of the GR.

The United Nations (UN) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10th December 1948 following the horrors of World War II. It became necessary to declare a comprehensive statement of inalienable human rights as a way of pronouncing global peace and an end to war and conflict.

The precise meaning of human rights is contestable because it lacks uniformity especially with regard to its use or application. Different groups or thinkers use human rights for different purposes. For some, as already mentioned elsewhere in the study, human rights have been hijacked by politicians for their selfish political agendas; while for others, human rights serve as the highest order of moral rights in that they transcend national and/or regional limitations in order to have an international focus. In the latter sense, human rights resemble the GR in that both have a global commitment with regard to moral, religious and/or political matters.

Human rights are generally understood as the inherent, universal and inalienable fundamental entitlements to a person purely on the basis of his/her being a human being – regardless of nationality, location, religion, ethnicity or any other status (United Nations - Office of the High Commissioner, 2018). The term 'Human Rights' is comparatively recent in usage, but the concept is as old as the history of human civilization. The history of humanity has been marked with constant struggle against injustice and exploitation. Laws dating as far back as the Hammurabi codes and Assyrian laws were devised for the purpose of the protection of, and respect for, the rights of the individual.

Ancient philosophers acknowledged human rights in their works. Plato (427-348 BC) was one of the earliest thinkers to advocate for a universal standard of ethical conduct. In *the Republic* (1992:87), Plato proposed the idea of universal truths that should be recognized by all. Similarly, Aristotle pointed out that the dynamics of justice, virtue and rights differ with respect to institutions and

circumstances (Aristotle, 1905:12). Cicero (106-43 BC), the Roman statesman, held that there should be universal human right laws that transcended customary and civil laws (Cicero, 1998:xxii).

Readers of human rights take the concept as a systematic attempt to work out the implications of the GR for political and social life. In other words, human rights, like the GR, calls upon the agent of an action to identify with or imagine the plight of their patients or recipients of their actions before executing them (Kaveny, 2009:109). This pits virtue theory against rights theory. Virtue ethics theory is concerned with the character of the agent rather than maximizing utility (utilitarianism or consequentialism) or simply doing a duty (deontological theory).

Essentially, virtue ethics theory transcends both deontological and teleological theories in that it is concerned with developing an ideal character through the power of reason, intuition and care. Thus, unlike deontological and teleological theories that focus on the right/wrong actions, virtue ethics dwells on the character or the good life and what kind of a person one should be. In other words, the question that a virtue ethicist wrestles with is: 'What kind of a person should I be?' or 'How should I live?' rather than, 'What is the right/wrong action?'

The function of human rights in contemporary setting is about what is due to others (and to oneself) in particular situations. However, to render others their 'due' requires recognition of exactly what constitutes that 'due', not just in the abstract but in the concrete situations. The question then is: What would one require to be able to determine a concrete situation and to identify human rights? Kaveny (2009:111) outlines three skills or modes of imagination towards identifying and preserving of human dignity.

Firstly, the *ontic imagination* or the commitment to the recognition that no two human beings or cultures are the same – hence the need to maximize on the commonalities rather than the differences for the sake of preserving the dignity

of others rather than on what would amount to demeaning their dignity as human beings.

Secondly, the *emphatic imagination and solidarity* or treating other people as partners or colleagues in the community – a solidarity attitude toward one another. Solidarity enables people to see others not only as significant, but also to see the world from their perspective. Solidarity is promoted by emphatic imagination, or the willingness to imagine oneself in the concrete circumstances of another human being with the end result being of mutual benefit to all involved.

Thirdly, and lastly, the *strategic imagination*, which is about actualizing the human rights concept by touching the lives of the less fortunate. For instance, by involving persons with disabilities in gainful employment, rather than discriminating against them, so that they may also actively contribute to society.

Both the GR and human rights were proposed at the backdrop of religious and political crises. The GR was declared at a time when the religious establishment was rigidly legalistic and hence was deficient in the humane outlook toward life. So, the GR drew the attention of all humans to the need to treat one another with love and fairness. Likewise, human rights were promulgated after a War[24] which, were it not for an unconditional surrender by the enemy (Japan)[25], could have brought an untimely end to an entire nation. UDHR's main objective is to promote mutual interdependence among countries in all areas of cooperation such as life, liberty, security, freedom and movement.

[24] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) came out of the 1939-1945 World War II. Prior to the War, there were a number of countries, especially Germany and Japan which were not only dictatorial to their own citizens, but also brutal towards their neighbours. During the War, millions of soldiers and civilians were killed or maimed under Hitler (Germany) and Hirohito (Japan).

[25] It is generally believed that the Japan surrender was as a result of the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which killed around 70,000 people. Moreover, the Soviet declaration of war against Japan shortly after the bombings left Japan's survival hanging in the balance – hence Emperor Hirohito was left with 'unconditional surrender' as the only option.

Thus, both the GR and human rights are founded on the premise of peace and concern for one another. Strict (or rather, blind) adherence to the religious laws necessitated the introduction of the GR; and the excess show of military might by the super powers against a rebellious nation led to drafting of a document towards promoting mutual global co-existence.

Furthermore, the GR with its recognition by the major world religions, and the fact that humans should exercise fairness in treating one another, conveys the simple yet profound message that humanity is meant for interdependence, which happens by upholding mutual respect toward one another irrespective of color, gender, religion or nationality.

Similarly, human rights through its emphasis on acknowledging and defending the inherent, universal and inalienable entitlements, demonstrates equal worth of all humans without regard to color, religion or geographical location. Thus, both the GR and human rights are global in their focus and uphold human dignity. It is also worth noting that they both are positive in orientation. In other words, the GR and HR are oriented towards enhancing a harmonious co-existence of humans.

However, human rights is rather secular by inclination and hence unreliable while the GR is basically religious. Human rights take human moral nature as its ultimate source while the GR would trace morality beyond humanity to some Supreme Being variously referred to as Yahweh (Judaism), Allah (Islam), Brahman (Hinduism), Nirvana (Buddhism) or Dao (Confucianism).

Human rights being predominantly secular in orientation, are prone to be inconsistent and unreliable. For example, the Human Rights Watch (HRW), or the organization that is mandated to conduct research and advocacy on human rights, has been the subject of criticism especially with regard to lack of transparency and its bias as well as manipulation by the powerful nations. The allegation has been used to explain the general misrepresentation of human rights issues in places such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Latin America and Arab-Israeli

conflict (Bernstein, 2016:3). Therefore, human rights are likely to change from time to time, let alone getting to outlandish details (such as the right to use one's body as one wishes whether within marriage or outside; and the right to choose who to marry irrespective of gender) – all in the name of preserving human dignity.

The GR, by contrast, based on the need for the agent to live it and, at any cost, be it or make it a way of life, may not easily change – hence the reason for the variants of the GR that have been devised (such as Silver Rule, Copper or Platinum Rule) probably either to express inability to satisfy its demands, or an attempt to downgrade the maxim.

This study has established that the GR and human rights are concerned with (though in different perspectives and depths) the promotion of peace and freedom among human beings. One (the GR) says, "treat others as you would like to be treated" and the other (human rights) says, "treat a person like a human being [*as per the prescribed list of rights*] and you will get a human being" (Donnelly, 1989:19).

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in Kenya was created by the National Cohesion and Integration Act (no.12 of 2008) following the Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007/08. The NCIC was formed for a noble cause of long lasting peace and harmonious coexistence among different communities in Kenya so as to enhance nationhood, national cohesion and integration.

The PEV was a political, economic and humanitarian crisis that erupted in Kenya pitting the supporters of the winner of presidential election, Mr. Mwai Kibaki, against the supporters of the loser, Mr. Raila Odinga. The violence, which lasted two months and one day (Dec.27, 2007 to Feb.28, 2008), resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 people and about 500,000 displaced (Staberock & Christopoulos, 2017:7).

Despite the gains of the NCIC such as reduction of ethnic violence and animosity especially during electioneering period, the commission continues to encounter the challenge of undesirable political utterances ('hate speeches') often made in vernacular and mainly in coded language. Politicians have a way of going scot free by alleging that they were misquoted or misunderstood. Besides, NCIC is constantly faced with the challenge of remaining non-partisan in carrying out its mandate. A case in point is when members of one community are affected (evicted) so as to preserve a natural environment (water tower), and suddenly the process gets politicized. A politician is heard telling the evictees:

> You are the ones who brought all this problem, let me remind you that if you disturb the bees, then be ready to deal with [them]. You disturbed us and it has come that time. This nonsense of your women making noise throughout the night as if you have been bewitched… must stop (Ndubi, 2018:1).

NCIC wrote a warning letter to the politician in question and no further action (such as arrest and/or prosecution) was taken. Apparently the belated letter was not signed by the NCIC Chair himself, who happens to be a member of the 'disturbed' community. Apart from the letter by the NCIC to the one politician, nothing more has been done by the commission.

Hard hitting pronouncements against hate speeches and divisive utterances have been issued by NCIC with little or no tangible results. Over and over again the NCIC leadership and the security agencies have threatened hatemongers with dire consequences, but the culprits keep getting away with it. No wonder as a sign of frustration and dissatisfaction, Kenyans have referred to NCIC as 'toothless' in that it hardly prosecutes any cases nor secures any convictions. Moreover, the courts have been accused of being lenient to hate-mongers and should urgently consider denying bail to them so as to send a serious message to would-be hate-mongers (Tobiko, 2016:1). Further, witnesses are threatened or compromised and they withdraw midway or as the cases progress, hence leading to the annulment of the cases.

This study has observed that despite the many workshops conducted by NCIC towards sensitizing Kenyans to the importance of peaceful coexistence, the country still remains polarized. Moreover, NCIC has failed to tame vocal politicians who have repeatedly made inflamatory statements about other communities. Besides, social media is rife with condenscending remarks by Kenyans about one another. Even songs are used to spread hatred against another group of people. At this rate, NCIC is left with the options of either to up its game by stopping the rhetoric and acting decisively on the culprits, change tact, or wind up.

The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) was established in Kenya by an act of Parliament in 2009. The TJRC's mandate was to investigate the gross human violations and other historical injustices between 12th December 1963 and 28th February 2008. It was deemed that by addressing the causes and effects of the crimes, the commission would contribute towards national unity, reconciliation and healing.

A glance at the TJRC report reveals that over 190 prominent personalities (some of whom are deceased) including some members of the TJRC are due for either investigation or prosecution for various misdeeds. The fact that the report is still gathering dust about seven years on after being handed over to the President in 2013, is in itself a clear indication that the report is 'a political hot potato' (Obonyo, 2017:10), because the implementers are among the implicated. Unfortunately, no effort has been made towards implementation of the TJRC's recommendations other than the public apology by the President on 26th March 2015, during the state of the nation address at Parliament Buildings, Nairobi, when he said:

> I stand before you today on my own behalf, that of my government and all past governments, to offer the sincere apology of the Government of the Republic of Kenya to all our compatriots for all past wrongs. I seek your forgiveness and may God give us the grace to draw on the lessons of this history to unite as a people and, together, to embrace our future as one people and one nation (Kenyatta, 2015).

The Deputy President on his part has, on many occasions, expressed fears that the implementation of the report would be a recipe for chaos in that it would divide Kenyans and re-open old wounds. It is the position of this study that the general failure of both NCIC and TJRC is attributed to at least two factors. Firstly, a wrong approach was adopted by the two bodies. Issuing threats and/or executing arrests and prosecuting the culprits may escalate ethnic tension, violence and hatred rather than enhance peaceful co-existence. In other words, harsh measures such as prosecution or imprisonment of the perpetrators, who most likely have a huge following and sympathizers, may worsen an already volatile environment.

In view of that, a more humane approach through organized peace talks would minimize tension and bring about a lasting solution. The issue at hand is moral rather than legal; it is about touching the hearts by those who care and are willing to identify with the hurts of the victims and together chart a way forward to a neighbour-friendly future. Apparently, the President's 'unusual' remarks above resonate with the character of the GR in that they underline forgiveness, which is one of the cardinal virtues of the GR.

Secondly, NCIC and TJRC, to a large extent, lack political goodwill. Politicians who ironically endorsed the formation of the two bodies have been at the forefront peddling the same vices that the two commissions were created to combat. During a farewell luncheon in his honour at Intercontinental Hotel on 18th October 2018, the NCIC Chair blamed the politicans for undermining NCIC's effort in the fight against negative ethnicity. Even as he lauded the handshake between the President and the Opposition leader, the NCIC Chair complained that many politicans are taking advantage of the divisions among Kenyans for their expedient strategies. Quoted by *The Informer* of 10th August 2018, an visibly frustrated NCIC Chair said, "It gives me a headache that we have not achieved much to bring Kenyans together – the main mandate of the Commission. This is because of political interference, but even as I quit the position, I will dedicate my life to uniting Kenyans" (Kaparo, 2018:3).

On her part, the NCIC Vice Chair, has expressed fear that the country's politics is mainly driven by ethnically based party vehicles and coalitions where values of tolerance, appreciation and embrace of unity in diversity have been eroded (Omondi, 2016:2). She finds hope in the faith based organizations and has called upon them to use their calling and moral obligation to preach harmony and tolerance among Kenyans irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds (Omondi, 2016:2). Regretably though, faith-based organizations and religious groups in general are not only divided among themselves and suspicious of one another, but have also fallen prey to political manipulations. Moreover, the TJRC suffered a long delay in securing an appointment to hand over its report to the head of state, and the implementation of the recommendations may not see the light of day – all because of political machinations.

Upon considering the merits and demerits of the NCIC and TJRC, this study reckons that the two bodies are dealing with moral (even emotive) (not legal) issues which should be handled in a humane manner. The study, therefore, recommends the GR approach where the perpretrators of the vices would be prevailed upon to place themselves in the shoes of the recipients of their misdeeds. Upon internalizing the unfair treatment of their fellow humans by imagining themselves on the receiving end, it is hoped that the culprits would be sorry and thereby have a change of heart.

A terminology that is usually used by the political class, which a surface impression would point to the GR, is 'dialogue'. Ideally dialogue is about discussion on assorted topics in order to refine thought. For dialogue to work, the ground ought to be level and the players or stakeholders should exercise mutual respect rather than resorting to outdoing one another. Dialogue is about willingness to confront national ills by putting vested interests aside and offering to commit ethnic, religious, regional, gender, clan and class or ideological suicide (Mutunga, 2018:21). This can only happen when we learn to respect others, acknowledge that they too have rights, and be our brothers' and

sisters' keepers – after all we are created equal both before God (religion) and before the law (jurisprudence).

Unfortunately, dialogue has metamorphosed, courtesy of political expediency, into condoning ills such as dictatorship and all manner of intrigues through bribery and threats towards making people support a movement often at the expense of their conscience or belief. Thus, on the whole, a 'win-lose' instead of 'win-win' situation is the trend in the Kenyan political scene and, to a large extent, the continent of Africa. Therefore, terms like 'rebels', 'sell-outs', 'moles', etc. have been used in reference to those who are perceived to be not sympathetic to a political point of view. Thus, the situation turns out to be an abuse of dialogue. Dialogue and, for that matter, the GR, can only work where there is fairness in terms of respect for the opinions of other people as well as exercising diplomacy (rather than threats or bribery) to win their support.

3.5 Criticisms of the Golden Rule

Despite receiving wide recognition across different fields (religion, philosophy, culture etc.), the GR has elicited a number of criticisms especially with the elevation and coronation of reason by philosophy. These criticisms have resulted in either the reformulation of the GR or its rejection and replacement with a new principle. In this section, some four major criticisms have been highlighted.

The four criticisms that have been sampled are: (a) The GR as a slave morality, (b) the GR as unrealistic and impractical (c) the GR as absurd and (d) the GR as inferior to 'the new commandment'. In this sampling, the main fields of knowledge are represented – philosophy [(a) and (c)], psychology [(b)] and religion [(c)].

3.5.1 The Golden Rule as a Slave Morality

Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900) was the son of Karl Ludwig Nietzsche, a Lutheran minister who died when Friedrich was barely five years old.

Nietzsche's view on morality was characterized by 'will to power' or the desire to lord it over others:

> Benefiting and hurting others are ways of exercising one's power upon others: that is, all one desires in such cases…. Whether benefiting or hurting others involves sacrifices for us does not affect the ultimate value of our actions. Even if we offer our lives, as martyrs do for their church, this is a sacrifice that is offered for our desire for power or for purpose of preserving our feeling of power. Those who feel 'I possess the truth' – how many possessions would they not abandon in order to save this feeling! Certainly, the state in which we hurt others is rarely agreeable, in an unadulterated way, as that in which we benefit others; it is a sign that we are still lacking power, or it shows a sense of frustration in the face of this poverty (Nietzsche, 1954: aphorism 13).

> A living being wants above all else to release its strength; life itself is the will to power… all animals strive instinctively for an optimum combination of favorable conditions which allows them to expend all their energy and achieve their maximum feeling of power (Nietzsche, 1954: aphorism 7).

Thus, for Nietzsche, morality is actually a form of immorality – that is, morality is not achieved by morality itself, but by immoral means such as force (power), lying, slander and injustice (Nietzsche, 1968: aphorism 306). He claimed that the good or right meant whatever heightened the feeling of power in humans; while the bad or wrong meant everything that is low or born of weakness. Similarly, happiness for Nietzsche meant the feeling that power is growing and that resistance is subdued. He viewed life from the context of power, and more of it, rather than contentment; and war rather than peace (Nietzsche, 1954: aphorism 2).

Nietzsche had no kind words to describe the 'Sermon on the Mount' (Mat.5:1-7:29), especially the GR and morality in general. He referred to the GR as a 'slave (herd) morality' as opposed to 'master (noble) morality', which he proclaimed (Nietzsche & Kaufmann, 1989:257). Inspired by egoism and/or his concept of 'will to power', Nietzsche compared human life with animal life and came to the conclusion that it is all about dominating and exploiting others especially the weak. Thus, for Nietzsche, Christianity, with its will to break the

spirit of the strong and emphasis on equality, is a retrogressive movement that should be rejected.

Accordingly, Nietzsche criticized Christianity and other religions for glorifying humility, compassion, selflessness and fairness or any teaching that was inclined toward reciprocity – a doctrine that he described as vulgar (Nietzsche, 1968:489). He despised the 'neighbour love' doctrine claiming that he had suffered a lot by exercising goodwill or seflessness toward others and began to associate generosity and sympathy with inherent weakness and virtue of decadence; and considered overcoming pity as a sign of virtue (Nietzsche, 2005:79).

Moreover, Nietzsche viewed Christianity with its emphasis on neighbour love, modesty and lawfulness as a sign of weakness unlike the Renaissance or the strong ages and noble cultures that treated Christian virtues with contempt (Nietzsche, 2005:140). He blamed culture for abdicating its responsibility of producing sovereign individuals and instead has maintained a series of deformations and perversions in the hands of European or Christian moralization. This is what he calls 'herd animal morality' because it assumes that there is a single morality valid for all (Nietzsche, 1990:228).

Nietzsche claimed that this unfortunate trend could only be reversed through a campaign for the death of God and the demise of Chrisitan morality. He asserted that the Christian morality has turned a human being, who is naturally a 'beast of prey', into a 'household pet' that is condemned to always strive to become 'better' by being more comfortable, more mediocre, and more Christian (Nietzsche, 1990:12, 228). He disputed the teaching that there is a line of descent that could be continuously traced to a common ancestor or that would enable us to trace moral notions and legal practices back to a natural single and fixed origin (Nietzsche, 1954:xx). He held that human instinct[26] is the origin of

[26] This study equates Nietzsche's use of 'human instinct' with the Golden Rule because what he associates with human instinct (e.g. mourning, desiring the best for others, etc.) is actually the GR.

morality, which constantly undergoes fundamental transformations, disruptions, innovations, and inventions of morality. As a result of the instinct, Nietzsche would claim, it becomes natural for humans to mourn, pity and to desire the best for others – an attribute which is also found in the animal world (Nietzsche, 1968:415).

Nietzsche's distinction between "master" and "slave" moralities with his preference of "master morality", which is in keeping with his doctrine of "will to power", shows that he was an ardent solipsist in that he advocated for the strong-willed as the origin and measure of all moral truths. The master morality is characterized by courage, open-mindedness and a sense of self-worth unlike the slave or traditional morality (morality of the weak), which strives for the common good. Nietzsche describes these characteristics of master morality as 'slandered instincts' as opposed to 'virtuous instincts', which are altruistic in essence. He advocated for the reconciliation of slandered instincts, which are essentially self-centered (egoistic) with virtuous instincts which are selfless because, so he claimed, both of them are founded in the essence of life and nature (Nietzsche, 1968:415). He, however, because of his admiration of master morality, came to the conclusion that the altruistic actions are mere disguises of egoistic actions and thus the degree to which one loves or gives, proves the degree of individual power and personality (Nietzsche, 1968:416).

Nietzsche was so averse towards slave morality or the GR (characterized by humility, sympathy, equality and generosity) that he vowed to fight it and overhaul morality altogether. The necessary result of this undertaking was the dethronement of God as the ultimate lawgiver or the origin of morality and the enthronement of the superman as the master of morality – hence Nietzsche's "God is dead" declaration.

Evidently, this turn of events not only renders moral values relative, but also leads to the celebration of both oppression and anarchy. In the midst of relative moral values, it becomes difficult to realize universal or common moral norms – a situation that could easily result in the oppression and exploitation of the lower

(slave) by the mighty (master) and anarchy would be inevitable. It sounds strange (if not, contradictory) however, for Nietzsche to attribute the source of morality to the human instinct and in the same breath claim that instinct is a false human invention. Yet it is this instinct that has made people to be doctors, nurses, counsellors, teachers and waiters among other professions. All these professions are not just for the benefit of oneself but also, and more importantly, for the benefit of others.

Thus, humans exist despite differences in professions, faiths, languages, colour, cultures or traditions for the benefit of one another – and this is the core of the GR principle. It is a very human instinct to satisfy the needs of others and our instincts reach far beyond selfish (or egoistic) pleasures. Therefore, because the GR is a basic human instinct, removing God or any deity from the equation would not alter this foundational human position. Consequently, if our selfish pleasures exist without God as Nietzsche wished, so must our natural selfless instincts – a lesson which, had Nietzsche realized, hopefully his philosophy would have been much more convincing and positive.

3.5.2 The Golden Rule as Unrealistic and impractical

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) was an Austrian neurologist and psychologist who founded psychoanalytic school of psychology. Using his system of psychoanalytic social psychology, which portrayed society as composed of competing impulses of the individual (the selfish) and the social (the selfless) as well as competing desires of love (*eros*) and death (*thanatos*) or the destruction of the otherwise lovely union, Freud observed that such is a more accurate description of human behavior than the Golden Rule.

For Freud, the love of all humans expressed in the injunction ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ is misguided and something utterly impossible for humans to attain. He could not make sense of an indiscriminate love and asserted that those to be loved must somehow deserve it (Freud, 1961:56). Freud emphasized two kinds of love – the sexual love (*eros*), which is the primary

drive and the familial love (*storgē*), which is genetically or family based. With this kind of interpretation of love, Freud argued that it would be meaningless for humans to love strangers as they love family members or close friends.

Moreover, Freud contended that while it would be sensible to love one's neighbour so long as that neighbour loves you, it would be utterly nonsensical to love one's enemies as Jesus commanded his followers in the New Testament. He maintained that the teaching that enemies ought to be loved, ignored the obvious antagonism between some human groups. Freud held that it is natural for humans to be aggressive toward one another, but not to love their neighbours and, worse still, their enemies as themselves. He rejected the GR not only for being unreasonable, but also for being in conflict with the aggressive instinct in humans. He states:

> Men are creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity to work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him (Freud, 1961:68-69).

Essentially, for Freud, the Christian injunction to unconditionally love one's neighbour, let alone one's enemy, is indeed too radical and downright impossible unless through instinctual (erotic) renunciation, which may result in hostility and disintegration of human civilization (Freud, 1961:44, 59). He explains a 'deserved love' as one where the beloved resembles the lover in important ways that the lover can in turn love oneself in the beloved and he claims that this is what Aristotle meant by saying that a 'friend is really another (second) self' or 'like is the friend of like' (Aristotle, 1869:320).

Freud went further to demonstrate the incredulity and pointlessness of the Christian 'neighbour love', which he viewed as a threat to self-love (egoism):

> Why should we do it? What good will it do us? But, above all, how shall we achieve it? How can it be possible? My love is something valuable to me which I ought not to throw away without reflection. …[If my neighbor] is a stranger to me and if he cannot attract me by

> any worth of his own or any significance that he may already have acquired for my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. Indeed, I should be wrong to do so, for my love is valued by all my own people as a sign of my preferring them, and it is an injustice to them if I put a stranger on a par with them. …Whoever follows such a precept in present-day civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage *vis-å-vis* the person who disregards it. …At this point the ethics based on religion introduces its promises of a better after-life. But so long as virtue is not rewarded here on earth, ethics will, I fancy, preach in vain (Freud, 1961:56, 90).

Thus, it is clear that Freud's assignment was to rescue love from indiscriminate and inclusive interpretation by the GR or religion (Christianity). In his advocacy for love as a relationship that resembles exclusive genital (libido) intimacy, Freud dismissed the GR by asking, "What is the point of a precept enunciated with so much solemnity if reason does not recommend it to us?" (Freud, 1961:90-91).

Freud's restriction of the meaning of love to libidinal (*eros*) and familial (*storgē*) ties robs the virtue of its universal character, which is conveyed by the *agape* meaning. It is upon this *agape* sense, or the all-inclusive and unconditional love, that the GR is based. Freud's limitation (or rather mutilation) of love, to suit his profession (psychology), has attracted criticism from philosophers and theologians. For example, Kant, despite his own objection to the GR, proposed a cleansing of moral theory from anything empirical (anthropological and/or psychological) in order to ensure that the discipline is kept within the precincts of reason (Kant, 1969:388).

Freud's rejection of *agape* love not only destroys all that is truly good in human life but also is a complete inversion of Christianity. For Christianity, *agape* love is the highest virtue (1Jn.4:7-19) while the lust of the flesh, often associated with evil desires and fueled by *eros* (2Pet.2:18; 1Jn.2:16), is to be rejected. Freud's claim that *agape* love stems from frustrated *eros* is quite unconvincing. For example, the selfless *agape* love of a mother for her child is not out of frustrated *eros*; neither do mothers who put their lives on the line to rescue their children harbour thoughts of future physical (*eros*) enjoyment with them. *Agape* (not

eros) is what drives humans to the greatest sacrifice and the greatest bravery; and it is to this category of love that the GR takes us. Freud, however, although somewhat belatedly and surprisingly, later found himself practicing the GR. It is said that in 1930, Freud who until then had viewed the Christian commandment of love for one's neighbor as unreasonable and impossible to fulfil, was forced by Hitler's brutal dictatorship to advocate for 'love without a sexual aim' as a way of opposing the dictator's war – and he confessed that psychoanalysis did not need to fear using love in this manner because even religion spoke of loving one's neighbor as oneself (Küng, 1979:171). Although Freud's situation may sound forced or reluctant rather than a willing interaction with a religious point of view with regard to love or the GR in relation to morality, it is, nevertheless an admission.

3.5.3 The Golden Rule as Absurd

Kant claimed that all moral judgments ought to be based on a supreme principle, which he described as Categorical Imperative (CI), "Act only according to that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law" (Kant, 1998:xx). For Kant (1956:51-52), the CI is a principle which ought to be employed by rational agents as a guide for making their own choices and judgments. The idea that governs the CI is autonomy – that is, the belief that the moral law is an internal (personal) activity produced by reason rather than an external (heteronomous) event imposed by cultural norms, traditions or even by God. The result, according to Kant, is that an individual would act as a law unto himself/herself (hence autonomously), but would cooperate harmoniously with every other member (hence, extreme humanism) – a situation which, for Kant, is "ideal kingdom of ends or systematic union of rational beings where one treats oneself and all others never merely as means but always at the same time as ends in themselves" (Kant, 1956:51-52). Thus, it can be said that Kant's ideal kingdom of ends is concerned with harmonization of both subjective and objective ends.

Despite attempts to show mutuality between the GR and Kant's CI by viewing one (CI) as providing a rational dimension to morality, while the other (GR) is concerned with the spiritual perspective (Thomas, 1970:194); or by taking the CI as a rationalized and secularized version of the GR concept (Redner, 2001:160), it is evident that Kant had reservations about the GR especially with regard to universality:

> … it cannot be a universal law, for it does not contain the principle of duties to oneself, nor of the duties of benevolence to others (for many a one would gladly consent that others should not benefit him, provided that he might be excused for showing benevolence to them), nor finally that of duties of strict obligation to one another, for on this principle the criminal might argue against the judge who punishes him, and so on (Kant, 1956:48).

Therefore, Kant would view the GR as allowing room for wrongdoers to use it for their own benefit. He would argue that a defense attorney might use the GR against the judge in favour of the defendant. Thus, a defense attorney might, using the GR, say, "Imagine if you were in the defendant's position. Would you want to be imprisoned for life on account of manslaughter? Don't do to the defendant what you wouldn't want done to yourself!" This, however, would be a case of improper and prohibited GR rhetoric because it invites the judge to a biased and subjective consideration of the case at hand – hence drifting away from an objective, fair and impartial judgment. An objective, fair, impartial judge whose ruling is properly based on the GR, as a metamoral rule, would make a verdict which, even if he/she were to switch places with the defendant, would still support the verdict.

In other words, consistency, being the preferred test for a balance in the GR, requires that if the judge deems morally (legally) wrong for the defendant to commit the crime of manslaugher, and that the legally preferred penalty for the felony is life imprisonment, the judge must be willing to comply with the sentence were he/she to switch places with the accused. This would be in conformity with the GR and demonstrates that moral judgments ought to be overriding in tenacity and universal in prescription (Hare, 1981:55).

The judge versus the defendant example above tends to operate on the reciprocity and/or retaliatory principles. At this level the GR is about searching for equivalent action/s to settle a moral issue. The positive version of the GR would, however, not stop at reciprocity level. In fact, Jesus discouraged his followers from settling for a reciprocity cause by challenging them to go beyond the commonplace way of doing things (Lk.6:32-35). Therefore, the GR is not necessarily a statement of either reciprocity or retaliatory morality. Reciprocity or retaliatory thinking is expectation-based, whereas the GR is based on taking the initiative and acting toward others first in accordance with our imagination as to how we wish to be treated without getting fixated on payback or retribution. Thus, the limitation with strict reciprocity is that the disabled and non-humans would be excluded in moral interactions.

The general presupposition under the GR is that people want to be treated fairly and beneficially, and that they are likely to respond with kindness and fairness if they are approached in that way. Thus, through the GR, Jesus invited the disciples to a higher ground where they would not just love those who loved them back, or do good to those who did good to them; but to extend love to their enemies, give generously to all and practise mercy (Lk.6:35-36).

Evidently, Jesus transcended the tit-for-tat rule or the 'get even' notion of the OT and/or Hammurabi code by teaching his disciples not to resist a cheek-stricker but instead 'offer the other cheek'; to the one who would file a lawsuit against them and take their tunic, 'give them the cloak also'; to those who would force them to go one mile, 'go with them two miles'; and give to the borrowers rather than turning them away (Mat.5:38-42).

With regard to the masochist who inflicts pain on non-masochists in the name of the GR, inconsistency would be evident in that he would not consent to have the same done to him in a switch-of-places situation. That is, as a non-masochist

who finds it very distressing to have pain inflicted on him, would object to others inflicting such pain on him (Gensler, 1996:99).

Clearly, Kant's CI is based on 'rational' response and autonomy; while the GR is based on contingent[27] facts. Rational response has no regard for feelings or emotional reactions; while contigent reaction weighs the options with respect to the situation at hand. For instance, suppose you learn that your sister has perished on a road accident and your frail elderly mother, who is hypertensive, asks you about her. You are to choose either to tell her the truth, however painful (according to the CI), or spare her the shock and agony (according to the GR). The GR would ask, "How would you like to be treated in a similar circumstance?" The answer would be contingent – the GR proponents would opt to be spared the harsh truths during such vulnerable moments; while the CI supporters would rather hear the truth however painful regardless of the consequences.

You might conclude that if you were in the mother's condition, you would rather not be told the news. Telling the truth irrespective of the outcome, as Kant's CI would insist, sometimes can be counterproductive – the frail mother's condition, on hearing the sad news, might worsen or she could even suddenly collapse and die out of shock.

Kant's CI, like the GR, acknowledges duty as part of human experience as well as the importance of equal treatment of individuals. However, unlike the GR, CI's emphasis on duty and reason to the exclusion of feelings or emotions (e.g. love, sympathy and compassion) would render Kant's maxim cold and insensitive.

3.5.4 The Golden Rule as Inferior to the 'New Commandment'.

Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) was a distinguished French philosopher of the twentieth century. Ricoeur, using his 'rhetoric or paradox' approach to resolve

[27] Contingency is a situation in which a proposition is neither necessarily true nor false.

the tension or inconsistency (as he saw it) between the 'love for enemies' command (or what he also calls 'the new commandment') and the GR, concludes that the one (the love for enemies) is based on logic of superabundance and the other (GR) on logic of equivalence and the two do not correspond (Ricoeur, 1990:397). He claims that one ('love for enemies') is based on unilateral love while the other (GR) is on bilateral justice. Further, Ricoeur maintains that love for enemies expects nothing in return, but the GR legitimizes a certain kind of reciprocity (Ricoeur, 1990:397). He views the GR as a reciprocity principle and thus implies equality between the parties involved, which leads to some form of a social contract between equal parties.

Ricoeur sees a progressive path towards true justice that ensues from observing the love for enemies or the new commandment. For him, this progression, starts with retaliation or *lex talionis* ('eye for an eye'), to reciprocity (which he calls 'justice' or the GR) and on to 'love' based on the new commandment of giving without expecting anything in return. Ricoeur is, however, trying to detach the GR from the new commandment or love for enemies, which is unncessary because the two rules are identical and originated from the same source, Jesus Christ, who could not have contradicted himself and/or did not need to improve his view on right living.

The study maintains that for Ricoeur to read reciprocity to the GR, which in the gospel of Luke (6:31) is sandwiched between the command of love for enemies (Lk.6:27) and its explication (Lk.6:32-36), is to lose sight of the entire context. The emphasis is not so much on the object of love as on love itself. That is why Paul says, "Love does not seek its own…" (1Cor.13:5a NASB), "Love does not keep record of wrongs" (1Cor.13:5b NIV); "Love endures all things" (1Cor.13:7c NKJV) – including enemies. The study considers Ricoeur's view of love as either too exaggerated or too superficial to be associated with the GR maxim that is premised on self-giving (*agape*) love. This misleading interpretation of the GR by Ricoeur is also evident in Anderson's (2009:5) hasty rejection of the precept as lacking the 'sacrifice' element and that it carries

reciprocal insinuations and hence falls short of being the essential core of human morality.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given the meaning of the GR and related it to the commonness (personhood) of humanity through the concepts such as the *humanum*, 'thick' and 'thin' ethics, and especially the 'image of God'. Statements similar to the GR from different backgrounds have also been outlined to demonstrate the universal scope of the GR despite different formulations. Moreover, certain objections against the GR drawn from a cross-section of disciplines have been highlighted and responded to.

The next chapter glances at the global moral condition in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of certain moral positions already mentioned in the study, and the need for a more refined approach to the GR that would be more inclusive and cross-cutting based on the virtue of 'beingness'. Further, the GR in relation to the virtue of 'beingness', has been explored with regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE 'BEINGNESS' APPROACH TO THE GOLDEN RULE

4.0 Introduction

A glimpse at the global situation today reveals an unprecedented speed in terms of technological, economic and political advances. In this section, the study has explored the global moral environment so as to establish the need for a uniting moral principle and how the GR would be suitable as a basis of universal morality. Also, the GR has been examined in the light of Jesus' teachings with regard to the virtue of 'beingness'.

4.1 Global Moral Condition in relation to the 'Beingness' of the GR

Globalization is the process of international integration arising from interchange of worldviews, products, ideas and other aspects of culture. Advances in transportation and telecommunication infrastructure have called for the need to pay more attention to globalization. The concept of globalization took centre stage in the year 2000 when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization namely: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge (Held, 1999:485). In addition, environmental challenges such as global warming, cross-boundary water and air pollution and over-fishing on the ocean have been linked to globalization. Apparently, not much attention has been given to the ethical or moral values, which ought to be the fundamental concern of the global age.

Globalization has a long history. In the years past, imperial conquests across continents have had debilitating consequences on the religious, customary and moral practices of their subjects. Today, technological advances especially in science and socialism are at such an unparalleled speed (through radio, television, internet, satellite, etc.) that national controls over information have proved ineffective. Thus, values of one culture are endlessly exposed to those of

other cultures – a trend that has pitted multicultural politics against fundamentalist identities in terms of religion, morality, nationalism and ethnicity. That notwithstanding, globalization has brought new societal security threats (e.g., cyber war, international and ecological terrorism and transnational organized crimes), which cannot be satisfactorily countered with either through traditional military means or within a national framework.

Granted that globalization has transformed societies albeit in multifaceted and uneven ways, it has sadly widened the gap between the richest and the poorest countries and further increased divisions within and across societies – there is more ethnic diversity (and animosity) and religious acrimony than ever before, and the trend looks irreversible. This calls for rethinking politics, social justice, values and identities with a view to enhancing a level-ground in all spheres of life. This development necessitates charting a more open or cosmopolitan approach that would accommodate itself to a global setting. This study has established that the GR based on the virtue of 'beingness' would be the most suitable approach in this regard.

Historically, globalization has taken environmental, economic, political and cultural forms. For many years, humans have migrated and settled in new lands. The notable great wave of modern migration was the transatlantic slave trade, between 15th and 19th centuries, where over twelve million people were shipped as slaves from Africa to the Americas. Consequently, this marked the beginning of a protracted tension between the whites and the blacks in America and, by extension, between America and Africa.

Politically, the nations of Africa and other continents are constantly in a state of 'repulse', though generally unsuccessfully, against frequent interference by the west in their internal affairs. On the moral front, Africa and other Third World countries tend to approve, despite some isolated and short-lived protests, whatever is culturally or morally acceptable in the west – even at the expense of the traditional and/or religious beliefs. What was considered immoral or abominable in Africa sometime back (e.g. homosexuality or gay and/or

lesbianism), is slowly being approved because of the rather irresistible pressure from the west. Thus, the idiom that says, "He who pays the piper calls the tune" and the phrase "might is right" resonate well with the situation above. Indeed, the mighty west pays foreign aid to Africa and the latter has to cooperate or else suffer economic marginalization.

This being the case, and that the situation (politically, socially, morally, etc.) is going from bad to worse despite the many treatises and international laws (most of which favour the west) that have been passed, it becomes necessary to devise an approach that prioritizes the dignity of the individual who desires the same for others – the approach of the GR from virtue ethics ('beingness') perspective, which this study has confirmed. This approach puts a premium on the dignity and worth of all humans irrespective of their cultural, religious, political and/or social affiliations. It also acknowledges the commonness of humanity by virtue of a cross-cutting attribute variously described in this study as *humanum*, 'thick' and 'thin' ethics and more specifically the 'image of God'.

This study acknowledged that the wave of globalization, despite the fears that have been expressed, is unstoppable. The challenge is how to manage it in terms of ensuring equal participation and mutual respect for all partners in order to avoid the rather blatant domination by the developed countries over the developing ones – a situation that is often witnessed in economic, political and social circles. This study affirms that the current lop-sided state of things in the foregoing areas is the consequence of a lapse with regard to the moral standing of humans toward one another.

The study noted that if all humans, regardless of race, culture, gender, religion, nationality, treated themselves as equals and purposed to do good to one another, guided by the GR principle, then the tensions (political, religious, social, etc.) that seem to multiply by the day, would be minimal and manageable. Further, the study observed that unless we get it right morally, nothing else will ever be right.

So how shall we get it right morally? The study acknowledged that the solution to the rather strained moral condition globally is to walk the talk of a virtuous life. That is, to put an end to the nice talks we often hear about moral values and actually 'live' or 'be' those values. Therefore, this study affirms that practicing the GR through virtue ethics ('beingness') approach would be a solution that transcends cultural, religious and traditional affiliations.

What we are witnessing today are the fruits of extreme (secular) humanism through its insistence on humans as the measure of all things. It is 'extreme' in the sense that the initial purpose of humanism was to engage with the literary, cultural, religious and educational programs so as to promote antiquity and eloquence (Gray, 1968:168). Religious humanists, just like the others from different disciplines, sought to renew rather than abolish religion (McGrath, 1999:39). However, in the passage of time, humanism has taken on a more militant meaning – an attitude that championed human instead of God. For instance, the 1933 "Humanist Manifesto" in the USA, which called upon humans to rely (believe) on themselves rather than upon God and seek human rather than divine values (*The New Humanist*, 1933).

Thus, secular humanism teaches that the ability to determine right and wrong rests with the individuals who, by relying on their own capabilities of analysis, self-observation, self-critique, are able to forge toward the common good. This type of humanism grounds morality on the potentiality of human beings to mature morally, assume ethical principles and respect not out of fear of some god/s, but because they recognize the value of these principles for their own good and the good of those around them.

However, to base morality on maturity of humans might be a sure path to moral relativism. This is because human capabilities can never be the same and hence leads to a whole lot of 'goods' and may even end up being 'conflicting' rather than 'common' goods. Besides, the morality of secular humanism sounds farfetched because it assumes that what is moral is obvious to all and that maturity is attainable by everyone. Moreover, secular humanism is not clear on

which humans are the measure of all things: Is it the humans that came before us (e.g., parents and/or ancestors) or both them and ourselves? And if so, which ones supersede the others if need be, and what would be the determining criteria?

Yet it is important to reconsider what humanism calls 'maturity'. This study has demonstrated that unless moral maturity is exercised by all (religious and non-religious agents alike) the enterprise would be an exercise in futility. When a religious person lets religion flow freely (intuitively) from the heart for his/her own good and the good of others without conscious obeisance to some code or rule, then genuine moral life would be attained. Likewise, when humanists (secular or religious) practice humanism for mutual benefit to themselves and others, that would be morality (the GR) at heart. In other words, for humanism to work, there is need to recognize the richness of "I-thou" relationships and appreciate the opportunity to be human without succumbing to the sentimental "cult of the human" (Shinn, 1968:167). This convergence of religion and secular humanism is eloquently summed up by Blackham (1963:26), "Faith without works is not Christianity; and unbelief [secular humanism] without any effort to help shoulder the consequences for mankind, is not humanism".

With the advent of ideologies such as 'neuro-technologies', 'human advancement' and 'trans-humanism', there is renewed reflection on the essence of the human being by engaging technology and moving toward some semblance of 'trans-human' or 'post-human' future – governed by the almighty 'I' or 'self' (Benedikter, Giordano, & Fritzgerald, 2010:1109), which may result in the replacement (or enhancement) of traditional humanism. This move, propagated by natural sciences, indicates that morality based on human aspirations will always be in a state of flux.

Further, the contest between 'morality-without-God' (atheism) and 'morality-with-God' (theism) is still on, with one side (atheism) claiming that what once used to be explained supernaturally (e.g. thunder, volcanoes, diseases, etc.) are

now in the domain of science; and the other (theism) insisting that without God there can be no objective moral truths – hence God has to be the source of morality.

This study has established that even though immense advances have been made by scientific innovations, solutions to moral judgments are beyond the scope of science. For instance, science helps us in describing how the world is, but cannot make judgments about whether the state of affairs is right, wrong, good or bad. Although genetic engineering could be an advance in terms of cloning venture, there are serious attendant moral concerns. It is observed that, in the final analysis, the product of cloning would be deprived of dignity, right to life, to consciousness and intelligence, which are supreme values of human species and inalienable birth rights (Terec-Vlad, 2013:923).

Similarly, science may help us in relaying information about colour or musical sound to the brain but cannot provide aesthetic judgments such as whether or not what we are seeing and/or hearing is beautiful or horrible because such judgments are based on individual's own aesthetic taste. Moreover, science cannot help us in matters that require supernatural explanations such as the existence (or non-existence) of God or gods because such issues are beyond the domain of nature/science.

Thomas Hobbes, in his *Leviathan* (1651) described the [moral] law of nature (*lex naturalis*) as a general rule, based on reason, that forbids humans to do anything harmful to their lives and endeavour to do only that which preserves their lives. He singled out two such laws – one is the *fundamental law of nature,* which counsels humans to seek peace and follow it; and the other is the *sum of the right of nature*, which calls upon humans to defend themselves by all means so long as they are contended with so much liberty against others as they would allow them against themselves. Hobbes called this "the law of the gospel": "Whatever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them. And that the law of all men is, *quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*" ('do unto others as you would have done unto you') (Hobbes, 1651:91-100)." Hobbes proposed that

the moral law of nature should be anchored to a supreme power that causes it to be observed, otherwise it may lead to partiality, pride and revenge and hence lose credibility (Hobbes, 1651:123).

This study compares Hobbes' 'supreme power' proposal, based on divine-command theory and/or utilitarian/consequentialist perspective, with 'virtue-based ethics' ('beingness') approach or a conscious and intentional cultivation and/or activation of the inner virtues by a moral agent for the advancement of the common good. In other words, virtue-based ethics is a deliberate and resolute disposition of exercising one's inner traits and making them a way of life. The study has confirmed that with such an approach to the GR, the precept would become a superior moral principle in that it is applicable to both the religious and non-religious settings.

The above section has outlined the global condition and affirmed that the GR, based on the virtue of 'beingness', is the best suited principle for universal morality. The next section gives a detailed consideration of GR according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

4.2. Golden Rule and Jesus Christ

The GR as taught by Jesus is drawn from Matthew 7:12, "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (NRSV), or Luke 6:31, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (NRSV). The setting of these two passages is 'The Sermon on the Mount' (Mat.5:1-7:29) and 'The Sermon on the Plain' (Lk.6:20-29) whose theme has been variously described as 'True Discipleship', 'The Ideal Life' or 'Righteous Living'. In this sermon, Jesus addresses both his disciples and the crowd on the characteristics and purpose of righteous living (Mat.5:1-16; Lk.6:20-26); comparison of righteous living to the former Hebrew righteous living (Mat.5:17-20); the proceeds of righteous living (Mat.5:21-7:12; Lk.6:27-42) and the duty of righteous living (Mat.7:13-27; Lk.6:43-49). In the eight beatitudes that characterize the righteous living, Jesus pictures the feelings, thoughts, purposes

and conducts of such persons as would be truly righteous. He declares that righteous living is about being the 'salt of the earth' and the 'light of the world' (Mat.5:13-14). In other words, exemplars of righteous living would restore well-being to the sick humanity. These exemplars are to be torchbearers to illumine the way of life, and be ministers of righteousness to humanity.

The Sermon on the Plain (also known as "The Beatitudes") centres on social relations or external matters and underlines the virtues of sympathy and kindness. On the other hand, the Sermon on the Mount is mainly concerned about the spiritual or internal condition with focus on the virtues of righteousness, love, equality of servant and master and the obligation of a charitable spirit.

At the time of Jesus Christ, the Pharisees and the scribes taught the law and required strict conformity to it and claimed that the only hope of salvation or good life rested on, and resulted from, law-keeping. Thus, the Jewish religious establishment at the time of Jesus focused on the letter of the law and neglected its spirit; hence lowering the standard of righteousness to the level of human practices instead of raising their practices to God's standard. Jesus, on the other hand, taught his followers to surpass, in terms of moral conduct, the Pharisees and the scribes who hoped to save themselves through a strict and cold adherence to the law. Through the story of the rich young ruler (Lk.10:17-22), Christ taught that life is about loving God and caring for the poor by sharing what we have with them (Lk.10:21) – that is, loving God and one's neighbour.

Jesus came to improve (i.e., fulfil, not to destroy) the righteous living or the law (moral). Up until the time of Jesus, the teaching of the law by the scribes and the Pharisees often focused on the letter and neglected the spirit; hence lowering the standard of righteousness to the level of human practices instead of raising their practices to God's standard. The improvement or fixing that Jesus brought to the law included love, repentance or restoration and forgiveness. He taught that all the law and the prophets are comprehended in two aspects – loving God with all

of one's heart and loving one's neighbour as oneself (Mat.22:40). The apostle Paul taught that the fulfilment of the Law was based on the love of one's neighbour as oneself (Rom.13:8; Gal.5:14). This could only happen to those who first love God. Loving God is brought through repentance or turning away from evil deeds to the mercy of God. The proceeds of a loving and repentant person upon coming in contact with a loving God is forgiveness and peaceful co-existence with one's neighbour/s.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount discourse, however, was not well received by a section of the crowd, especially the Pharisees and the scribes, who charged that his teaching was against the law. For example, the Pharisees and scribes later accused Jesus of breaking the law when he allowed his disciples to pluck heads of grain to eat on the Sabbath (Mat.12:1-2); and when he (Jesus) healed a man who had a withered hand on the Sabbath (Mat.12:10-14). To this charge, Jesus responded with an affirmation: "Do not think that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets; I have not come not to destroy but to fulfil" (Mat.5:17 NKJV). By this, Jesus meant that upon the foundation of the Torah, he would build a higher exposition of God's will for humankind. Therefore, the moral/righteous living and message of the law and the prophets were in the right direction, but that he had come to set a higher, freer, truer and more helpful conception of righteous living.

But even as he built upon the Old Testament Law, Jesus did not propagate it as the Pharisees and the scribes did – no wonder when he finished, the crowds were awestruck because he taught with authority, not like their scribes (Mat.7:29 NKJV). Jesus' teaching was not like that of the Pharisees and the scribes in at least two areas. First, unlike the Pharisees and the scribes who seemed to thrive on the "do as I say, but not as I do" philosophy (hypocrisy), Jesus practised what he taught. The Pharisees could neither help nor sympathise with the troubles of the people to whom they ministered. They placed heavy burdens on people but were not righteous themselves (Mat.23:4). Thus, in their hypocrisy, the Pharisees secretly transgressed their own laws and traditions which they publicly

enforced. Although they would appear to be godly outwardly, the Pharisees were neither sober nor righteous inwardly (Mat.23:25-26). Jesus, on the other hand, out of compassion and love, welcomed to himself all those who had issues so that he could assist them (Mat.9:36; 15:32; 20:37).

The second difference between Jesus and the Pharisees is that unlike the Pharisees who were so 'law-abiding' that they could not allow healing to take place on the Sabbath, Jesus taught that Sabbath was made for humans and not humans for the Sabbath (Mk.2:27). In other words, Sabbath was instituted for the benefit/good of humans, and not for their harm.

Jesus concludes the sermon with the GR. Through this principle, Jesus teaches that humans are not to be critical and judgmental in their attitude towards one another. Jesus in the GR ("In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the law and the prophets" – Mat. 7:12 NRSV) taught that the rule of thumb in deciding how one should treat others is to consider how oneself would like to be treated. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus articulates the GR in the context of 'love for enemies' and doing good to haters (Lk.6:27), blessing the cursers and praying for the persecutors (6:28), non-retaliation (6:29a), giving freely (6:29b-30) and treating others the way one wants to be treated (6:31).

The purpose of the GR for Jesus was not to establish a system of mutual exchange based on, "You be good to me and I will be good to you" or "You mess with me, and I will mess with you". This would have essentially been retaliatory and Jesus would have merely endorsed a deficient status quo. Rather, the good that Jesus proclaimed ought to flow from the individual, without seeking a return or payback, for the sake of love (*agape*) and selfless service to others. There can be no conditions or relations in life where the principle of love, unselfishness and sympathy would not apply. Being good and doing good to everyone everywhere and at all times, is an equal ideal for all – indeed, it is the higher law for humanity. Jesus stands pre-eminent for having made this principle clearer and more effective. In expressing the selfless and universal character of the GR, Barak Obama says,

> "... it asks each of us to take some measure of responsibility for the well-being of people we may not know or worship with or agree with on every issue. Sometimes, it asks us to reconcile with bitter enemies or resolve ancient hatreds; and that requires a living, breathing, active faith. It requires us not only to believe, but to do - to give something of ourselves for the benefit of others and the betterment of our world" (Obama, 2009).

This study has ascertained that it takes a deliberate decision to align one's character through a virtue-based ('beingness') approach to meet the demands of the GR. This GR is based on unconditional *agape* love and hence does not consider either retaliation or reciprocity. To do good primarily in order to elicit desired results for oneself (egoistic reciprocity) would end up being a technique to manipulate rather than a way of seeking good for one's own sake and for the sake of others. Thus, the 'beingness' doctrine in relation to the GR as advanced in this study is about a paradigm shift from, or transcending, the retaliatory and/or reciprocity lifestyle.

4.3 Conclusion

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the application of the virtue of 'beingness' to the GR precept would enhance its potential as a universal moral principle. The virtue of 'beingness' in the GR points to a sincere, humane and genuine (not hypocritical) application of virtues in human relations. Such a level of understanding and application of the precept would transcend the hitherto reciprocity and/or retaliatory interpretations. The next chapter presents some implications and recommendations in relation to the GR based on the virtue of 'beingness'.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study set out to explore and establish the potentiality of the GR as a universal principle of morality in terms of the aspect of 'beingness' or 'personhood'. The study found out that indeed the GR suffices as a universal principle of morality as confirmed by the specific objectives covered. The study established that although the GR, in its various formulations, is recognized by different cultures, religions and disciplines around the world, the interpretation and/or application of the precept is not the same in every respect. Besides, the study has shown that the GR should not be manipulated to encourage an action that one perceives beforehand as wrong prior to applying the rule because a rule cannot be responsible for those who misuse it or fail to grasp its purposes. On the contrary, the GR should be applied to situations that are rational and/or moral rather than to irrational and/or immoral situations.

Thus, to conceive that the GR would justify a masochist's beating up of someone else is to assume that masochism is rational and/or morally permissible. Such a perception of the GR would, however, be fatally flawed because if I am a sensible person, I may expect ill treatment but it would be irrational for me to desire and/or encourage such an act.

Furthermore, the study has shown that the GR is not reciprocity, because it is much more than giving and/or receiving in like measure or manner (that is, 'measure to measure'). In effect, the GR is a deliberate moral commitment to the well-being of others (irrespective of their age, gender, colour, religion, culture or race) without being bogged down with thoughts of 'pay back'. Ideally, what is central to the GR is being good and doing good or what is right for its own sake – that is, without strings attached. In other words, the thrust of the GR is living it, being it, and expressing it; or, in the words of Wittgenstein concerning a rule, "what is primary … lies not in interpretations, or in a mental state of understanding, but in actually *doing* or practising in particular cases what we

call ‘following the rule’” (Wittgenstein, 2009:87 ♯201, ♯201). Thus, the GR is being fair and expressing fairness to all (friends and foes alike) without being anxious about reciprocation or otherwise. Simply put, the GR based on the virtue of ‘beingness’ means living and defending a life that is worthwhile regardless of its fruits or rewards, which are sometimes bound to be tragically bitter (Redner, 2001:297).

The study has demonstrated that the GR is justifiable philosophically, sociologically, psychologically, religiously and economically. Philosophically, the GR involves treating one’s neighbour as ‘I’ or ‘self’ or simply as oneself. Sociologically, the GR is about mutual interrelationship between individuals and/or groups.

Psychologically, the GR entails empathizing with other people, including those with whom we may not agree. Religiously, the GR involves perceiving oneself and other people as of equal importance before a Supreme Being, and the need to foster respect and fairness toward one another. Economically, the GR would guard against exploitative attitude in order to enhance fair-trading or business endeavours.

Certain implications and/or recommendations may be highlighted in terms of the way forward with regard to the GR principle. Firstly, *the transcendence of the GR*. The study has established that the GR has a universal appeal and thus cannot be confined to a few religious groups and/or cultures. Although religion features prominently in the history of the GR, the precept is non-religious in that it does not mention God and so is not bound to the teachings of any one religion. Therefore, the meaning and practice of the GR would still be possible without any conscious religious commitment. So, while acknowledging the achievements of *Ubuntuism*, *Ujamaa* and other African philosophies, which were (and still are) political in nature, and the Black Theology of North America and South Africa, which is primarily focused on religious emancipation of the blacks from the theological dominance by the whites, the study has established

that the GR, in its transcendent character, cuts across religious, cultural and political affiliations.

Secondly, *the zeal and courage to practice the GR*. Much as it may take a higher calling to satisfy the demands of the GR, it is nonetheless feasible. Courage being one of the virtues that Plato and Aristotle identified, it takes the courageous and risk-takers to counter the tides of superstition, mistaken traditional beliefs and pessimism and thereupon bring the GR to life. In essence, if you never tried it you would never know if it worked or not. Thus, the way to go is to gather courage and endeavour to bring the GR to life. Dan Koffman's Web page motto, "Be a GR activist in your heart, in your mind and especially in your actions" (Koffman, 2008) is spot on. Indeed for the GR to work, it is not about the "powers that be" to make things better; rather, it is about everyone doing their best to be fair and "everyone" starts with me. For example, it took zeal and courage for Jesus to confront the religious "powers that be" of his day who had localized a universal principle – an action that formed part of the reason for his crucifixion. Ideally, the definitive test for fairness with regard to the GR is to use the precept in a way that we would accept if used in that same way against us even in the event of roles switching.

Thirdly, *the universality of the GR*. The clarion call of the GR is across cultures, races, nationalities and religions, and its ultimate fulfillment rests with the realization that all humans, irrespective of colour, status, religion and geographical locations, bear a common semblance. Mahatma Gandhi (India) captured the universality of the GR so eloquently by saying, "The golden way [is] to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family as one" (Krispalani, 1980:115). Similarly, Karen Armstrong in her acceptance speech for the TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) award in 2008, said, "If we do not manage to implement the Golden Rule globally, so that we treat all peoples as though they were as important as ourselves, I doubt that we will have a viable world to hand [over] to the next generation" (Armstrong, 2008).

Fourthly and finally, *the validity of the GR*. Kant's charge of absurdity, which is premised on a rather naively literalistic interpretation, against the GR is somewhat misplaced because it fails to take into account the fact that the precept does not teach that there must be similarity in every detail of behaviour; rather the GR teaches about impartiality of interest. Actually, a rule cannot be responsible for those who misuse it, or fail to grasp its purposes. Therefore, to claim that the GR would endorse the acts of a masochist amounts to misusing the principle. On the other hand, the criminal who cares to grasp the purpose of the GR would have to endorse the verdict of the judge as the latter would approve of the same verdict were he/she the criminal. In that respect, the GR is, after all, a reasonable (not absurd) principle.

The study established that for any human relationship to thrive, the GR, through a virtue-based ('beingness') approach, is an essential ingredient. Certainly, by no means, this is an exhaustive treatise on the GR. It is, therefore, recommended that further studies could be done on the applicability of the GR to political and/or institutional spheres. Also, the relevance of the GR to cross-cultural interactions such as intermarriages or trade relations could be explored.

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