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The Place of the Golden Rule in Promoting a Peaceful Social Order in Africa

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Abstract

The global society is overwhelmed with violent conflicts and many other situations that threaten a peaceful social order. Hardly any part of the world is free from violent conflicts. It is a truism that conflicts are endemic to life, but violent conflicts need not be in existence. Among the violent conflicts and situations that troubles the peace are the violent conflicts in Russia-Ukraine, Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Venezuela, etc. Migration tensions exist in places such as the Mediterranean region, the US-Mexico border, the English Channel, etc. Various forms of conflicts over land issues, natural resources, family disputes, business transactions; and religion and ethnic-based conflicts also take place. Africa, of course, is filled with conflicts of different types such as migration conflicts, environmental conflicts, herdsmen-farmers conflicts, etc. This paper using a critical analytic and hermeneutics method argues that the universal Golden Rule which is found in almost all religions and philosophic traditions can help to create a peaceful social order in Africa and help to mitigate conflicts. The paper finds that the social order in Africa is threatened by anti-peaceful forces/situations. It concludes that through the safeguarding of the Golden Rule, a peaceful social order can be sustained in Africa.

Keywords: Golden Rule, promoting, peace, social, order, Africa, religion, philosophy.

Introduction

The Golden Rule is important to human living, yet it is rarely discussed in moral philosophy. [1] Puka rightly argues that today many people no longer are serious about practicing the Golden Rule. But the Golden Rule is still necessary and just as Utilitarianism and Kantian ethics though idealistic are not discounted so also

[1]Bill Puka, "The Golden Rule," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 13 March, 2024, https://iep.utm.edu/goldrule/

should be the Golden Rule.[2] The world is troubled and almost all regions in the world are experiencing violent conflicts and other restive struggles. The Israel-Hamas war is currently ongoing. The following regions or countries are experiencing conflicts: Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela, Russia-Ukraine, etc. Outside violent conflicts, there are tensions arising from migration in the Mediterranean region, on the Mexico-US border, the English Channel, etc. The world has also experienced gross human rights violations in the past. The Holocaust and the Rwanda Genocide in the past led to the loss of millions of lives and the destruction of properties. The struggle over natural resources in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria's Niger Delta, Angola, etc has all precipitated and made it difficult for those societies to experience peace in the past.

The core argument of this paper is that recognition and observance of the Golden Rule can help to foster a peaceful social order. How that can happen will be discussed later in this work. By way of procedure, the paper will next make some conceptual analysis, followed by an examination of the situation of peaceful order in Africa, a look at some elements of the Golden Rule, the Golden Rule, and the creation of a peaceful social order in Africa. Thereafter the paper will conclude.

Conceptual Analysis

The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica write the following about the Golden Rule: it is found in Matthew 7:2 (do unto others what you want them to do to you); it is a summation of the Christian responsibility to help the neighbour; it is a fundamental ethical law; it can be found in the following also-the Christian Didache of the 2nd century, the Aristides Apology, in the book of Deuteronomy, in Tobit 4:15, in Hillel, Philo of Alexandria, Plato, Isocrates, Seneca, Aristotle and the 6th century BC Analects of Confucius.[3]The fact is that the Golden Rule is not only found in Christianity or Judaism. It can be found in other religions and ethical systems. Among the Ancient Egyptians, the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant* written between 2040 BC and 1782 BC, the Tale states: ''Do for one who may do for you, that you may cause him thus to do''; Isocrates in ancient Greece around 400 BCE said: ''Do not do to others that which angers you when they do it to you''; the founder of Zoroastrianism, Zoroaster opines that: '''That character is best that does not do to another what is not good for itself''; and the Chinese philosopher Confucius taught thus: ''What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.''[4]

It can either be found in the positive or negative form. In the negative form, it states: "Do not do unto others what you do not want done to you." The Golden

[2]Puka, "Golden Rule."
[3]Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Golden Rule." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 5, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Golden-Rule.
[4] "The Golden Rule: Significance, History and Secular Philosophy," *Study.com*., March 7, 2023, https://study.com/academy/lesson/golden-rule-overview-significance.html.

Rule is a philosophical principle that aims at helping others and promotes morally treating others with care. [5]With the Golden Rule defined, it is imperative to define a peaceful social order. What is a peaceful social order? The term, "peace" will be defined first. Amaria, Jacob, and Okoye cite Miriam Ikejiani-Clark and Casmir in opining that "peace is seen as a state of mind in concourse with serenity: a state of harmony, tranquillity, concord and a balance of equilibrium of powers."[6] From the biblical prophet Isaiah peace will be a state of cooperative and harmonious living among humans; and humans with animals and nature. The prophet images the reign of the messiah saying: Wolves dwell with lambs, leopards play with the kids, lions and calves play together and a little child leads all these. Both violent and non-violent animals dwell and relate together and there is no destruction on the earth as the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth.[7]

Peace is dwelling together calmly, amicably, and in equanimity. Before verse 6 in the Isaiah text, the passage also speaks of righteous judgement and justice for the poor. There can be no peace without justice. Obizulike-Osuofia writes that: "Peace has been understood as the state of being calm and free from disturbances or a state of quietness tranquillity, freedom, and cessation of war or from civil disorder."[8] One of the foremost fathers of the discipline of peace studies and conflict resolution, Galtung asserts that there are two concepts of peace- negative and positive. Negative peace refers to the absence of violent actions and activities, while positive peace is the presence of harmony.[9]

A peaceful social order can be present in different geographic areas. A country can have a peaceful social order. A continent can have a peaceful social order. So also there can be a global or international social peaceful order. There can be a peaceful social order in a kingdom, neighbourhood, etc. Social refers to society or the interactions among two or more persons. Social order refers to how a group or institution or society is kept in being and existence in an orderly and cohesive manner free from violent conflicts; and this social order is fostered by values, rules, standards, and regulations. [10] A peaceful social order is permeated by cooperative living among the people, and freedom from violent conflicts, chaos, commotion, and disorder. Many things are a threat to a peaceful social order such as corruption, poor and inept leadership, violence, underdevelopment, human rights violations, ill-health, poor health facilities,

[5] "The Golden Rule: Significance, History and Secular Philosophy."
[6]Amiara Solomon Amiara, Uche Henry Jacob and Chiamaka M Okoye, "Security, Peace and National Development: The Nigerian Question 1967-2015," in Perspectives on African Crises: The Challenges of Socio-political and Economic Transformation in the 21st Century, ed. Solomon Oladele Akinboyepp (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2011), 281.
[7]Isaiah 11:6-11, Revised Standard Version.
[8]M.C. Obizulike-Osuofia, *Peace and Conflict Studies* (Lagos: Cadmot Educational Associates, 2013),7.
[9]Johan Galtung, "Negative and Positive Peace, "In *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, ed. Nigel J Young (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 352.
[10] Dylan Jaxon, "Social Order: Definition, Maintenance and Examples," November 21, 2023, https://study.com/learn/lesson/social-order-overview-examples.html

decadent social infrastructures, etc. They are all threats to peace for when they happen they make people's lives unbearable, sad, depressed, and restless.

The Situation of Peaceful Social Order in Africa

There are indeed some peaceful situations in Africa. Many countries in Africa enjoy some form of social stability or social order, but there are no countries that are free from disturbances to the peace. Take South Africa for instance. Its earlier history was marked by the evil practice of Apartheid. After the fall of Apartheid, the country is still troubled in some areas. The nation has witnessed a series of different forms of protests and demonstrations. Recently there have been growing protests over the rising cost of electricity.[11] It has also experienced various xenophobic attacks against foreigners, especially against Nigerians. Different other countries in Southern Africa have also experienced ethnocentric attacks. Ethnicity is poorly managed in Africa. There are hardly any African countries that are free from ethnic tensions and rivalries. Onyekpe writes that many political struggles for control of the state apparatus have often been along ethnic lines since independence. [12]

The Horn of Africa has remained in perpetual tumults and conflicts, especially violent conflicts. Wars have raged in the recent past in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The tensions are still there. The nation of Somalia has been called a failed state because of the absence of stable real governance. The coast of the Horn of Africa is known for sea piracy, So also is piracy in the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Coast of Nigeria. Sudan has experienced conflicts in the past and is still experiencing conflicts. Omar Bashir ruled the country with an iron fist for many years. Presently there is a bitter civil war between the military and the Rapid Support Forces. For many years there were conflicts in Darfur. You cannot even speak of a peaceful social order in Sudan. South Sudan which gained independence from Sudan is also in a state of conflict. In all these conflicts lives are destroyed, properties burnt, and many people are displaced.

There is another kind of war and conflict situation going on in Africa. It is the onslaught of globalization, Westernization, and capitalist culture. Many of Africa's values are being eroded and supplanted with Western values. While there may be some good aspects of Western values it is often the dehumanizing ones that many African youths and others have imbibed. The culture of fast food instead of well-cooked food from the African kitchen has gained ground. In many African towns and cities, there are now many people who are overweight as a result of patronizing fast food restaurants. African youths have learned Western lyrics to the detriment of their indigenous culture. Western films and movies are competing seriously with indigenous films and often western films

[11]Claire Mom, "Violent Protests erupt in South Africa amid Growing Frustration at Electricity Crisis," *The Cable*, January 23, 2023, https://www.thecable.ng/violent-protests-erupt-in-south-africa-amid-growing-frustration-at-electricity-crisis
[12]J.G. Nkem Onyekpe, "The Historical Underpinnings of Africa's Political Crises," in *Perspectives on African Crises,* 20.

are winning. Internet fraud and scams are now the order of the day. Corroborating the erosion of African cultural values, Jang notes that there is a war on African culture as Africans are becoming de-Africanized through the forces of Western civilization.[13]

The West African sub-region has not been free also from violent conflicts and other disturbances. In the past Nigeria has fought a civil war. There have continuously been ethnic-based and religious conflicts too numerous to mention here. In the Niger Delta, there has been ongoing rise of militants and insurgents. Though with the Presidential Amnesty Programme embarked upon by late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2009, the militancy has generally died down, there are still youth restiveness, occasional militant attacks, and oil theft in the Niger Delta. Liberia, and Sierra Leone, have all had violent conflicts in the past. The consequences of these continue to affect people to a certain degree. Cameroon which borders the region in the East has continued to experience struggles among the French-speaking and English-speaking areas of the country and in the process, many have lost their lives while properties have been destroyed.

Related to the issue of war and violent conflicts in the continent is the problem of terrorism. In Nigeria, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups have been on the rampage. They have bombed and killed people in the North East and places like Niger State, Zamfara, etc. In Nigeria some time past Boko Haram was reported to have bombed the office of the United Nations in Abuja. They have also engaged in banditry, kidnapping, and rape of women. Terrorist herdsmen have invaded people's farmlands depriving them of access, raping women, and attacking men. In the Sahel of Africa, the Islamic State of West Africa has carried out attacks in Mali, Niger, etc. Al Shabab in Kenya has bombed and killed people. In 2023, the Interior Ministry of Kenya reported that in an attack of 60 terrorists on Al Shabab on the Garsen-Witu-Lamu Highway in Lamu County,10 people were killed and 10 others injured.[14] This was not the first terrorist attack in Kenya, others had taken place in the past. There should be no doubt that these attacks affect social cohesion, and bring about displacement of people, fear, and loss of lives and properties. Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria have led to economic doldrums in the North East and affected national revenue as funds that should be used for other purposes have to be re-directed to the army and other security forces, increasing criminality, and undermining national unity and cohesion.[15] Constant incidents of terrorism certainly affect

[13]Madugu Alexander Jang, "Embeddedness: Rediscovering Africa in the Mirror of Security and Cultural Others," in Perspectives in History, Development and International Relations: Festschrift for Professor Ibrahim James, ed.TerhembaWuam and Philibus Audu Nwamagyi (Kaduna: Kaduna State University Department of History, 2018), 228.
[14]Andrew Wasike, "2 Killed, 10 Injured as over 60 Terrorists Attack Civilians in Kenya," January 08, 2023, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/2-killed-10-injured-as-over-60-terrorists-attack-civilians-in-kenya/2959401
[15] Dipo Kolawole, "Terrorism and National Security: The Challenges of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," In State, Governance and Security in Africa: A Festschrift in

social order, stability, and stable peace. Even the fear of terrorist attacks alone makes social life unstable.

Almost through the continents elections are troubled times filled with political assassination, violent attacks, stealing of ballot boxes, and arson. In Kenya, there were widespread post-election violent attacks in 2007/2008 in which more than 1000 persons lost their lives and many were displaced.[16] There is hardly any Nigerian election in which no violence was recorded. During the reign of President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe most election under him was marked with violence and political suppression. Africa has a political leadership succession problem. Bassey writes that African leaders often refuse to discuss succession matters and countries like Kenya, Togo, and even Nigeria have all experienced succession problems at one time in the past. [17]There is a political leadership crisis in Africa as Ake, Onimode, Crowder, and Henderson indicate this is caused by depending on force to rule instead of the people's consent, suppression of opposition through violence, jailing, and exiling opponents. [18] As many African rulers rule they have dashed the hopes of the people and made their societies unstable and filled with tensions and agitations. Arinze writes that: "The reign of greed, dictatorship, and oppressive government, exercised through coercive fist by some African leaders has made the political climate unfriendly for the realization of the dreams and aspirations of the common man."[19]The annulment of the June 12 1993 election in Nigeria led to a series of political crises and social instability in the Nigerian polity. Many lost their lives and properties in the wake of protests.

There are many sit-tight dictators in Africa and these have made their societies have less peace. For many years Laurent Kabila ruled in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila. There are continuous conflicts in the DRC. Struggle over natural resources has continued in the DRC. In the Central African Republic, there was serious ethno-religious violence in the past. The Center for Preventive Action writes that: "Since gaining independence in 1960, CAR has experienced decades of violence and instability, including six coups. Since the 2003 coup carried out by François Bozizé, much of CAR, especially the northern areas, has been controlled by rebels."[20] Bad and

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Honour of Professor Bamitale Omole, ed. Funso Adesola, Iwebunor Okwechime, Ronke Ako-Nai and Akin Iwilade (Tallahassee, FL: SokheChapke Publishing. 2015), 180.

[16] Gabrielle Lynch, Nic Cheeseman, and Justin Willis," From Peace Campaigns to Peaceocracy: Elections, Order and Authority in Africa", *African Affairs*, 118 (473): 603-627, October 2019, https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adz019, 603.

[17]Stanley Chinonye Bassey, *Politics in Africa* (Lagos: Premium Publishers, 2007), 84.

[18]Agaptus Nwozor, "Political Leadership, Poverty and the Failed State Syndrome in Africa" in *Politics and Law in Africa*, ed. Aloysious-Michaels Okolie, Onyemaechi A Eke and Paul A Areo (Abakaliki: WillyRose and Appleseed Publishing), 162.

[1919]Ngwube Arinze, "Political Leadership and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from the Central African Republic" in *Politics and Law in Africa*, 174.

[20]Center for Preventive Action, "Conflicts in the Central African Republic," August 10, 2023, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic

corrupt governments and leaders in Africa have led to military coups in the past. And at present military rulers are ruling Mali, Niger, and Guinea. The reasons that these rulers are given for taking over power are poor and corrupt leadership in their nations.

It is impossible not to mention the migration crises pervading the continent. Thousands of African youths and even adults daily are moving through the Sahara Dessert to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Many of them are searching for better lives in Europe, escaping situations of wars and violent conflicts, broken economies in their countries, and bad and corrupt governments. The news is often filled with news of African migrants dying in the Mediterranean Sea (the sea of death and burial ground of the dream of African youths). Omilusi has documented the problems and pains of African migrants which include the risks involved in the treacherous journey through the hot Sahara Dessert, sexual abuse and violent attacks on migrants, hunger and starvation, death in the Blue Sea, maltreatment, and human rights violation in Europe against migrants, etc. He has also enumerated the push factors that drive these migrants such as poor situations in their countries, unemployment, social insecurity, poor health facilities, massive underdevelopment in their homelands, violence and war, poverty, etc. [21]

From all that is narrated above it is difficult to affirm of Africa that there is a peaceful social order. The situations mentioned above are just within the public social square that are visibly noticed. What about the many internal crises in people's homes and families, in businesses and organizations, in personal lives, and in the hinterlands of Africa that are never reported? The social order in Africa is not s stable one. It is politically, economically, and culturally unstable.

Elements of the Golden Rule

It should be realized that it is not only Christianity that has a Golden Rule. You can find the Golden Rule in other religio-ethical traditions. Below are some religions/traditions and the expression of the Golden Rule:

[21]Mike Omilusi, *Between the Deep Blue Sea and European Realities: A Study of African Migrants in Europe* (Ibadan: Swift Publishers, 2023), 19-36.

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Table 1. 0: Golden Rule in Some Religions and Traditions

S/N	RELIGION	GOLDEN RULE
1.	**Baha'ì**	"Blessed is who prefers his brother to himself"
2.	**Buddhism**	"Whatever is disagreeable to yourself, do not do unto others"
3.	**Confucianism**	"Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you"
4.	**Christianity**	"You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."
5.	**Judaism**	"What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow-man. This is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary"
6.	**Gandhi**	"To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face, one must be able to love the meanest of all creation as oneself"
7.	**Jainism**	"In happiness and sorrow, in joy and in pain, we should consider every creature as we consider ourselves"
8.	**Judaism**	"Never do to anyone else anything that you would not want someone to do to you"
9.	**Hinduism**	"This is the sum of duty. Do not unto others that which would cause you pain if done to you"
10.	**Islam**	"None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself"
11.	**Native Americans**	Respect for every form of life is the foundation"
12.	**Plato**	"I can do to others what I'd like them to do to me"
13.	**Yoruba wise saying (West Africa):**	"If somebody stings a bird with a sharp stick, should be first try it on himself and realise how badly it hurts".
14.	**Seneca**	"Treat your inferiors as you would be treated by your betters"
15.	**Shintoism**	"Be charitable to all beings, love is the representation of God"
16.	**Sikhism**	"I am a stranger to no one, and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all"
17.	**Voltaire**	"Put yourself in the other person's shoes"
18.	**Zoroastrianism**	"Do not do to others what is harmful for yourself"

Source: Adapted from Living Peace-International, 2016.

While the information and words (data) in the table above are from the source indicated below,[22] the table and arrangement of the data is a creation of this research. The table above clearly shows the different versions of the Golden Rule. No matter how expressed it calls for consideration for fellow human beings, to treat them as human persons, and desist from harming them. The various founders of different religions, movements, or groups of persons who gave a Golden Rule initially proposed and commanded it to their followers. But with consequent universal application to all people. As the followers of that particular group expected it of his followers, so also other human beings are to follow the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule can be said to be a summation of the moral and ethical teachings of these different teachers. The Golden Rule is like the Utilitarian principle. But the Golden Rule moves beyond the good of the greatest number of people to all people and persons.

In terms of the Golden Rule as an action rule, it tells people how to act, it has a psychological function to help human beings not to be self-absorbed, to be aware of how their behaviours affect others, teaches that human beings are peer to one another, they are to give good consideration to others and to see human inter-relationship and relatedness, know that the interests of others are equally important.[23]The Golden Rule is not simply an ideal or utopia. It is a command, declaration, and requirement. It tells people how they are to behave. It is about doing. It states, "Do unto others, what you want them to do to you." Even when expressed in the negative, it is the same requirement, "Do not do unto others what you don't want done unto you." It is not an optional requirement. When the followers of the different religions or traditions of the Golden Rule gave it to their followers, they expected that their followers would follow it.

The Golden Rule calls for how human beings should be treated. A look at the Judeo-Christian tradition from the beginning reveals how God wanted people to be treated. First, the biblical foundation attests that human beings are created in God's image and likeness. This is a crucially important cardinal point in the bible. And since every human being carries the image, likeness, and resemblance of the supreme being, the almighty, they are people of dignity, worth, and value. They are to be treated not as objects but as acting instruments. They are agents and deserve to be treated with kindness. The Ten Commandments are equally a reflection of how human beings are to be treated. The Ten Commandments are traditionally divided into two sections-the sections devoted to God and the other that concerns human affairs. There are the humanistic dimensions of the Golden Rule. The human being is important and matters. The human being is not to be dispensed and discounted as if he/she is a nobody. The Golden Rule affirms everybody as a somebody. The philosophy of "somebodiness" of Martin Luther King, Jnr, and personalism comes into play here. Each human being is a person of inestimable worth and

[22]Living Peace-International, "The Golden Rule," 2016, http://livingpeaceinternational.org/en/the-project/regola-d-oro-2.html
[23]Puka, "Golden Rule."

value and should be treated as such. Because of this, no human being deserves maltreatment, ill-treatment, and being harmed. Just as other people should not harm you; you should not harm yourself. The philosophy of personalism as espoused by various authors gives credence to human dignity and personhood and implies humans should not harm one another. [24]

Another element that is embedded in the Golden Rule is reciprocity ethics and cooperative living. [25]A group of authors states that the Golden Rule has helped people navigate complex situations as people think of what will benefit others and how they love to be treated, and it also fosters tolerance for others and goes the distance for others.[26] There are African values that are expressions of the Golden Rule differently. Such values as Ubuntu, Ujamaa, and humanism, all affirm the humanness of others and treating others with kindness and compassion. Ubuntu speaks of humanness, humanness, fraternity and togetherness. The Southern African philosophy of Ubuntu means, "I am because We are." Your humanness is connected to the humanity of others. This implies seeking what is beneficial to them and shunning selfishness. Ujamaa as proposed by Julius Nyerere speaks of brotherhood or familyhood. All human beings are connected and should live as such. Africans believed in coming to the aid of those in need. All these ideas have the import of humanism, compassion, hospitality, and kindness. They are all other ways of expressing the Golden Rule. You are to seek out what is beneficial and good for your neighbours and never what will harm them.

The Golden Rule speaks of empathy and compassion.[27] Many authors have affirmed that the Golden Rule speaks of reciprocity.[28] But in the view of this paper, this is not strict reciprocity. Because the fact is that whether other people do unto you what you expect of them or not, in the light of the teaching of Jesus on love of enemies, you must do good unto them. Your acting for the good of others is not based on their acting for your good. In a parable that Jesus gave Jesus opined that if you invite people to a feast, invite those who cannot repay you. Your goodness should supersede what people do for you. One key aspect of the Golden Rule is that you are required to do good irrespective of situations and what others have done to you. Jesus gave the Golden Rule as part of the Sermon on the Mount. In that sermon, Jesus had previously denounced revenge, retaliation, and hatred of energies. Jesus said if you do good to only those who do good to you, what reward have you. The story of the Good Samaritan

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[24] Mark Omorovie Ikeke, "The Role of Personalism in Eradicating Linguistic Violence, " *East African Journal of Law and Ethics* 3, no. 1 (2021):1-9, https://doi.org/10.37284/eajle.3.1.323.

[25]National Center for Families Learning, "What is the Golden Rule," 2024,https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/what-is-the-golden-rule

[26]Kristen N Corazzini et al, "The Golden Rule": Only a Starting Point for Quality Care, 14, no .1 (2005): 255-293, PMID: 17334452; PMCID: PMC1636677.

[27]"The Golden Rule: Significance, History."

[28]See Elia Shabani Mligo, "The African Principle of Reciprocity: Examining the "Golden Rule" in Light of the Ubuntu Philosophy of Life," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*,7, no. 1 (2021) 1-20, https://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2021.v7n1.a19

illustrates vividly altruism and the Golden Rule. Despite the risk involved and the fact that Samaritans were hated by Jews, the Good Samaritan goes out of his way to help a fallen and wounded Jew. The Golden Rule though expressed in a "reciprocal" form is not conditional.

The Golden Rule and Creation of a Peaceful Social Order

Writing about the social situation in Africa, Ujomu shows that social life in Africa is battered by injustice, intolerance, inequalities in resource distribution, no compassion, violation of human rights, terrorism, corruption, disorder, parochialism, lack of cooperation, and so forth; and in the midst of all these the value of Ubuntu, reconciliation, respect for others can help to foster a social and political order that is viable in Africa.[29] In the viewpoint of this paper, all that Ujomu describes above is also implied in the Golden Rule. When faithfully observed the Golden Rule can help to foster a peaceful social order. It should be clear that a great deal of conflicts, violence, self-centeredness, and rugged individualism come from a lack of recognition of the dignity and worth of others. If you see others as inferior to you and deserving less consideration you are likely going to treat them as such. That can inspire unhealthy competition and rivalry, violent struggles over goods, greed, and a lack of empathy for others. In the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, it is asserted that every human being has inherent dignity, and equal, and inalienable rights. Recognizing these values is the foundation for justice, peace, and development in the world but when these values are disregarded there are bound to be violence and wars.[30]

The United Nations rightly notes that every human being carries inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights. As noted previously the Golden Rule recognizes the worth of every human being. It enunciates that one should treat others as one wants to be treated. Those who have committed atrocities, kidnapping, terrorist acts, and other violent activities would not want to be treated as such. If one recognizes that the other is a human being like oneself with equal value and inherent worth and should be protected from harm it can help in fostering protection for the other. But refusal to recognize this leads to devaluation of the other. The non-recognition makes it easy for a person or persons to commit and perpetuate atrocities against the other (s) such as ethnic cleansing, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and so forth. One who is informed by the Golden Rule and also willing to carry out the import of the Rule will likely foster more peaceful situations than violent ones. The Golden Rule is a principle that encourages peace when followed. Think of the Rwanda Genocide, the atrocities of Apartheid, terrorist killings and kidnapping, the civil wars, and many crimes against humanity taking place in Africa; they

[29]Ujomu, Philip Ogochukwu. "Africa's Crisis of Social and Political Order and the Significance of Ubuntu Human Values for Peace and Development," *Culture and Dialogue* 8, no. 1 (2020): 97-115, doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/24683949-12340077, 97.
[30]United Nations, " Universal Declaration on Human Rights,"1948, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

could be curbed if those who perpetuate them just imbibe the values of the Golden Rule. Those who perpetuate these evils will generally not want these done to them if they are in their right frame of mind. Who would want to be killed or kidnapped? The Golden Rule poses a serious ethical challenge for Africans.

It is difficult to have a peaceful social order without recognition and respect for egalitarian ethos and values. The Golden Rule affirms egalitarianism. The Golden Rule speaks of equal or equivalent treatment for others. You are not to treat others differently from the way you desire to be treated. The Golden Rule can make a difference in our world. Ambassador Hailu states the difference the Golden Rule can make as follows: it can help to curb crisis and conflict, foster co-existence and harmonious living as people learn to honour, love, and respect others and offer forgiveness.[31]

Altruism which is an essential requirement of the Golden Rule makes the world a better and happier place. By the way, what is altruism? It can be defined as: ".. when we act to promote someone else's welfare, even at a risk or cost to ourselves."[32] Another way to understand altruism is in its actions. Note that: "Altruistic acts include not only those undertaken in order to do good to others but also those undertaken in order to avoid or prevent harm to them."[33]It can also be defined as: ".. the act of putting others' needs before your own without any expectation of personal gain. This can come in many forms, from donating money to charity to volunteering your time to help those in need. The key component of altruism is selflessness - the willingness to do something for someone else without expecting anything in return."[34] In a continent ravaged by poverty, unemployment, and many other economic challenges, the Golden Rule can make a big difference if those who are wealthy and able use their wealth and riches to foster philanthropic and humanitarian projects to ameliorate the situation of the suffering of the masses. If all African leaders are altruistic, they will shun corruption and embezzlement of public funds. They will act for the welfare of the people. The many wars, violent struggles for natural resources, and bad leadership will be gone. Many political and economic problems in Africa are inspired by self-centeredness, selfishness, individualism, and ego-centeredness. In a Prayer against Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria, Catholic Bishops of Nigeria speak of the wrongful use of Nigerian gifts of both human and natural resources arising from injustice, corruption, and bribery. They equally prayed that God-fearing leaders who are

[31] Ambassador Mussie Hailu, "The Golden Rule: The Path Way to Human Right and World Peace," http://www.fowpal.org/peak-view/golden-rule-path-way-human-right-and-world-peace
[32] The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California-Berkeley, " What is Altruism?" 2024, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/altruism/definition
[33] Richard Kraut, "Altruism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2020 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/altruism/.
[34] Faster Capital, "Altruism: The Golden Rule: Embracing Altruism for a Brighter Future,"December 2, 2023, https://fastercapital.com/content/Altruism--The-Golden-Rule--Embracing-Altruism-for-a-Brighter-Future.html

concerned for the peace and progress of the people will help to end the socio-economic and political malaise. In many Christian churches and even in Islam, you are likely to see pastors, other ministers of the gospel, the Iman, etc speaking against these social evils. The point is that leadership can make a great deal of difference. African leaders should be guided by the Golden Rule to seek out the good of the people they govern.

The practice of the Golden Rule will help to foster peace in society also as it creates a situation where people are happy. By practicing the Golden Rule, you enhance the wellbeing of others. People who are in pain and suffering are helped. Those who practice the Golden Rule can help others overcome unemployment, poverty, hunger, sickness, etc. As people are helped to find more joy and happiness they are empowered to become better citizens who can contribute productively to their societies. Thus peace is enhanced. Faster Capital avers that: " By treating others as we would like to be treated, we can foster empathy, compassion, and understanding towards others. This can lead to better relationships, more productive workplaces, and a more just and peaceful world."

The Golden Rule avidly requires altruism. If you act non-altruistically you are acting against the requirement of the Golden Rule. The fact that altruism is connected to the Golden Rule is corroborated by Faster Capital when it states that altruism is a principle of the Golden Rule which requires treating others well. [35]This world becomes a better place when we act for the good of others. This does not mean you neglect your genuine needs and good. Imagine if people in business were to think of the good of others and act accordingly there would be less conflict. They will respect business tractions and agreements. But if rather than altruism people act selfishly, this leads to unhealthy struggles, rivalries and deceptions, etc. There should be no doubt that respect for the Golden Rule creates a more peaceful world. In the holy book of Christianity, the holy bible, the apostle James rages against selfishness, lack of altruism, and its consequences he states thus: "What causes wars, and what causes fighting among you? Is it not your passions that are at war with your members? 2 You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet[a] and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not as"(James 4:1-2, revised standard version). The apostle James attributes wars to selfish desires. This does not mean all wars come from selfish desires, but most do. Altruism curbs wars and violent conflicts. In altruism, you seek the good of others. A follower of the Golden Rule will be altruistic and shun harm to others. In Africa, altruism would make a great difference. The actions of every individual matter. If each individual were to act for the good of others in Africa, many of the social conflicts and struggles over natural resources would be gone. People would learn to be patient and settle disputes non-violently.

[35]Faster Capital.

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Conclusion

This paper has asserted vigorously that amidst the many violent conflicts and other problems confronting Africa and preventing a stable peaceful social order, there is a need for the acceptance and practice of the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule enunciates treating other human beings as one would desire to be treated. It affirms the equal humanity of others. Observing the Golden Rule can help curb selfishness, self-centeredness, corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and other harm done to others. The paper indicated that almost all religions believe in the Golden Rule in one form or another. Many social problems in Africa endanger a peaceful social order and these problems in wars and other violent conflicts, corruption and embezzlement of public funds, terrorism, unemployment, poverty, cultural imperialism, and many others. As the paper indicated all these negatively impact the realization of peace. When they are not tackled the social order becomes unstable and life becomes unbearable for the people. The paper argued that the ethical values embedded in the Golden Rule can help to curtail these social problems. Living by the Golden Rule is necessary for Africa. When this is done it will help to create a peaceful social order in Africa.