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## Metaphysical and Moral Questions About the Initial State of Human Mind/Machine

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### *Abstract*

The claim that machine table begins from State A has raised the question of the equivalent state in human mind. Putnam's initial position, although already repudiated, is that human mental state is equivalent to machine state. By implication, everything which is true of a state of machine table is also true of human mental state. Turing likens this initial state in human mind to the state of the mind of a child at birth. However, upon the fact that fetus has been implementing some programs before birth might challenge Turing claim. But then, this might raise some metaphysical and ethical questions. For instance, which is the initial State in human mind? What is the implication of the initial State on the anti and pro abortionists' debate? This study, employing the debate between the pro and anti- abortionists, argues that this state might not be so easily defined as it seems. This study connects the issue of discourse with how questionable it is that Turing's view holds the primitive view of time. We are taking side with Putnam concluded that the issues of time, and initial state will only be resolved when language is much developed and become more technicalized. This study adopts philosophical argumentation and critical analysis as methodology.

*Keywords:* Putnam, mental state, machine, mind, pro-abortionist, anti-abortionist.

### 1. Introduction

Putnam's adoption of the Turing machine model set a stage for an exploration of the equivalence of the machine state in mental state. Whereas Putnam who initially would follow Turing to argue that the nature of human mental state is equivalent to that of machine state, later found this position very complex and complicated. This is partly on the question of computational and compositional plasticity, and partly again on the issue of the possibility of a token-by-token equivalent relation between machine and mental state. This complication led Putnam to seriously challenge a sense of realism which he initially adopted.

What is of importance to this study is to look at a tiny but yet contentious part of Putnam's issue which bears an allegiance to Turing hypothesis, which requires the need of sufficient clarification. This is the issue of the correlate of the initial state in human mind. On the machine table adopted by Putnam, the initial state is state A. Now, the question we are pressing is; do we have equivalent initial state A in human mind? If there is, what is this initial state in human mind? As easy to determine as this question appears, we observe that it has the propensity to raise some metaphysical, epistemological as well as ethical issues. We intend to show that this

initial state in human mind might be complex and not very static as compared to the machine. The paper is divided into four main sections. Section one considers Putnam's machine view of the mind. Section two focuses on the question of the initial state in a child's mind. Section three discusses Anti and Pro abortionists' debate on the moral status of fetus. Meanwhile, section four, considers the implications of the initial State on the anti and pro abortionists' debate. It also discusses the primitive dogma of time and the complexity about the initial state in a child's mind/machine.

## 2. Putnam's machine view of the mind

Putnam raised many issues with his machine hypothesis of the mind. Another issue raised by his adoption of Turing machine is about the initial state of the machine. For Putnam, the machine state starts in state A:

The machine described by this table is intended to function as follows: the machine is started in state A. On the tape there appears a 'sum' (in unary notion) to be 'worked out', e.g. '11 + 111.' The machine is initially scanning the first '1'. The machine proceeds to 'work out' the sum (essentially by replacing the plus sign by a 1, and then going back and erasing the first 1). Thus, if the 'input' was 1111 + 11111 the machine would 'print out 111111111, and then go into the 'rest state' (state D) (Putnam, 1975: 365).

What is evident in this quote is that the nature of the machine structured here is that the initial state of the machine is state A. Not only that, the machine has a tape on which input is scanned. It also relies on the machine table for its functioning. The machine table specifies what the machine is to do given any particular input. For instance, that the machine described in the quote machine is programmed to replace the sign "+" with a "1" in unary notion which is to be worked out by the machine. Then in working out the sum, the machine is to move back to erase the first "1" in order to present output which is the output. What is important here is that the machine is said to start on state A.

## 3. Question of the initial state in a child's mind

The confronting question we pose to Turing is; what is the equivalence of this state A in the description and workings of human mental states? Does it describe the first state when a person wakes up from sleep, say in the morning or after a nap, or a state which the mind is when it receives the first input in a day? Neither of these could be the equivalence because neither could be the starting state A of the mind. The state at which the mind receives an input cannot be its starting state. This is because the mind receives so many different inputs at every minute. Besides, it is debatable whether or not human mental state is performing computing work when a man is asleep. Or if it is, then what type? To find this equivalence, let us revisit Turing's initiating article *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*. For Turing, "in the process of trying to imitate an adult human mind we are bound to think a good deal about the process which has brought it to the state that it is in. We may notice three components:

- (1) The initial state of the mind, say at birth,
- (2) The education to which it has been subjected,
- (3) Other experience, not to be described as education, to which it has been subjected.

Instead of trying to produce a program to simulate the adult mind, why not rather try to produce one which simulates the child's? ... . Presumably the child's brain is something like a

notebook as one buys it from the stationers. Rather little mechanism, and lots of blank sheets. ... . Our hope is that there is so little mechanism in the child brain that something like it can be easily programmed (Turing, 1950: 433).

Here, we may see that Turing claims that the equivalence of the machine state A is “the initial state of the mind, say at birth.”<sup>1</sup> But there is an additional description of that state. The state has “so little mechanism.” There is also another issue to be pointed out from Turing’s hypothesis. Turing seemed to suggest that an adult mind is already a complex functional system whose question about its initial state has to be traced to the mind at birth. Regarding a child’s mind, Turing might not be far from being correct to describe it as “little mechanism”. This is because to claim that a child at birth is devoid of any functional state is going to raise some other questions. Based on some gestational evidences, it may be argued that fetus begins to run some form of functional program from a certain stage of the pregnancy however intricate and little this may be. This is true upon the biological evidence that a fetus begins to respond to stimuli at a certain stage of gestation.

The question which arises here is; how “so little” is Turing’s “so little mechanism” in human brain at birth? Does the fact (if it is a fact) that a child’s brain at birth is like a clean notebook which runs a little mechanism, follow that the ‘mental state’ is also so little? What we think is that timing only described the human functional mechanism at different stages; from its fallible early stage to the mature stage of adult mind. In fact, there is a reason to assume that the way Turing holds human brain “at birth” as equivalent of state A appears questionable. This is because, at a certain level of functional description, a baby at birth appears already as a complex functional system under some certain state and stage description. The child has been implementing some set of programs as a fetus in its environment inside the uterus. The first cry is actually natural and innocent way of responding to a new environment. This is similar to the way an adult will respond to a sudden exposure radically different environment. Therefore, at birth, a child could be a good example of a functional system, already running some level of complex program. Now, the question which persist is; which of the states is the equivalence of machine initial state A in the mental state? Even, given Turing’s ‘little mechanism,’ we still have to determine the first state.

In order to address the question of initial state in a child brain at birth equivalent to state A in the machine table, let us consider some ethical arguments from anti and pro-abortionists on the question of the rights of fetuses versus the rights of women. The aim is to find out if there may be anything to shed some clarification light. Do fetuses have rights? If yes, when exactly/at what point can it be established that a fetus possesses a right? But now, do we mean that the initial state/state A in a child starts when a child possesses right? We admit that this also appear to be a complicated and controversial matter. We shall return to this with a view to seeking a perspective into the question of the initial state in a child’s functional state. Meanwhile, let us consider the anti and pro abortionists’ debate on the moral status of fetus and its relevance to the subject matter.

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<sup>1</sup> This assertion may be reminiscence of the Lockian notion of *Tabula Rasa* which is referring to the mind as the clean slate at birth. But care must be taken to make this comparison. This is because, Turing gives an allowance for ‘little mechanism’. This ‘little mechanism’ may represent many things ranging from ‘little functional organization’ to ‘some little ideas’ which may be quickly termed ‘innate ideas’, however it may not necessarily be ‘innate ideas.’ Whatever ideas there are explainable in terms of its functional descriptions. But, coming back to Turing, a ‘little mechanism is a mechanism all the same and it has to be fully described in terms of its own state descriptions. We may then ask again, what is the equivalence to the machine state A in this functional organization ‘little mechanism?’

#### 4. Anti and pro- abortionists debate on the moral status of fetus

One of the longstanding controversial issues that has touched various aspects of life is abortion. It has touched medical, moral and religion aspects to mention a few. Essentially, the debate about ‘abortion’<sup>2</sup> raises fundamental questions about human existence, when life actually begins and what it is that makes us human (Marquis, 2006; Qaisar, 2009: 26). Does life really begin at conception as some people assumed, or at the point of birth? As earlier mentioned, biological science has proven that life begins with fetus. That is, fetus has life.

Answering the question; ‘when does live begin?’ raised regarding the issue of abortion largely involves the pro-abortionists and the anti-abortionists, each of which attempt to defend its positions. Contrary to a common misunderstanding, the pro-abortionists do not disagree with science on whether or not fetus has life. Their point of dispute is that fetus is not a human being, just as dog has life but dog is not a human being. The argument of the pro-abortionist is that, fetus is not sufficiently a human being. The implication of this view is that every right or respect that should be accorded a human being needs not be extended to a fetus. For instance, Peter Singer argues that, an infant might be accorded the same right to life as other persons some 28 days after birth (Singer, 1994: 217).

The implication from Singer’s view is that fetus does not possess rights. However, the above submission may not go down well with the anti-abortionists who believe that fetuses already have rights from the beginning of the gestation period. Jacques Maritain’s claim that “the human being has the right to be respected, because he possesses rights...these are things which are owed to a human being because of the very fact that he is a human” (Jacques, 1944: 37). is not applicable to fetus. For the pro-abortionists, abortion is not morally impermissible because fetus is not an actual human but mere potential human. It is on this note that pro-abortionist like J.J. Thomson argues that woman has a right to abortion in case of rape, or in a situation when the woman’s life is endangered (1984: 126-129). Since it is believed that fetus is not fully human, aborting fetus due to rape or threat to life of the woman is morally permissible.

However, one challenge that Mary Anne Warren identified with pro abortionists’ position is that it is problematic to produce a satisfactory defense for a woman’s right to obtain an abortion without first showing that a fetus is not a human being (1984: 144). That is, pro - abortionists should be able to clearly establish that fetus has not initiated or been implementing some programs before birth which will qualify it to be a human being. Now, would the anti-abortionists agree with the pro-abortionists on this subject matter? Or, would the anti-abortionists agree that fetus should not be accorded any right that human being should enjoy? The anti-abortionists rely on the premise that the fetus is a human being from the moment of conception (Thomson, 1984: 126). Thus, for the anti-abortionists, abortion is morally impermissible because it is an act of murder. The fetus, they claimed, is a human being not just a life (a frog is a life but not a human being), a creature of full moral status imbued with fundamental rights (Little 2005: 27-28).

Contrary to the view defended by the pro-abortionists, the anti-abortionists argue that a fetus, at any stage of the gestation period, is a human being. As a matter of fact, Norman Ford argues that “Life once conceived must be protected with the utmost care” (2002: 63). Ford’s view implies that life starts from conception. But, is it possible to maintain this position consistently? To strengthen their position, the anti-abortionists also argue further that a fetus is a living being that needs to be protected just like any human being. One problem with the anti-abortionist’s view is that they did not pay attention to the fact that all human beings are living being, but not all living beings are human beings. Anti-abortionists on this note claimed that the fetus possesses all the

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<sup>2</sup> Abortion could be defined as the act which a woman performs in voluntarily terminating, or allowing another person to terminate her unborn her pregnancy (Warren, 1984: 144).

potentialities of a full-grown human being. Aborting the fetus is, by implication, aborting a human being (Thomson, 1971: 47). What this suggests is that a fetus has every capacity of becoming a full-grown man because it carries all the potentialities of a full human being. By implication, and to employ Turing's view, a fetus is a *potential* functional organization because it possesses a 'little mechanism' at birth. However, it may be objected that there are marked differences between a potential functional organization and actual functional organization. Therefore, a fetus is different from full grown human functional being. But the pro-abortionists could reply, as Ford hinted, that "the genetic identity of the adult individual is practically the same as that of an embryo who possesses the potential to develop and grow into an actual human being...Thus, embryo and the resulting adult are the same living being" (*Ibid.*, 2002: 63).

We must be able to clearly separate some issues. The difference between a fetus and a full-grown human being based on the criteria; being human, is quite different from a difference between a fetus and a full-grown man under the criteria; being a functional organization. Now, by Putnam's claim that everything is a functional automaton under relevant description, and the pro-abortionist's claim that a fetus is just a living tissue which may grow to become a human being, we may be compelled to admit that a fetus is a functional organization in its own relevant description. In fact, given this consideration, the pro-abortionists may also see some reason not to deny that a fetus is a functional organization. The only premise that they might deny is that this functional organization is a human being. We have established an agreeable position for the two opposing parties. This is the position that fetus is a functional organization whether or not it is a human being.

That a fetus is functional organization is true in the sense that every activity of the fetus can be logically characterized in scientific/functional explanation. This might be true on the ground that whatever object whose activities can be logically characterized into a functional structure is *ipso facto* a functional organization. Under this consideration, a fetus will be qualified to be referred to as functional organization. If a fetus is a functional organization which is running a certain marked program, then it becomes obvious how difficult it is to address and settle the question of the initial state of fetus' functional organization. What the foregoing has demonstrated is that the question of the initial state A in the machine state automaton is not easily paralleled in the case of human automaton. This is a fundamental demarcation from machine state automaton as a description of the nature of mental states.

The issue is that if we assume the similarity of inputs in both the digital machine and the mental machine, then this raises the question; how does the mental state machine convert its own inputs to the digital codes and symbols which the human functional machine works with? This ended on the point that for a digital machine to be a sufficient model of the mental machine there must be an equivalence of the initial state in the mental state. But we found out that to do that we must first find out the initial state in the fetus. However, the initial state of the mental state is not easily determined in the case of fetus functional organization. This, no doubt, poses a problem but not the one classified as a hard problem in the philosophy of mind.

Considered from another point of view, note that Turing likens this initial state to the state of the mind of a child at birth. What does Turing imply by "state of the mind ... at birth"? Does he mean that a child possesses a mind before birth or at birth? What appears a consistent view here is that Turing assumes that a child possesses a mind before birth. This is because it might be impossible for a child to suddenly develop a mind at birth which wasn't there before. However, we observe that fetus has been implementing some programs before birth. But then, can mind be ascribed to this fetus as a functioning system, i. e. can a fetus have a mental state? If Turing is willing to ascribe a mind the fetus before birth, at what stage? Again, this is a complex but hardly a hard question. We want to clearly assert that it is impossible to accord a functioning system what is not yet clear. The term 'mind' is not yet clear! Looking at it from the view of the identity theorists, the fetus only possesses the mind at a certain stage in the gestation when the

brain is developed. But, following the functionalists, if the mind is ascribed to a functional performance, i. e. the time fetus begins to implement certain functions, then from the period of fertilization, fetus could be accorded mind. It begins to implement functions immediately fertilization takes place! But whether the mind is equivalent to the brain or functional system or some other prescribed variables is yet to be clearly ascertained. From the foregoing, we found out that the debate on the moral rightness or wrongness of abortion only makes the question of the initial state of the machine more complex. The fact is that whether deserving the accordance of right, or even mind or not, fetus has been implementing some computational functions before birth. This may weaken Turing's view if he imagines that the initial state is likened to the state of baby at birth. Now, what is, or, are the implication(s) of the initial state on the anti and pro abortionists' debate? Let us consider this in the next section.

#### 5. The implication(s) of the initial state on the anti and pro abortionists' debate

This section reveals how and why we claim that the initial state might not be so easily defined especially when considering the debate between the anti and pro-abortionists due to certain questions that require clarifications.

The first question is that; can it be really proved beyond any doubt that the initial state of the mind is activated before birth, just as it is evident in Putnam's view that the initial state of the digital machine is state A? If it can be established that the initial state of the mind is activated before birth, certain question will follow. Is it desirable or not to accord the fetus with an activated mind with some human rights before birth? Anti- abortionists are likely to jump at this view and use it to compel their argument. The argument is likely to be that (1) since the fetus possesses a mind, and (2) possession of mind is part of requirements for ascription of rights, then it should be accorded some rights. The implication will be that this fetus ought to be accorded certain rights like any other human being. However, a pro-abortionist might, for whatever reason, assent to the point that this fetus has a mind but might deny the view that it should be accorded rights. It might be argued that (1) though the fetus appears to have a mind, whatever that is, (2) it is not yet a human being. Therefore, it is still not to be accorded right.

The second question is; can it be truly established, beyond any doubt that the initial state of the mind is activated after birth? If it can be established that the initial state of the mind is activated after birth, certain question will follow. Is desirable to deny the fetus (even moments before birth) some rights simply because it is believed that its mind is not activated yet? Pro-abortionists' argument will also hold to this view to argue that since the fetus doesn't possess an activated mind before birth, then it should not be accorded any right.

This issue as here presented is hiding a point though. The point is that the issue has turned to that of an 'activated mind.' The debate between the two camps will turn out not to be whether or not the fetus has a mind but whether or not the mind is activated. But again, there is the term 'mind' as a common denominator here whose existence is begged and whose proof of existence is necessary in order to resolve the matter. At this point, until this is addressed, this debate may not have a way to be resolved. However, as hinted earlier, Turing likens the initial state to the state of the mind of a child at birth (Turing, 1950: 433). This, in a way, suggests that Turing's argument is in line with the pro-abortionist's position. But Turing's view is highly contestable because it is not yet settled when the fetus actually possesses a mind. Therefore, the issue of the initial state might not be so easily defined as it seems.

## 6. The complexity about the initial state in a child's mind/machine

It is a biological fact that fetus has been implementing some programs before birth. This might challenge Turing idea of likening the initial state in human mind to the state of the mind of a child at birth (1950: 434). But then, which is the initial state in human mind? According to Norman Ford, zygote or fetus is already implementing programs because it starts interacting with the maternal environment in a continuous process (2002: 63). This is where the initial state in human mind is complex. From the understanding that certain process has been activated even before a child is born, can we then, say that initial state starts before birth when the brain started forming at week five, or before, or immediately after a child is born? This appears as a complex issue.

The question of time is another implicit question waiting to be battled with. For instance, considering the complexity of timing, does Turing mean few minutes before birth, or few minutes after birth or the moment when the head is out but body still inside the mother? This initial state of human mind is difficult to ascertain when compare to that of a Machine. One of the main questions here is that of the time at which initial state or mind is to be ascribed to a fetus. But this raises another issue entirely.

## 7. The primitive dogma of time

The point we intend to push in this section is that temporal realism assumed in the talk about the initial state of human machine raises some further question about the discourse. The first point to be made is that the issue about the initial state of human machine assumes the reality of time, i.e., that there is a particular temporally marked moment when the fetus or what have you assumes the state called the initial state. This is based on an assumed belief that there is time and consequently, there is temporal measurement. In other words, it is assumed that there is the time  $T_1$  when a state  $S$  is at its initial state. This is the assumption and it is distributed over the whole idea of the initial state. But this assumption can only make sense if the question of the nature of time has been settled in favor of time. We doubt this! As far in the literature as we are aware, none of the methods to determine the existence of time has clearly point out the reality of time.

The convincing point about the methods is that both A-series and B-series are themselves event or process in time. The question is how can an event which occurs in time be used to define time without begging the question? This is what made McTaggart, a notable scholar on the question of time to conclude on the point that time does not exist (1993: 457). We are not here taking a position on the question of the nature of time. We are only pointing out that something is wrong about the assumption of temporal realism which is forced on the idea of initial state, even of the machine state. The notion of time remains to be sufficiently accounted for. Consequently, the idea of the initial state of human or computer machine could not yet be easily resolved. To resolve it, the problem of time has to be resolved first.

The second point is that we will like to take some temporary solace in Putnam's view that perhaps, much of these problems will be much clear when our language becomes more technicalized. This is because the issue of time, existence and of course the initial state of the machine all appear to bear some direct relationship with tense and the use of language. We want to vehemently support Putnam<sup>3</sup> that language at this stage, as it is being used, still falls short of its expectation, i.e. it appears very primitive and yet to attain the technical level at which concepts,

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<sup>3</sup> For information on this, see Putnam, 1971: 54, and Quine, 1964: 370.

tense and or sentence could definitely capture ideas of existence, being and process of events and how these could be affirmed.

What we therefore propose is that all that are concerned should continue to work on language as a system with a view to making it more advanced. It is expected that at that level, language will become empowered to and be more precise to account, define or describe things and events. The point here is that for problem of the question of the initial state of the machine (digital or human) to be adequately confronted, we figured that both metaphysical and its implied epistemological correlate of the nature of time has to be resolved first.

## 8. Conclusion

In this paper, we have been able to examine the claim that machine table describes the nature of a functioning machine. This machine table begins from state A which has raised the question of the equivalent state in human mind. For Putnam (though repudiated much later), it follows that by implication, everything which is true of a state of machine table is also true of human mental state. Turing likens this initial state in human mind to the state of the mind of a child at birth. However, this paper observed that the fact that fetus has been implementing some programs before birth might challenge Turing claim. But then, this raised some ethical and metaphysical questions. We found out that the debate on the moral rightness or wrongness of abortion only makes the question of the initial state of the machine more complex. The fact is that whether right deserving or not, fetus has been implementing some computational functions before birth. This weakens Turing's view that the initial state is likened to the state of baby at birth.

Besides, this issue has also clearly shown that the point between the pro- and anti-abortion is not whether or not the fetus is a functioning system, but that of whether or not a functioning fetus should be accorded some rights or not. It is also noted that Turing's view accorded with the pro-abortionist since Turing seem not to regard a fetus as possessing the mind. This study therefore, argued that the initial state might not be as easily defined as it seems.

Consequently, this study raised the issue of how questionable it is that Turing's view holds the primitive view of time. We, taking side with Putnam and concluded that the issues of time, and initial state will only be resolved when language is much developed and become more technicalised. We adopted the methodology of philosophical argumentation and critical analysis in the study methodology.

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## Between Violence and Nonviolence as Tools for Liberation in Africa

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### *Abstract*

Political theory as the study and systematic speculation of the writer or an author about the phenomena of the state has really served as models for explanation of the political reality and conditions of the people. Political philosophers and theorists through political theories have raised questions about “what should be the relationship between the state and the citizens?”, “How do we organize human societies?”, “what is the best principle or ideology for regulating the actual human society?”, among others. In the modern era, we have seen nations, political communities; postcolonial societies and indigenous peoples battle for political cum territorial sovereignty and self-determination. Different political theories, ideologies, methodologies and experiences; both colonial and postcolonial have shaped liberation struggles. The dimensions that the struggles have taken are informed and shaped by political theories and ideologies inherited from colonial mentality and residue. However, two prominent methodologies have played out in African struggles, these are violence and nonviolence. Each of these methodologies have manifested in different parts of Africa owing to the prevalent political theory embraced, in some Arab nations and other parts of the world, especially nations that went through colonialism. In spite of myriads of political theories on how best to organize human society, the establishment of a “perfect” or “ideal” political society has always eluded human beings. In this regard, I intend to examine the roles of violence and nonviolence as tools in liberation struggle for political and territorial sovereignty and self-determination. In doing this, I will be arguing that though violence and nonviolence are effective tools for achieving peace and liberation, depending on the prevailing circumstances, nonviolence is a better and more pragmatic alternative. The case for nonviolence would be drawn and anchored on some cultural values known in various African societies. This paper will draw from the concept and principle of UBUNTU – which means *I am because we are. That is, I am only a human being because of other human beings such that when I inflict pain on others, I am also inflicting pain on myself.* The paper concludes that nonviolence as a method anchored on some African values, such as *Ubuntu*, will set a better model for the best life.

**Keywords:** Africa, liberation of Africa, non-violence, violence.

### 1. Introduction

The problem of human liberation is as old as human society itself. Right from the earliest recorded history to the contemporary period, human beings have always sought and developed methods of achieving peaceful co-existence. Violence and nonviolence methods have played significant roles in liberation thought. Violence could be seen as the intentional use of force to injure, abuse, damage destroy or to influence people’s behavior. It manifests in various forms.

It could be physical, structural, political or psychological. Similarly, nonviolence may be seen as the use of means like negotiations, dialogue, peaceful protest, non-resistance, non-cooperation to achieve political or social change. For example, the violent and nonviolent struggles and the anti-colonial resistance that shook Africa was a result European imperialism and aggression towards the Africans for the greater part of the twentieth century. This resistance to colonialism manifested in diverse forms which included violent and non-violent resistance which differed from one African nation to the next. In recent times, events such as the insurrection at the US Capitol, coup d'état in some African countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Gabon), violence perpetrated by Hindus on Muslims in India during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Taliban take over in Kabul that is threatening the lives of women, forcefully remind us of violence as a means. To some people like the libertarians, violence is a justified means, at least for self-defense. As a matter of fact, violence is common and ubiquitous.

Dating from the ancient period, human beings have always sought and developed methods for achieving peace and organized society. In human society, peace is the most essential commodity for a good and fulfilling life. It is only in a peaceful environment that good life can take place. However, the more human beings yearn for peace, the more it becomes elusive. In achieving peace, violence and nonviolence have played prominent roles, at one period or the other. Violence and nonviolence are crucial tools in liberation struggles. This becomes important because according to Hoffman and Graham, “In all relationships, power is involved and, therefore, there will be those who are relatively disadvantaged” (2006, 248).

In view of this, I intend to examine the roles of violence and nonviolence in liberation struggle in Africa. Are violence and nonviolence compatible? What is even liberation in the context of violence and nonviolence? Can either of the two, or both be justified? Which, between the two, is more effective? What are the strengths and weaknesses of violence and nonviolence? In responding to these questions, I intend to argue that though violence and nonviolence play significant and effective roles in liberation struggle, nonviolence is a better option or alternative. It is not only a better alternative; it will set a better model for the best conception of the good life. To achieve this, the paper will be divided into three sections. The first section attempts to conceptualize the key concepts: violence and its roles in human liberation; the role of nonviolence in liberation struggles. The second section examines the justification of nonviolence over violence, showing why it will be a better alternative through Ubuntu Philosophy. The last section is the conclusion where the key issues discussed in the paper were summarized. nonviolence. It was noted that notwithstanding that nonviolence will be a better alternative, it is not a perfect method. It has its own limits and weaknesses. The paper also acknowledges that the political environment or situation determines the effectiveness of any method. That is, the effectiveness of either violence or nonviolence, as a method of liberation depends on the virtues that have been cultivated by both those who employed the method and those against whom it is employed.

## 2. Conceptual clarifications

It is important to conceptualize and clarify the major concepts and terms employed in this paper. The concepts include violence, nonviolence, as well as Ubuntu philosophy as necessary ingredient in-built into nonviolence philosophy.

## 3. Violence and its roles in liberation thought

The best and first step to be taking in the discussion of a subject or topic is to start from the definition or clarification of concepts. The concept of *violence* is complex and diverse, such that each author or scholar tend to define it from his/her perspective. Hence, the definition varies as the individuals that attempt to define it vary. Violence is such a concept that getting a

precise definition poses a problem. It could be defined narrowly as physical actions of human beings that inflict painful and physical injuries on the victims. This definition sees violence as an act of aggression against the objects at which it is directed. Along this direction, in *Violence, Inequality, and Human Freedom*, Ladicola and Shupe (1998) provide a conceptualization of violence that affords a comprehensive examination and dissection of violence in any society. These authors divided the world of violence into three interacting spheres, domains, or contexts: (i) Interpersonal violence- what happens between people acting in their private lives, without regard to occupational roles or formal institutions; (ii) Institutional violence- what happens within an institutional context vis-a vis the action of institutional agents and others; and (iii) Structural violence- what happens within the context of establishing, maintaining, extending, and/or resisting hierarchy, privilege, and inequality. Violence is a universal phenomenon. According to Gregg Barak (2003), “violence is an integral part of every society”. This implies that every human society witnesses and is a product of one form of violence at a particular point in time or the other. It manifests in form of interpersonal, institutional or structural, depending on the human conditions that give rise to it.

In the same vein, Salmi, a development economist from Morocco, in his important work entitled *Violence and Democratic Society* defines violence as an act that threatens a person’s physical or psychological integrity (Salmi 1993: 16). He distinguishes between four categories of violence: (i) Direct violence- This involves deliberate attacks that inflict harm (rape, kidnappings, torture, homicide); (ii) Indirect violence- This is inflicted unintentionally as in cases of violence by omission, when for example inaction contributes to starvation or genocide; (iii) Repressive violence – when people are deprived of their political, civil, social and economic rights; and (iv) Alienating violence – This embraces the kind of oppression (ethnic and male chauvinism, racism, hostile acts of homophobia, opposition to AIDS sufferers etc.) that undermines a person’s emotional, cultural and intellectual development. This succinctly depicts that violence is not only about physical force. This is made clear by Hoffman and Graham, who maintained that “By violence we do not simply mean the direct infliction of physical harm by sticks and stones. We also mean the indirect infliction of physical harm which arises from abuse, the kind of security that causes pain and depression, torment of a kind that destroys a person or a people’s sense of self-worth (248).

However, in *The Use and Abuse of Political Violence*, David Miller argues that violence may be permissible in dictatorships and other repressive regimes when it is used to defend human rights, provoke liberal reforms, and achieve other desirable objectives (Miller, 1984). In this regard, violence may serve as a good weapon in the hands of the oppressed people. For example, during apartheid regime in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC), resorted to this form of violence (among other tactics). It is important to note that the ANC only resorted to violence as a response to the actions of a regime that banned the organization and imprison its leaders. Brian Bunting, a South African, who has written widely on the anti-apartheid struggle, has documented in detail the laws passed in the period of “grand apartheid” under Dr Verwoerd that, among other things, prevented peaceful protest.

What the above implies, is that, violence could be justifiable in its repressive form. That is, when people have suffered under violent regime, fighting back with violent means will be justifiable. But, does violence, in anyway serve as a solution to violence? The obvious problem with this view will be that such move will lead to circle of violence and invariably those that have suffered from violence are likely to continue being victims of violence (Hoffman & Graham, 2006, 2). Hence, the initial problem of how to liberate themselves from violent and oppressive regime will be rather aggravated than rooted out of the human society.

To corroborate this view, John Hoffman and Paul Graham hold that if political violence can be justified when a state is explicitly authoritarian and denies its opponents any channel of legal change (as in apartheid South Africa), it becomes terrorism when employed

against a liberal state (Hoffman & Graham, 2006, 230). The reason for this is that the liberal state is in opposition to force or violence as a method of settling conflicts of interests.

Violence arises in human society as a result of struggle for power and how to distribute and manage power. According to Arendt Hannah, power springs up between people as they act together; it belongs to the group, and disappears when the group disperses. It is a collective capacity. Until this coming together, it is only a potential. Violence is an instrument. It is the use of implements to multiply strength and command others to obey. When power and violence are combined, “the result is a monstrous increase in potential force”. This is Rollo May in his book *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence* maintains that:

Violence has as its breeding ground in impotence and apathy... as we make people powerless, we promote their violence rather than its control. Deeds of violence in our society are performed largely by those trying to establish their self-esteem, to defend their self-image, and to demonstrate that they, too are significant... violence arises not out of power but out of powerlessness.”<sup>1</sup>

Violence manifests in various forms as direct and visible, which is intended to harm and hurt an opponent; structural violence, which is invisible and is embedded in the structures of the society like poverty, slavery, colonialism and imperialism. Violence also manifests in its cultural form which is invisible but seen in the marginalization and exclusion of certain people of different caste, color, sex and community. In whatever form violence is experienced, be it visible or invisible, it is against human flourishing and improvement in the modern world both in its manifestation and results.

Similarly, violence is not limited to physical actions like riot, arson, war, murder, and physical injury or act of physical aggression. Violence encompasses both physical and psychological aspects of human experience and existence because it is not just limited to the intended action of an individual or institutional agents. An act of violence covers intentional violation of people’s right and also embraces both the overt and covert acts of violence, including psychological abuse, dehumanization as well as moral abuse. It is in the light of this that Robert McAfee Brown sees violence as “whatever violates another, in the sense of infringing upon or disregarding or abusing or denying that other, whether physical harm is involved or not, can be understood as an act of violence.... In the broadest sense then, an act, that depersonalized would be an act of violence.”<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that violence is often perpetrated as a result of wrong or forceful exercise of power by those that possess and wield it. I now turn to the concept of nonviolence.

#### 4. Conceptualizing nonviolence

Nonviolence as a strategy or method for liberation was developed most fully by Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Junior. Each of these authors and scholars developed and applied nonviolence resistance in their respective domain and on different degrees. Nonviolence is the use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change. It is the abstention from violence as a matter of principle. It is used by different people for different reasons. It is an important technique for dealing with conflict without harming anyone by bringing about the desired and targeted end. In particular, Luther King Jnr. That nonviolence involves practical action that seeks to win friendship and understanding of the opponent, not to humiliate

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<sup>1</sup> Rollo May, *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Source of Violence*, New York, W. W. Norton, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Robert McAfee Brown, *Religious Violence*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987, p. 7.

him. In his words, “Many of the things that I had not cleared intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action.”<sup>3</sup>

Nonviolence is the absence of violence. It is a state or condition of avoiding violence. It could mean the process of protesting peacefully or working for social changes without resorting to violence. It is a tool or method for combating societal injustice and oppressive regimes. Nonviolence as a tool for liberation attempts to refrain from the use violence, especially when reacting to or protesting against oppression, injustice, discrimination, or the like. Nonviolence rejects the use of physical violence in order to achieve social or political change. It seeks to defeat injustice, not people. It holds that suffering can educate and reform. It chooses love instead of hate.

The trio of Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jnr. Had a great impact on the intellectual history of nonviolence through different epochs. In *My Religion* (1884) and *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1893), Tolstoy laid down his political philosophy of nonviolent resistance. He vehemently criticized in particular the modern slavery of military conscription or compulsory military service which had been introduced in Russia after the army reform of 1874. To Tolstoy, nonviolence became the ethical basis for the doctrine of Truth Force which was later developed by Gandhi in his Satyagraha philosophy and Martin Luther King Jr. in his Soul-Force. “The trio regard violence or power as absolute evil and reject fighting against evil using the same means as does evil.”<sup>4</sup> For Gandhi in particular, nonviolence was not just a negative concept of non-injury but a positive one in which meant love for selfless service. He understood nonviolence its Sanskrit root *Ahimsa*, which translated in English means and implies non-injury or avoidance of physical violence or any form of violence. Both Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. acknowledged that nonviolence as a method of liberation recognize that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. In a similar vein, Tolstoy repudiates violence and power and regard both as absolute evil. He warned that evil should not be fought using violence and power because they are evil and it is not good and acceptable to fight evil using the same evil means.

According to Gandhi, nonviolence is the personal practice of not causing harm to others under any condition. This may come from the belief, among others, that hurting any creature, including the environment, is unnecessary to achieve an outcome. “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”<sup>5</sup> Under nonviolence, the weakest have the same opportunity as the strongest. To Martin Luther King Jr., nonviolence is the activation in us of that true courage, honor, faithfulness, integrity and loyalty to truth and justice (Luther King Jr., 1991). Gandhi unequivocally states that nonviolence contained a universal applicability. In his word, he stated that “I have no message to give except this that there is no deliverance for any people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth and nonviolence in every walk of life without any exceptions.”<sup>6</sup> Gandhi’s aim was to bring every problem, social, political, economic or otherwise, face to face with truth as it may present itself at a given moment. Nonviolence as a philosophy was a way of life for Gandhi, who sometimes describes it as a method of noncooperation with evils.

Gandhi and King adopted nonviolence or nonviolent resistance with the conviction that it is a way of life that has to be embraced and lived after a conscientious search for an enduring meaning of human life and the brotherhood of all mankind. In reacting to this, John Okwoeze

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther King Jnr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, HarperCollins, 1958, p.84.

<sup>4</sup> Tetsuo Mochizuki, “Nonviolence by Tolstoy and Gandhi: Toward a Comparison through Criticism”, *Comparative Studies on Regional Powers*, No.11, pp. 149-169, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Gandhi, M. K. *Hind Swaraj*, Ahmedabad, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> Gandhi, M. K. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan Publishing House, 1955.

Odey maintains that “the goodness of nonviolent resistance is characterized more by its moral truth and beauty rather than by its immediate practical usefulness.”<sup>7</sup> For Gandhi and King, nonviolence method is not just mere a functional alternative to violence, it aims primarily to employ good means and the most morally constructive means to achieve good ends.

In the contemporary and recent literature, nonviolence has been similarly conceived to be a weapon or method in the hands of a group for the resistance of oppressive regime without employing or relying on violence. For example, Ettang asserts that:

Nonviolence is the means through which groups can actively oppose a system of injustice and violence without using violence and exacerbating an already volatile situation. In the case of Africa, these systems of injustice range from oppressive governments to structures that perpetuate violence and deepen inequalities among various groups. As the definition depicts, nonviolence is not passive or weak but requires action in transforming a situation. Discourses on nonviolence agree that conflict is necessary and an inevitable part of society. As long as there is a desire and competition among individuals and groups, conflict is bound to emerge.<sup>8</sup>

The above definition clearly sees nonviolence as a veritable tool for pursuing and achieving peace and justice. It is a weapon of liberation drawn from the strength and resolve to oppose and confront oppression and injustice without resorting to violence. This is with the recognition that conflict is inevitable in human society, especially in the process of acquiring and exercising power. Nonviolence aims at achieving equality for the oppressed people in the face of inequalities. In a similar vein, Erica Chenoweth and Kathleen Gallagher assert this:

We define nonviolent resistance as the application of unarmed civilian power using nonviolent methods such as protests, strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations, without using or threatening physical harm against the opponent.<sup>9</sup>

It is unanimous among scholars from the above definitions that nonviolence does not employ violence, force or any form of threat that will harm anyone, including the perpetrator of oppressive regime.

## 5. Ubuntu philosophy as an indispensable tool in nonviolent liberation struggle

The Ubuntu Philosophy is one of the philosophical traditions that evolved in African continent over hundreds, if not, thousands of years. Ubuntu is an ancient African word meaning ‘humanity to other’. It is often described as reminding us that “I am what I am because of who we all are.” It originated in the Bantu and Xhosa people of Southern Africa by popularized by Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela. As a philosophy rooted in African tradition, it embodies a communal ethos that emphasizes shared responsibility, trust in each other, interconnectedness and solidarity among the individuals in the community. Generally, it translates to “a person is a person through other people.” This implies that the source of knowledge and power is the community, not the individual. From this, we could say that for Ubuntu, “I am because we are.” There is no individual without the community and no individual can outshine or grows beyond the

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<sup>7</sup> John Okwoeze Odey, *Active Nonviolent Resistance: The Moral and Political Power of the Oppressed*, Enugu: Snaap Press Limited, 1996, p.44.

<sup>8</sup> Dorcas Ettang, “Factors for Successful Nonviolent Action in Africa”, *Peace Review, A Journal of Social Justice*, vol.26, Issue 3, pp. 412-419, 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, “Understanding Nonviolent Resistance: An Introduction”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp 271-276, special issue, Understanding Nonviolent Resistance, 2013.

community. In this regard, Ubuntu can aid nonviolence to disarm and change the world – our lives, our relationships and our communities but it has to be well organized and disciplined.

Ubuntu is an ancient African Philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of community. It has the potential to play a significant role in strengthening peace, cohesion, and national integration. In the words of Tim Murithi, “Ubuntu” acknowledges the interconnectedness of humanity at all times (Mbigi, 1995). From this, Ubuntu implies, among other things, that an individual can only increase his good fortunes by sharing with other members of the society and thereby also enhancing their status within the local communities. According to Desmond Tutu, the concept of Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a western philosophy but it is one of many African Philosophy and indigenous approaches from South Africa which highlights the framework of understanding humanity (Tutu, 1999). One of the notable values in Ubuntu philosophy as a nonviolent ingredient is that the role of elders and chiefs are highly recognized and respected. They function as a court with broad and flexible powers to interpret evidence, impose judgements, and manage the process of reconciliation (Pkalya et al., 2004).

The argument of this paper is that nonviolence is a better alternative to violence in liberation thought and that Ubuntu philosophy is deeply engrained in nonviolence and readily reinforce and facilitate nonviolence as a liberation tool. The primary aim of nonviolence is to liberate the people in an oppressive regime. In this regard, Ubuntu guides everyone towards lives dedicated to active practice of nonviolence with the purpose of overcoming violence oppression and injustice. The Ubuntu philosophy embedded in nonviolence method facilitates human liberation from the oppressive structures of the government, from one’s ego and the urge to control others forcefully. Ubuntu philosophy is embedded in nonviolence since it emphasizes togetherness, harmony, reciprocity and solidarity. With these features, Ubuntu is an essential aspect of nonviolence process of liberation. It encompasses the political, cultural, economic, social and philosophical dynamics of African society which is practiced across Southern, East and Central Africa. In the words of Tim Murithi, Ubuntu involves the values of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between people (Murithi, 2008). Similarly, such values as solidarity, compassion, generosity, mutuality and commitment to community can find resonance well beyond Africa’s borders (Ngunjiri, 2010). Nonviolence promotes reciprocity and inclusivity hence Ubuntu philosophy with such values will enhance nonviolence as a tool for liberation. This will make nonviolence achieve a permanent victory whereby violence will be avoided and social or political change would still be avoided.

Ubuntu promotes the principles of empathy, justice, collaboration, diversity and education which greatly contribute to fighting social challenges by fostering a collective and inclusive approach focused on the well-being and empowerment of all individuals. This is part of what nonviolence liberation thought aims at achieving, hence Ubuntu can easily facilitate and support nonviolence as a better alternative for liberation. In line with the people-centric Ubuntu Philosophy, individualism is not viable, for it is inadequate as a model to understand the basic human elements of a society (Khoza, 1994). In nonviolent resistance, everyone counts. The liberation is targeted at nonviolent activities like strike, noncooperation, boycott, peaceful demonstration and protest that will connect everyone by removing the disadvantages experienced by particular groups within the society. This will easily be made possible by the Ubuntu philosophy since it promotes peace by acknowledging guilt, showing remorse and repentance, asking for and giving forgiveness and paying compensation or reparations as a prelude to reconciliation. In line with this, Mbigi identified the five principles of Ubuntu as survival, spirit of solidarity, compassion, respect and dignity (Mbigi, 1997). Survival enabled African communities during harsh environment conditions, to rely on each other for existence despite differences they might have had among themselves. This is capable of reinforcing nonviolence liberation process.

## 6. Conclusion

The major claim of the paper is that violence and nonviolence are viable methods in liberation thought but that nonviolence is a better alternative in liberation discourse. Also, that Ubuntu Philosophy rooted in African traditional society readily reinforces and facilitate nonviolence as a tool for liberation of the oppressed people. It has been argued in the paper that nonviolence is a better alternative than violence in liberation thought because it chooses love over hate unlike violence that reinforces oppression, repression and revenge, thereby causes more havoc. It was argued that nonviolence is a better alternative because it aims at transforming everyone-the oppressor and the oppressed by seeking to defeat injustice and powerlessness through suffering, education and reform that will be favorable to everyone. It was also argued and established in the paper that nonviolence as a better alternative method for liberation harbors some principles in ubuntu philosophy that can easily reinforce it. These principles include compassion, reciprocity, solidarity, mutual understanding and generosity. The paper conclude that nonviolence is a better alternative tool for liberation than violence because of its numerous merits like making the antagonists to start being peaceful, encouraging people to resist evil without resorting to violence, making it a powerful and just weapon. Above all, nonviolence is a better alternative than violence because it leads to much greater degrees of democratic freedom. It is also important to note that there are some demerits associated with nonviolence as a method such as protesters can be abused, or even killed by violent opponents. Also, nonviolence as a method can be pacifying but could be incoherent and disorganized sometimes. However, notwithstanding the demerits of nonviolence, it is still a better alternative than violence as tools for liberation- this is the central argument defended in the paper.

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# The Philosophical Underpinnings of Human-Nature Interconnectedness

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## *Abstract*

The relation of man to the physical world, landscape, weather, plants, animals, rocks, seas, mountains, often contribute immensely to humans' health, wellbeing and development at various dimensions. Mankind's connection to nature is steadily and progressively dropping day by day due to numerous human interferences into the natural environment. The crucial role played by this relatedness to nature directly or indirectly, provides suitable livelihood, necessary health benefits and better conditions to people by guaranteeing sustainable terrestrial life and the wellbeing of individuals and groups. This article aims at portraying the growing interests in remedying the perennial problems of mankind, precisely, through the intensification of human relations to nature. It justifies the relationship man shares with nature, and advances evidences whether the human-nature link influences human benefits positively and/or negatively. I demonstrate the manner in which nature transformations and modifications lead to health advantages as well as the satisfaction of individuals and communities. I conclude by portraying the existence of different vital needs of human wellbeing due to humans' interaction and relation to nature: from the relation for consumption of natural food, enjoyment such as spending time in natural environments like the beaches, lakes, parks, forests and zoos.

*Keywords:* environment, ecological restoration, environmental philosophy, human-nature interconnectedness, perspectives.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last few years, individual and collective human activities on the physical environment have emerged as an issue of greater concern, discussion and debates in socio-economic discourse and a focal point for scientific research. Addressing issues of such natures is of vital necessity because the quality of soils, water bodies, aquatic inhabitants, including the survival of plants and animals have been deteriorating drastically. A majority of these degrading situations stem from the human societies, especially from Sub-Saharan Africans who persistently change their manner of interference with nature through excessive extraction of natural resources, mining, lumbering, agrarianism, just to name these few. Agriculture is also responsible for extracting vital organisms from nature. So, the direct and indirect forms of extractions cause contamination and decay all provoked by human-nature interactions for decades. Although there exists more ongoing interest in modern agricultural practices in Africa, modern agriculture which also involves the use of chemicals in the production process presents a huge threat to the existence and survival of other species of the ecosystem (Leech, 1996: 4). Leech equally emphasized on the

increase in vegetarianism and demand for chemical farming products to enhance and realize industrial agriculture. It is believed that, the outbreak of different diseases affecting, plants, animals, soils, and biodiversity at large, result from a faulty interaction with, and improper interference into nature.

Humanity is faced with numerous challenges which could mostly be attributed to the activities of the current generation. The future generations may likely experience more damages if stringent measures are not implemented to address human-nature relations crises locally, nationally, and globally. Environmental degradation, excess extraction, exploitation, and destruction still exist, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, presenting a huge risk to the present and future generations. A clear-cut panacea to these perennial problems is far-fetched as any attempted answer provokes many more questions from the appeal to the expertise of various fields. For instance, traditional ethical theories are insufficient in determining exactly what ought to be done in any given situation concerning environmental problems, as well as the incapability of identifying the best manner of treating the environment, nature, and human relations with them. Therefore, the adoption of very pragmatic environmental perspectives is salutary for the assessment of theories and policies connected to environmental crises of different natures with more emphasis on the contributions of western thinkers to human-nature relationships.

Pragmatic knowledge will certainly influence our actions and understanding of the environment and also in shedding more light on virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and on ethical theories as a whole. People do not emerge from a vacuum, virtue is learned, habituated, acquainted, and it is not necessarily inherent, adding that, “happiness means more than just taking a bottle of beer after a tedious day at work”. In some situations, the greatest good requires individual sacrifice because just considering only an individual is missing a larger part, since the effects of human actions on another may inflict pain or damages nature but is beneficial to the whole. In addition to this, I. Kant (2008) prescribes treatment of one another with respect and dignity, in other words, treating people as an end in themselves and not simply as a means to an end.

## 2. The philosophical foundations of human-nature relations

The quest for human civilization, the desire to manifest freedom from ignorance, and the eradication of superstitious beliefs that characterized the past, contributed immensely to a redefinition of human-nature relationships. From this perspective, mankind has always attempted to identify their links with the natural environment and nature as a whole, by engaging in various forms of interference and interaction with nature. Human-nature relations in the pre-social context, that is, life before the establishment of civilized societies (the state of nature). The state of nature was regarded as a separate entity and as an opposition to the human society. According to T. Hobbes (2010), human life under such pre-social context was termed “solitary, brutish, poor, nasty, and short”. This negative conception of nature during pre-colonization by Hobbes signaled the flaws of nature and a clear-cut separation between humans and nature. The burning desire to transform and dominate, therefore, took its rise as humans avoided a situation of being dominated by nature through whatever means available. On the other hand, J. Locke (1954) opposed Hobbes’ conception of the state of nature by propounding and attributing a state of “peace, of goodwill, and of mutual assistance and cooperation.” From this Lockean perspective, his viewpoint situates nature as prior to the creation of the modern human societies as quoted by Macnophthen and Urry (1995: 206). These pre-social contributions, among others, were aimed at fulfilling the principal objectives of the Enlightenment, that is, to guarantee human development and liberty which was initially dominated by irrationality and the belief in the superiority of nature over mankind.

Similarly, before the eighteenth century, natural phenomena such as lightening, rainfall, including natural disasters like floods, droughts, earthquakes, etc., were usually

considered as “unknowable mysteries” (Habermas, 1984: 45). Moreover, the animists’ school of thought equally regarded particular aspects of nature which include stars, sun, moon, rivers, mountains, valleys, stars, animals, just to cite these few, as examples of natural aspects possessing spirits. Since these natural aforementioned forms of nature are believed to possess spirits, it rendered them objects of worship and to be worshipped, consequently qualifying them as “Superiors” to mankind. Their superiority to man is further substantiated and justified by their invisible causes which are different from those of humans, coupled with the forces which led to their origins and existence within the natural world as Bratton (1993), Hughes (1993), Berman (1981), indicate. The relation between humans and nature was therefore examined as a far dated issue and one of the most significant, since humans have often interacted with other beings and nature from time immemorial. Even during the pre-Enlightenment, humans were never separated from nature, despite the controversial perspectives of the state of nature proponents like Hobbes (2010) and Locke (1954). So, Man (human) was a part and parcel of nature, given that people were integrated into nature and constituted part of it.

The Enlightenment was impacted by the mutations emerging from debates on the interconnectedness of man and the natural environment, paving the way for the rationalist thinkers like R. Descartes (1837). These rationalists, among others, modified the place of nature by transforming it from a life force to a dead matter-non-living thing as well as changing nature from a “spirit” as initially held, to a “machine”. Descartes’ main reason for subduing matter was an attempt to render humans “masters and possessors of nature” as highlighted by Berman (1981: 25). According to these Enlightenment rationalists, nature can be known, understood, and controlled, by appealing to the scientific method of rational inquiry which involve observation, verification, demonstration, and experimentation (Bohn, 1988: 57-58). The transformation of nature through the use of rational thinking actually replaced some of the characteristics of the past eras such as superstition, dogmas, myths, legends, folklores, and others, thereby paving a smoother path for modernity, defined by Macnaghten and Urry (1995) as: “the belief that, human progress should be measured and evaluated in terms of human domination of nature” (p. 205). From this perspective, the modern era portrays and treats nature as mere matter which should be easily and constantly manipulated for the interests of mankind and for the good of the entire society. This contributed to Utilitarianism, precisely on nature’s purpose that was to be limited by man and meant mainly for what nature could be used for, hereby prioritizing human interests.

### 3. The status of human-nature egalitarianism

Eco-centric philosophers (Aldo, 1937; Hokhelmer & Adomo, 1943; Luke & White, 1985; Katz, 1992; Light & Katz, 1996; Callicott, 1996; Naess, 2008) firmly believe that, deep ecology completely disagrees with the belief that man is different from all other aspects of the environment in particular and nature as a whole, by propounding a more unified viewpoint. To the ecological egalitarians, the unavoidable link between humans and nature in the biosphere is indispensable and necessary because holistically, humans, animals, plants, etc., possess equal rights to develop and cohabit pacifically. The necessity for propagating equal rights among human and non-human forms of life is also supported by the fact that, both aspects have values in themselves. Hence, the non-human world should not be tampered with for human goals. The wealth and beautiful diversity that characterize nature holistically, contribute positively in attaining varied values and in justifying the real identity of such values. The egalitarians firmly advise that, only in case of satisfaction of very vital and necessary needs should man attempt to extract the richness and diversity offered by nature. Currently, due to the excessive and gross interference of human practices into the non-human world, better situations have been transformed to worse due to human activities like indiscriminate hunting, fishing, lumbering, mining, etc. In order to address this burden properly, a change of mentality and ideologies should be directed mainly toward an appreciation and ethical justification of the quality of life, instead of

prioritizing and succumbing to higher standards of living. Moreover, policies affecting ideologies, economies, and technologies should be different from the present ones which are noted for presenting adverse influences to human-nature relationships as B. Devall & G. Sessions (1985) propagate.

To add, ecology produces wealth and is considered as a simple *modus operandi* in human lifestyles. Emphatically, in a similar light, Naess (2008) assures us that, the value of ecology is a form of philosophy comprising thorough articulated wisdom which constitutes a synthesis involving both theory and practice (pragmatic philosophy). In other words, the active participation of numerous organisms is essential in acknowledging the richness of biodiversity and in guaranteeing a healthier ecosystem. Thus, the involvement of all living things is vital for their own sake and for the good of the ecosystem. All human and non-human life forms, from bacteria in the soil are vital in realizing a smooth functioning of the ecosystem due to their peculiar intrinsic values. Following the varied values examined as contributors to the link between man and nature, it follows that, humans should avoid underestimating the riches and diversity of nature, unless in exceptional cases involving the satisfaction of only vital needs for survival such as; food, shelter, water, among others, being necessary requirements for growth and survival.

Contrarily, it is worth stating that, vital needs vary, depending on the particular place someone lives, it also involves technology, given that certain things solely depend on various sorts of technologies to function well nowadays, which is different from the cases in the past. On the other hand, examples of non-vital needs could be the act of buying a new car, constructing a swimming pool, which are things humans can live without and still survive in today's society. The desire to realize mainly vital needs greatly minimizes our influences and degree of interference into the environment and in nature remarkably. From this perspective, it is important to concur with C. Mechant (1992) by affirming that, humans ought to be positioned as part of nature and are supposed to live pacifically with it and not by always attempting to dominate, suppress, or subdue it. Insistently, she adds:

re-inhabiting the land as 'dwellers in it' rejects industrial society as the world paradigm for development and entails leaving vast tracts of land as wilderness, people can live their lives as 'future primitives' by withdrawing from developed land and allowing it to reestablish itself as wilderness... For each ecological religion, the guideline for use should be human carrying capacity (p. 87).

Irrespective of the fact that statistics indicate an increase in more human interferences into nature and carrying capacity today, resulting from evidences of more occupancy on earth, visible through food shortages, soil degeneration, lack of quality water, among others, humans are hereby called up as dwellers of nature, to manifest a higher sense of responsibility by ensuring that, the numerical value of humans does not in any way affects the local environment in which every society inhabits negatively. It is worth noting that, the reduction of people's ecological consciousness contributes immensely to a drastic drop in our consumptive habits, reduces forms of environmental injustices, water pollution, unfair treatment of minorities and the underprivileged. Therefore, all sorts of negative lifestyles impacting nature should be revisited. Basing on B. Devall's (1988) *Simple in Ideas, Rich in Ends: Practicing Deep Ecology*, in which he advocates for the implementation of new and healthier lifestyles by humans *vis-à-vis* nature. This Devallian view is prompted by the fact that, a majority of humans manifest deviant attitudes from an average behavior expected to be exemplary in the dominant culture (p. 83).

Another solution for a change in mentality about ecological concerns would be the ability to resist advertisements and appeals geared toward more consumption under the pretext of maintaining the economy, or the introduction of "the absence of *novophili*" which Naess defines as, "the love of what is new simply because it is new" (p. 83). So, a more compassionate lifestyle, simplicity which is not attributed to self-denial (alienation) and respect for non-human creatures are recommendable in bridging the gap between humans and non-humans. Similarly, from a

greater extent, nature conservationists, like biologists, consider the adoption of deep ecology as a means to facilitate the selection and designation of barriers and better management strategies of nature reserves, parks, and wild lands (p. 92). Even the impacts of technology on the environment can be easily determined through the introduction of ecological consciousness and ecological restoration. However, given the current state of affairs portraying various varied forms of environmental crises derived from human activities and partly related to the cleaning up of pollution, the act of preserving and conserving rapidly growing habitats, coupled with the endeavor to prevent past mistakes of various natures, the appeal to biotechnology is a panacea in providing a new, effective, and more innovative system that minimizes the level of human interference and impacts on the environment, while addressing other human environmental concerns simultaneously. In addition, biotechnological approach to ecological restoration leads to another method termed “Bioremediation”, considered by Lenhard, Skeen and Brouns (1995) as “the use of microorganisms and other living species to destroy, immobilize, or otherwise transform contaminants to less hazardous forms” (p. 159). Since human activities on the immediate environment and in nature are in most cases considered hostile and unacceptable, irrespective of the reason, the principal preoccupation of environmentalists should focus mostly on ecological restoration. Hence, bioremediation, being one of the newest technologies and most effective method plays a catalyst role in restoring destroyed natural environment by human activities.

#### 4. Challenges and controversies of ecological restoration vis-a-vis human-nature relations

Disappointment and disapproval of the possibility of restoration of nature is justified by A. Light (2000), a non-anthropocentric thinker as he regards it (restoration of nature) as, “a technologically created nature” (p. 56) which is always mistaken for reality. Similarly, our level of technological fitness and advancement is a clear reflection of human arrogance and dominance over other aspects of nature, fabricated by man as a means to monitor and impact the natural world and life. Also, the desire to recreate nature as a restoration goal is considered as an artifact meant for human purposes which eventually results to less inherent value. A radical interruption in the natural processes of nature is produced with the intention of redesigning, recreating, and restoring the natural events, giving more room for manipulation, domination, imposition of human interests, and restricting nature from taking its original course. From this perspective, the real values of the original aspects of nature do not need preservation as a possible remedy to render worse situations better, since humans constantly use, always destroy, degrade, and replace natural entities at will, regardless of taking moral impacts into account (Katz, 1992: 56-57).

Moreover, D. Scherer (1995) believes that, the historical continuity of the environment is usually disrupted by humans through intervention and interference, adding that, the real worth of natural land created naturally, is worth more value than human created land and man-made nature (pp. 359-379). Moreover, the intrinsic value of nature focuses on the richness and diversity of nature, but not limited to its historical continuity. However, historical continuity should simply be a catalyst in signaling warnings in case of future problems that could influence the richness and diverse nature of a particular area. In addition to the challenges of restoration, newly restored areas are more vulnerable and unnatural, compared to old areas which possessed originality, authenticity, uniqueness, due to natural adaptations derived from organisms found in the environment. Given that human arrogance is primordially responsible for various environmental damages today, emphasis on bioremediation which recognizes past mistakes serves as a form of apology of man towards nature. So doing, man is bound to develop the tendency of learning from errors in order to achieve a higher level of tolerance and humility towards non-humans/inanimate forms of nature.

That notwithstanding, nature merits self-value and even the highest value, which should not be destroyed by human intervention as Katz (1992: 231-241) suggests in relation to restoration as: that which man created in order to satisfy human interests and not for the sake of the environment itself. Naturally, nature is the author of the natural environment that humans perpetually contaminated, destroyed, and reshaped. Since the natural environment was already created naturally, it follows that, no human has the power to create it a second time. This justifies why objects of human creation such as cars, houses, dresses, among many others, involving human intelligence and ingenuity do not exist naturally. Another typical example of ecological restoration is the act of considering an old car that is affected by rust, causing the engine to no longer function. If someone buys the old car and reshapes it to look original, will the buyer conclude that he created the car? Certainly no, because from this case, the car was simply restored and not created which is similar to issues of ecological restoration.

Again, man's domination of nature is aggravated by ecological restoration forcing nature to satisfy his best interests by using every available opportunity to play the role of a suppressor, dominator, and exploiter as is usually the case, hereby insinuating that, humans do not seem to be restoring nature at all. An example of real human-nature dominance would have been geared toward the transformation of the environment to prevent continuous contamination which is not restoration by leaving contaminated areas, as well as adopting only technologies that cannot affect the survival of species on earth negatively. Another possible constraint of applying ecological restoration is that, it can easily lead to a slippery slope based on the belief according to which, if the previous natural environment is effectively replaceable, then, it will present a golden opportunity for humans to keep on toying with nature, having in mind that nature is a replaceable entity that does not deserve any moral considerations. To further support the dangers of restoration, M. Bookchin (2008) states that, "our ecological problems derive their origins in the society and from social problems" by emphasizing that, deep ecological practices have limited humans from social beings to mere species when he writes: "we are already living in a period of massive de-individuation, it is not de-individuation that the oppressed of the world require, but re-individuation that will transform them into active agents in the task of remaking society" (pp. 246-247).

From a more developed context, even AIDS, Smallpox, Chickenpox, and other harmful microbes constitute part of the whole interrelated ecosystem equally having same intrinsic value like humans do. Though the principal difference lies on the basis that, humans exclude themselves from nature by fighting diseases through the use of anti-bacterial products, building tight houses, irrespective of the fact that they are not the only inhabitants or occupants of the same house, are all regarded as a solution to self-preservation. Microorganisms in general are vital agents for the smooth functioning of the ecosystem, though their significance is always underestimated, neglected, and morally unconsidered. Given that humans are also a constituent of the environment just like non-human species, it is practically complex to exclude humans from the space they occupy with others in the same environment, not leaving out the connection and perception of things, although humans have usually tended separating from wild animals. To buttress this statement, M. Bookchin (2003) states:

Perhaps the most obvious of our systematic problems is uncontrollable growth. The growth of which I speak is not humanity's colonization of the planet over millennia of history. It is rather an inexorable material reality that is unique to our era: namely, that unlimited economic growth is assumed to be evidence of human progress. We have taken this notion so much for granted over the past few generations that it is as immutably fixed in our consciousness as the sanctity of property itself (p. 43).

Moreover, the reliance on bioremediation is beneficial in attaining environmental sustainability, non-artificiality, and noninvasiveness. Thus, without the implementation of true restoration, it will be time consuming allowing contaminated land to restore themselves like

before. Even environmental pragmatists like K. Parker (1996) firmly holds the view according to which, people are inseparable from the environment, they are interrelated and are part of it “mind is not apart from the world; it is a part of the world...the environment is above all not ‘something out there’, somehow separate from us, standing ready to be used up or preserved as we deem necessary” (p. 28). In a similar vein, it is worth stating that, ecosystems are constantly undergoing change (dynamic) in nature. Due to their mobile character, pragmatists therefore believe that, reality is a stage of growth, while qualifying beings as relationally defined areas of meaning and not merely as individual elements standing with others in the natural and human world. Therefore, despite the geometrical progress in technology so far, without the environment and human experiences, everything ceases to exist as A. Weston (1996) writes: “Things are valuable in their contexts, with it being foolish and philosophically confused to try to value them outside of their contexts” (p. 285).

##### 5. Prospects: Re-visioning human-nature relationship

Until recently, the physical environment or nature as a whole, being what humans in particular and the society existing within has been taken for granted in the domain of social theory. This is evident from the separate treatment of the “natural” and the “social” contexts. Numerous threats and damages on the natural environment have been a reality over the last few decades, leading to the creation of more awareness about the prevention and/or control of harmful impacts on nature and the rigorous and endless desire for survival and sustainability. However, the attempt to seek possible solutions leads to more questions and doubts provoked by the continuous exploitation and interference into nature by humans, not leaving out the extent to which nature will continue to bear such exploitations. Therefore, in face of this evolving social concern linked to an imminent environmental crisis, the idea of neglecting human-nature relations becomes unavoidable as revealed by Ferre (1996), including Luke and White (1985). Nonetheless, this burden has led to the emergence of new theories, ideas, and orientations, geared at understanding and intensifying the attention on the importance of seeking better and more effective solutions, through an evaluation and thorough investigation on human-nature relations holistically (Morrison, 1986; Magnaghten & Urry, 1995; Foster, 1995).

Focusing on the social, political, philosophical, and scientific concerns of environmental/natural links between nature and humans/social is still an issue of ongoing interest and debates. For instance, disagreements, misconceptions and misinterpretations still exist among policy makers, environmental activists and scientists concerning the intensity and pace of environmental hazards. Despite the differences, one common ground held by various schools of thought is the fact that, erroneous human-nature relations are accountable for environmental crises of varied natures experienced today. This erroneous interference has been attributed to pressure from modernity and capitalism, which retard compromise and gears at drawing a consensual conclusion to correct or transform human faults to possible solutions (Aldo, 1937; Hokhelmer & Adomo, 1943; Nash, 1967; Bookchin, 1990a). Despite the absence of a consensus from environmental ethics and norms regarding human-nature crisis, there has been progress though relatively low (Armstrong & Botzier, 1993).

A form of modern environmental ethics expected to reflect the characteristics of modernity such as “homo-centrism” should be implemented as a spearheading paradigm, charged with the provision of vital information on human-nature links in every aspect of societal life. Also, Utilitarian ethics should focus more on tackling issues prioritizing human-nature welfare, as well as to critically scrutinize the features of good human actions *vis-à-vis* nature, since nature comprises an enormous landscape embedded with diverse vital credentials for humans. Again, the use of non-human creatures and forms of life such as animals should be conditioned and limited only for the satisfaction of vital desires for man’s existence and survival, such as for food and

shelter. Too, an appeal for human-nature conservationism is a salutary initiative that portrays compassion and concern for environmental deterioration. Similarly, the aspects of nature possessing economic values should be encouraged, preserved, protected, and given the widest possible support to hold common grounds with ecological restoration as propagated by conservationists such as Rousso-poulous (1993) who affirm that, “human-nature connection focuses on cost and benefit justifications to unveil modern human-centered rationalism” (pp. 285-286).

Furthermore, the preservation of the natural environment is significant and necessary, since nature is viewed as an ecosystem. Here, the extraction from nature for economic gains becomes a problematic issue. In order to ensure and enhance the continuous survival of a variety of non-human species, and the maintenance of the beautiful natural environment with all its natural endowments and particularities, adopting an ethical standpoint for the protection of nature for current glorification and appraisal or for future use is beneficial. If preservation is prioritized, then, in future, the importance of having preserved the ecosystem and its natural values will be more appreciated (Rolston, 1988: 111). A typical example is the practice of preserving plants today for future curative or medicinal values. Still, Policy-makers, stakeholders, Non-Governmental Organizations, Food and Agricultural Organization, should intensify reactions in various ways by providing public awareness on the values of the survival of useful organisms and other forms of life. This strategy involving sensitization on the vital role of nature to mankind, is gradually yielding fruits as African countries are being educated and sensitized to avoid the use of chemicals and actions that are detrimental to their environments. Finally, the provision of grants, sponsoring of scientific research related to the sources, nature, gravity, and values of environmental concerns should be facilitated in realizing more reliable and sound decisions related to ecological preservation and restoration. Various countries should intensify a more holistic and interactional means to moderate human-nature relations and spare the destruction of the natural world from extinction.

## 6. Conclusion

Globally, several governments are less worried about environmental education, political leaders are too tolerant by permitting the construction of houses in non-constructible areas which leads to countless deadly cases of landslides such as the cases of South Africa, after three days of heavy rainfall in April 2022, Nguouache landslide in Cameroon on 29 October 2019 and the most recent, the Mbankolo landslide in Cameroon of 8 October 2023, among others. The Anthropocene period has described humans as the principal geophysical force, possessing a praxeological role that gives them the power to modify and artificialize the environment and nature as they wish. Provoked by anthropocentrism and technological advancements, human actions towards the environment have triggered environmental crises of varied natures whose impacts are evident on a global context: climate change, extinction of species, natural disasters, degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity, pollution of the biosphere, drying up of natural lakes (for example Lake Chad), depletion of underground water level, sewage spills, shrinking of the ozone layer, over exploitation and use of water resources, soil degradation, among others. Currently, the epistemological discourse on the subject matter at stake is needs to be revisited and renewed, by extending its focus from an anthropocentric perspective to an ecocentric point of view, which paves the possibility of addressing the Cartesian technoprogressive utopia positioning humans as “Master and possessor of nature.” In a similar manner, the French philosopher and anthropo-sociologist Edgar Morin has developed an “ecologised way of thinking” based on three major pillars: First, the reintegration of our environment into our anthropological and social consciousness, second, the ecosystematic resurrection of the idea of nature and third, the decisive contribution of the biosphere to our planetary consciousness

Therefore, propagating theories and research based on a better understanding of ourselves, from the historical, cultural, political, and social contexts will eventually guarantee environmental sustainability, nature preservation and conservation. The urgent and perpetual quest for remediation of conflicts in this complex and dynamic world, paves the way for the introduction and intensification of environmental philosophy, social and political philosophy, which place humanity and democratic concerns at the forefront of social programs and policies. Given that experiences and nature differ from social and ecological realities, therefore, various situations require different peculiar remedies to environmental problems. The environment and nature deserve to be well taken care of, irrespective of the person or organ in charge. Therefore, humans are obligated to serve as catalyst by saving nature from extinction. If humans fail in this significant task of cohabiting tolerantly, accommodatingly, empathically and pacifically with nature, then, we (humans) should be held accountable for destroying what was meant to be preserved, protected, and saved especially for future generations.

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# The Meaning of Using the Name of a Child From the Bible in the Book of Genesis in the Jewish Bible According to Jewish Religious Literature

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## *Abstract*

In the article we go through on the broad field of knowledge, we presented the topic of reading names in the book of Genesis. We came to see that people's names express a connection to family and culture. We also saw that the name expresses mental contents and qualities, which connect the bearer of the name with a spiritual source. Later we reviewed all the characters in the book of Genesis that the scripture indicates the act of calling by name and from that the reciters of the names are also mentioned. As part of the study, we examined the reading of the name from different aspects and tried to explain in each case the connection between the reciter of the name and the subject of the name, and between the name itself and the effect of the name on the person who bears it. To reach conclusions, we divided all the cases of reading the name in Genesis into groups and then discussed each group's details separately and tried to find things in common between them.

*Keywords:* Judaism, Cain, Jacob, Radak, Malbim, Rambam, Bible, Genesis, Jewish literature.

### 1. Mothers call the child's name

#### 1.1 *Eve: Cain and Seth*

##### Cain

"And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and gave birth...and she said, I have bought a man..." It is not explicitly written who calls Cain by name, and simply, for example, as in the Ramban, it can be said that if Eve is the one who explains the name, then she is also the one who calls by name. However, the question still exists about the fact that in other sources it is explicitly stated who the reader and the explanation are, whereas in this source the scripture chose to give Eve's explanation without the indication that she was called by name (Bereshit Rabbah, Vilna Publishing House).

Rashi interprets the word "I bought," in Eve's explanation, as sharing, this means that up until now, G-d was creator and maker and now the man and the woman share in the creation of the child. If we discard Rashi's interpretation to interpretation of Cain's name, we can say that "Cain" means sharing (Rafel, 1966).

The Radak has a completely different opinion, and although it refers to the creation of Cain's birth by the verse "buys heaven and earth," he does not interpret Eve's words as participation in the birth, but on the contrary, Eve sees herself as an inventor and creator and

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therefore attributes the action to herself – “I bought” and perpetuates the acts in the name of her son. This is the way the “Hafetz Chaim” went and articulates it as “excessive hopes” because this name is a name of arrogance and Hava expresses the feelings of pride that throb in her through the reading of her son's name. Rabbi Hirsch also agrees with the opinion that there is in reading Cain's name, she feels self-conscious and adds in a poignant style that the pride inherent in the name is the one that caused Chava to distort her thinking and forget God, and therefore attributes the birth and the power given to her only to herself. Later in his words, Rashar continues and links the pride woven into Cain's name to his essence and actions. According to his interpretation, the name Cain does not mean sharing as the commentators above believed, but rather from the language of property rooted in the power of production. Cain sees himself as a creator and develops pride in property. Cain is a tiller of the land; he invests all his strength and energy in his property to the point of physical and spiritual enslavement in the pursuit of possessions and possessions. When the time comes to sacrifice and bring his possessions to his Creator, Cain finds it difficult to get the fruit of his labor out of his hands, so he gives casually and does not choose the best. This is how you can understand the reason why his offering is not accepted, not because of the nature of the grain he brought, but because he brought only grain and not himself. The purpose of the sacrifice is to bring man and God closer together, but Cain remains distant and enslaved to himself and his possessions (Kimhi, 2005).

A completely different interpretation refers to Cain's name in the sense of nurturing, from the word “nest” which expresses the protection and care that the bird gives to its chicks, and borrowing from the animal world, the word expresses the care that a parent gives to his child. It seems to us that this explanation for the name Cain is grammatically beautiful, but from a study of the verses and the explanation given by Eve, the interpretation does not imply that, what is more, it seems that until the word Cain received its meaning as cultivation, it went through several linguistic evolutions, as can be seen from Caspi's article, while the name Cain it is in a very early period of humanity and the development of language (Gordon, 2016).

According to the Midrash Sheth is called so because “from whom the world was founded,” and according to the Hezekoni explanation all those individuals, descendants of Cain, mentioned in chapter 4, were lost and mankind continued to exist. It seems to us that Hezekiah meant in his commentary that at the time of the flood, all the descendants of Cain and Noah and their seed that came out of the sea were lost, and a new human beginning began. Therefore, it seems that the name of Seth expresses a prophecy about the importance of Seth, but also imposes a curse on all Cain's descendants. The Hazekoni gives the account of the fact that Seth's name was called twice by both his mother and his father and explains that the name was called by Eve, so this is indicated with his birth, but in the list of relation when the sons are attributed from the fathers there the scripture indicates Adam as called by name. According to the simplification “shet” from the word to put, as in “for the sake of two of these in his midst” the Onkelos translation interprets Eve's words, “give me” – gave me, because God gave another son to Eve who replaced Abel.

Radek explains and expands the translation and says that God paid Eve with the birth of Seth, in exchange for killing Abel. If we examine the surface of things in comparison to the calling of Cain's name, then Eve sees the birth of Cain as her exclusive creation, and in his birth is expressed her power as a mother who brings life into the world, whereas This time in giving birth to Sheth she has a new insight and she sees the creation of the child as a partnership and perhaps recognizes the fact that her part is smaller than G-d's. She attributes the power to G-d and says that G-d gave her the extra son. Perhaps it can be said with some criticism that in the son she recognized His power God's power also existed and this son continued to make history, and in contrast to the son who attributed him to his power, his dynasty came to an end (Kamhi, 2005).

Kiel interprets the word “sheath” as a foundation, thus Adam and Eve indicated that it was the foundation of creation. He cites in his commentary the Netzav which says that Seth was

the purpose of creation, and thus he sees the birth of Seth as the seal of creation, and from then on creation unfolds with the powers inherent in its creation.

In the Kiel commentary, there is a reference to the various names of God mentioned in the reading of the names. When Cain's name is called, the name of God is mentioned, while when Seth's name is called, God's name is mentioned. Kiel explains that the use of God's name indicates the sentence, in which God made judgment on the creation of Eve and decided to reward her instead of Abel's loss. There is therefore in giving the name Seth a recognition of Eve's place compared to her pride in Cain's birth on the one hand, and the other hand, there is great pain over the loss of the son and his seed in the future, both of which are expressed in the name of the third son, Seth (Kiel, 1999).

## 2. Daughters of Lot: Ammon and Moab

Lot's daughters hurriedly leave Sodom at dawn, the beautiful square city, which overnight became a smoking pile of ruins. They settle in the cave together with their father Lot, leaving behind Amen, who became a salt commissioner, and their sons-in-law, whom they named for hours as a warning to the angels who came to save them. The daughters of Lot see before their eyes the world as a sword and think that the whole world has been destroyed as it was in the generation of the flood. The two daughters are pregnant by their father after they water him with wine, and at the end of several months, they give birth to two sons. The senior initiate of the idea calls her son Moab, and her younger sister, who also took part in the act, calls her son Amon. It is not clear whether when the boys were born, the father and the girls had already left the cave and discovered that they were not the only ones in the world, or whether the boys were born while they were still in the cave. It makes sense because at the time of the birth, the girls already knew that the world was not destroyed, since it was a matter of several months that required them to go out and look for food and even arrange for more comfortable living quarters.

The mother-sisters call their sons-brothers by name and do not add an explanation, although those who know the course of events understand the connection of the names to the formation of the children. The name Moab is clearer and, as it were, tells the story itself, in which the child was born from the mother's father. In the name of Ammon, you can find only a hint about the events of the event (Rofa, 2006).

Soforno writes that the daughters of Lot wanted to testify by naming their sons that their lineage was good and that they had conceived a decent man and therefore they were not ashamed of their sons. This interpretation sounds a bit cynical since the sons were born out of nakedness, but in the continuation of Soforno's interpretation, he explains, relying on the words of the Sages in the treatise of Nazir, that the daughters of Lot intended for the sake of heaven in their actions and not for the sake of nakedness. The girls thought that there were no more people left in the world as we explained above, and to sustain humanity they separated from their fathers (commentary of Soforno, 2005).

The Radak also insists on the lack of modesty revealed in the name of Moab and clarifies that the name Ammon only implies that his birth was from a close relative. We mentioned above that the mention of the act of calling by name is there to emphasize continuity, even here it seems that the daughters of Lot, for their part, intended to renew a dynasty that for them had been lost, what is more, the scripture emphasizes that from these two sons came dynasties of the peoples of Ammon and Moab which are also connected in the future with the fate of Israel (Kimhi, 2005).

### 3. Sons of Jacob

The complex family tract of the Jacob family begins to take shape the first time Jacob meets Rachel. In chapters 13-14 it is described that Jacob carries the two sisters Rachel and Leah and then their handmaids, Belha and Zilpah. Within the family encampment, great love is brought together against paralyzing hatred, fertility and birth against barrenness and death, hope against despair, activity against passivity, and connection against separation.

Leah, who first married Jacob, gives birth to four sons and stops giving birth, Rachel marries her slave Leah to Jacob, and she gives birth to two sons. Even Leah brings her slave Zelpa to Jacob and the slave also gives birth to two sons. All that time Rachel was barren. After the act of the uncles, Leah gives birth to two more sons and a daughter, and then finally Rachel also gives birth to her first child. The family leaves Haran, and on the way, Rachel gives birth to her second child. The tract of the births of Beit Jacob is coming to an end, but at the same time, you are also the tract of Rachel's grieving life.

Leah gave birth to Jacob's six sons and a daughter, but she named eight sons and her daughter. Among the sons' names, she also calls Zelpa's sons by name, and so does Rachel call her sons' names, but before that, she calls the names of Belha's sons. In the next unit, we will try to establish the meaning that the mothers cast by calling the names of their sons and the sons of the maidservants (Segal, 1938).

### 4. The sons of Leah and the sons of Zelpah

Reuven is the eldest son of Leah and Jacob. The scripture indicates that Leah was hated and because of that God opened her womb. According to the Sphorno, Leah feels that Jacob suspects her of being an accomplice to her father's cheating and she had a hand in the matter because she was considered barren and circumcision with Jacob was the way to get Leah married. Considering this, for her, the birth of sons symbolizes her purity from cheating. There is an allusion in Reuven's name, a declaration of her fertility, which for her symbolizes not only the physical condition and female ability but also the fact that the pregnancy and the birth remove from her the disgrace of Jacob's suspicion. Leah hopes that the birth of the sons will affect her marital relationship with Jacob, and in the names of the sons, she expresses the whispers of her heart (Sphorno commentary, 2005).

If it seems from the simple that Leah hopes for the birth of the sons and with each birth she wishes for a change, Rabbi Hirsch sees the names of Leah's first sons as a process. According to him, each name expresses an achievement that has already been achieved in the process whose goal is to reach Jacob's heart. The explanation that accompanies the names of the sons is not a future hope but symbolizes the change that has already taken place in Jacob and Leah's relationship. Leah feels that she and Jacob have come a long way in their relationship, and when Yehuda is born, she thanks God, because she feels that her husband's love is already given to her. Likewise, in the name of Zebulun, the Rasher interprets the word Zebul as the main and explains that Leah already sees her place in the family as the main one from the fact that she gave birth to most of the sons, and from Jacob's attitude towards her. It is precisely from the names of the sons that the feelings of love that were imbued towards Jacob are revealed, and in each child, she saw another floor added to the building of their love. "The names of the sons forever perpetuate all the values and possessions, which are the foundation of the Jewish home and the happiness of marriage," misleads Rashar, explaining that out of love for her husband, Leah saw before her eyes the lofty goal of both to produce offspring. Rashar Hirsch's interpretation puts in a different light the words of Leah and or give a new context to the children's names, and conveys to its readers the message about the importance of marriage in particular and the family unit in general (Hirsch, 2002).

Sages say that the mothers were prophesied by the Holy Spirit that Jacob would have twelve sons, and from them would come the nation of Israel. Rashi, following the Midrash, demands that each of Jacob's four wives should bear three children, and therefore after the birth of Levi, the third son, Leah Millah She did her duty and there will be no opening for her here, and now she hopes that Jacob is a woman who will appreciate her. Even in the same context, at the birth of Yehuda the fourth son, Leah gives thanks because she received a son more than what she should have given in her share. The prophecy about the birth of twelve tribes culminated in a sense of mission in the House of Jacob and tension on the part of the women. The birth of a son brought a sense of happiness and pride to the woman who gave birth, and on the other hand, it brought jealousy and anxiety to another. There seems to have been a sense of obligation on the one hand, and on the other, pride in being part of the establishment of the nation of Israel. The birth of children binds the mothers to the people of Israel.

The Holy Spirit that moved in Jacob's tents also left its mark on the children's names, and thus Radek writes that it was Jacob who named Levi by name, unlike the other children, because he saw in his Holy Spirit that Levi would come forth as God's servants, which made him very happy with this son. Compared to the joy it brought the prophecy about Jacob when Reuben, Shimon, and Levi were born, Leah saw in the Holy Spirit that wicked people would come out of them and therefore did not give thanks to God, and only when the fourth son was born she give thanks to God and named him Judah.

The desire to build the House of Israel was so strong, that Rachel and Leah were ready to give up their handmaids and give Jacob wives. Zelpa, Leah's slave, gave birth to a son, but Leah calls the baby's name, not the biological mother. Leah calls Ben Gad, which means luck, but on the other hand, Spurno interprets the name as betrayal. In the Name of the Son, Leah alludes to her complex situation in which the pregnancy betrays and deceives her: at first, she was barren, and God opened her womb and here she is again barren who stopped giving birth and therefore had to give her slave, who would bear sons to Jacob. Although the Hezkoni understands that Leah expresses her feelings in the names of Zilpah's sons, but unlike the Soforno who attributes the feelings to her biological condition, the Hezkoni reflects her feelings towards Jacob. He also clarifies the name Gad from the language of betrayal and interprets that although Leah was the one who placed her slave under the wings of her husband, she had the foresight that Jacob would not come to accept her sacrifice and would not carry the slave and at the birth of Zilpah's second son, Leah still bears the sorrow and grief and praises herself for agreeing to bring her slave into their home (Morah Hizkoni, 2005).

##### 5. Rachel's sons and Belha's sons

Yosef, the long-awaited son, whose birth Rachel was so looking forward to, was born to Jacob after ten sons. Rachel calls out his name, and unlike the rest of Jacob's sons, whom Leah explains their names, Rachel is not satisfied with one explanation, but explains, calling out the name and giving another explanation. And she conceived and gave birth to a son and said, "God has gathered my shame, and she called his name Yosef, meaning, Yosef, the Lord has given me another son" (Segal, 1938).

The question is, why was his name Yosef and not Asaf? The reason is that the name Yosef interweaves within it the two meanings that express the feelings that flutter near her: on the one hand, the joy that she is no longer barren, and on the other hand, a longing for another child. Rashi adds that the desire for another child brought with it a prayer for the twelfth son, who will fall to Rachel's lot to give birth to him.

The Rashbam's question raises bewilderment about the contexts between the names given by the mothers and the names themselves. Perhaps it can even be said that the need for an

additional interpretation beyond the interpretation given by the mothers themselves to the sons' names raises linguistic-grammatical difficulties regarding the compatibility between a name and its meaning according to the Bible (The Rashbam commentary, 2005). The Soforno already addresses this difficulty and says that the names given by our holy witnesses Rachel and Leah are not new names but ancient names that were already known and given in previous generations, but that they adapted the names according to the event they wanted to indicate in the reading of the name. According to Soforno, there is no linguistic match between the name and the mothers' explanation, but the sound of the name, or its root, hints at the meaning that the mothers wanted to attribute to that son when reading the name (Soforno's interpretation, 2005).

Rachel wants to give birth to Jacob a son, but her expectation is not fulfilled. While her sister gives birth to four sons one after the other, jealousy sprouts in Rachel. Rachel offers Jacob her slave and she gives birth to a son, whose name she calls Rachel. Although Rachel was not the biological natural mother of the Bnei Belha, she sees herself as their spiritual mother and therefore calls them by their name, thus she also has a practical contribution to Beit Ya'akov – in the education of the children (Galily & Petkova, 2022).

The connection of Rachel to the birth of Belaha is given in Rashi in the interpretation of the name "Naphtali". The interpretation itself is not original by Rashi, but he cites the interpretation of Menachem ben Sarok, and thus he explains the root of the name as a convolution of two elements that by the convolution They connect. According to Rashi, Rachel expresses this connection with the family by reading the name of Belha's son.

Rashi himself interprets the name Naphtali as "stubbornness" and cites as proof the pair of words "Akash and Fataaltal" as synonyms. According to Rashi, the reading of the name by Rachel emphasizes her stubbornness by unceasing prayer for the child. This stubbornness, which Rashi points to as a miracle, can also explain the bringing of Belaha to Jacob, the desire to give Jacob a son in any way, even at the cost of bringing a slave girl to her husband (Rofa, 2016) (Lau, 2014).

The Radak interprets the name "Naphtali" as strength and explains that when one thing is linked with another, its strength is double, like a fuse made from the interweaving of several threads. Rachel sees the son of her servant as her son, and in his birth, she feels that she is creating something strong together with Her sister. In contrast to Radek, who wants to see Rachel's intention as sharing and unity with her sister, Rashi sees the name as an expression of the desire to be equal to her sister and thus there is some expression of competition (Kimhi, 2005).

The Melbim also cites Menachem ben Sarok's interpretation of Naftali's name and explains the interpretation according to his understanding. The Melbim explains that Naftali is a bracelet, made of two fuses, but unlike a radak, he uses this image to express the fierce rivalry that takes place between Rachel and Leah. When a person wants to bring down another person, he pins his opponent to him in a twist and overcomes him, just as in our case Leah prevails over Rachel. Rachel thereby expresses her wonder to the Sovereign of the Worlds why her sister is the one who prevails over her, to which Melbim answers Rachel doesn't get an answer. In this way, he gives additional meaning to the name Naphtali – secrets that Rachel understands that there are divine thoughts and secrets stored in the divine moves (Malbiim, 1956).

Rabbi Hirsch also sees the name Naftali as an expression of Rachel and Leah's struggle, but he does not see this struggle as a human struggle arising from destructive feelings of jealousy and anger, but as a divine struggle of the Holy: "Naphtoli of God I became involved with my sister," and this to be part of the spiritual construction of the people of Israel (Hirsch, 2002).

## 6. Yehuda's wife: Onan and her

Rabbi Ovadia Sofarno says that the name Shelah is an inappropriate name and expresses Bat Shua's disappointment that Yehuda was not present at the time of his son's birth, so she calls him "Shelah" as in "You will not deceive me" (2 Kings 4:20). This interpretation of the Spurno shows that the giving of the name by the woman is an opportunity for her to express her feelings and thoughts towards her husband. In this interpretation, the magnitude of the power of the name's role must be underestimated since it symbolizes a specific emotional point in the parents' marital life and does not refer to the child and his mission.

This matter may show how much the role of calling by name depends on the person reading, because if Yehuda had been called by name and not his Canaanite wife, he would have been given another meaningful name, but still Yehuda chose not to object to the name given by Bat Shua (Sofarno commentary, 2005).

In this article, we reviewed the reading of names given by women. The women are mothers who named their sons, except for Rachel and Leah who also gave names to the sons of their slaves. Eve was the first woman in the world, the first to give birth, and she is also the first to give a name to her sons. We brought the reading of Eve to the discussion and from that we tried to wonder about the connection between Eve's act of giving birth and the connection with her son, and from that, we sailed into a discussion about the connection between Cain's name and his actions. Eve is a partner in creation through the process of giving birth and creating life, and therefore calls her son Cain, which according to Rashi means sharing.

The Radak points to Eve as arrogant, who takes upon herself alone the power of creation by calling her son like this, this opinion is also joined by Rabbi Greenberg and Rabbi Hirsch, who preceded him, and adds that the name Eve gave influenced the behavior of Cain who was arrogant and thereby also killed the His brother (Kimhi, 2005) (Hirsh, 2005).

Caspi brought a linguistic interpretation of the meaning of nurturing and thus Eve wanted to express her obligations towards her son, we did not accept Caspi's interpretation. Next, we brought the midrash that explains the meaning of the name as a basis, that Sheth was the basis of humanity (Caspi, 1991).

Hezkoni's commentary completes the midrash and says that a prophecy was thrown to Eve in which she saw the descendants of Sheth in contrast to the destruction of the sons of Cain, her firstborn son. Onclus interprets the name Sheth as meaning giving and Abaz who interprets the translation continues the interpretive line and claims that Eve saw Sheth as payment from God for the killing of Cain (Hezkoni Commentary, 2005) (Ibn-Ezra Commentary, 2005).

The interpretation of Kiel weaves the first move we mentioned in the name of Cain and ends with the name of Seth and says that Eve went through an internal personal process out of the crisis of a bereaved mother. Cain's name reveals her pride in her procreative power, and Seth's name reveals her pain for Cain that she lost and received Seth in return (Kiel, 1999).

The daughters of Lot are called by the name of their sons who were born to their father Lot. The names Moab and Ammon call out the story of the deed succinctly and for those who know the story, the names are a constant reminder. Lot's daughters, according to Sofarno, wanted to imply that the sons' attribution is good and therefore imply this in the name of the sons (Sofarno commentary, 2005).

Rashi and Radek seek to explain that giving these names expresses a deficient inner content that manifests as a lack of modesty by giving a name that indicates the act of pregnancy, and Rashi adds that the lack of modesty associated with the names of the sons is revealed in the sons themselves and the generations, they raised after them (Kimhi, 2005).

The fourth mother that the Torah mentions as calling by name is Leah. According to the hash, it seems that Leah vents her sorrow and expresses her happiness, alternatively, by the names she names her children and the children of the handmaids. Soforno in his commentary on Reuven's name shows that the giving of the name was a stage for Leah to prove to the people and the crowd that the suspicions attributed to her regarding her barrenness and thus her cooperation with her deceitful father, are false suspicions (Soforno Commentary, 2005).

Rabbi Hirsch uses Leah's sayings to outline a path of education and to show that in marriage there is a need to work on the relationship, and the names Leah gives her children indicate milestones achieved in this process. We brought the sages who state that mothers were given the Holy Spirit upon the birth of twelve tribes, and following the prophecy they felt an obligation to build the nation of Israel, which affected the names they gave their children (Hirsch, 2002).

The Radak also attributes the calling of the names to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that came upon Leah, Rachel, and Jacob and explains that the names were given in the name of what was to happen with the sons who were born. We saw that Leah is the one who calls the names of the sons of Zilpah her slave (Kimhi, 2005).

Soforno, who refers to Leah's situation in his commentary, as we have already seen in his previous commentary, shows that Leah describes her attitude towards the female personal power and describes him as a traitor, calling her slave boy Gad. Even the Hezkoni interprets the name as betrayal, but not Leah's towards herself, but Jacob's towards her. Thus, giving the names according to Hezkoni expresses Leah's continuous pain and sorrow (Soforno interpretation, 2005).

Rachel also calls by the names of her sons and the names of her servants. But in a complete difference, the order is different, first, she calls the names of the slaves and then the names of her sons. To put it simply, it seems to us that Rachel expresses her distress in the name of Bnei Belha in that she cannot give birth on her own and needs the help of her family. After the birth of her son Yosef, Rachel testifies to the shame she felt until his birth and longs for another son. It is this hope and prayer that was chosen to be expressed in the name of her eldest son.

The Rashbam explains that the two meanings: the joy of the existing and the longing for another son, are both expressed in the name Yosef. The Sphorano states in his commentary that the names given by the mothers were not their original creation but were names that were already known, and the mothers adapted their hearts and hopes with names that could allude to Yes, but there is no perfect match between the name and the meaning they attributed to it (commentary of the Rashbam, 2005).

Rabbi Hirsch says that the names allowed her to express the connection between her and the slaves, in that she was the one who gave them the names, took it upon herself to be their spiritual shepherd charged with their education and thus be practically connected to the building of the spiritual house of the House of Jacob and cover her inability to be a partner in the physical building. Rashi also sees the reading of the names of the slaves as a connection and comparison with Leah (Hirsch, 2002).

The Melbim also interprets Menachem ben Sarok regarding the name Naftali but sees the name as an expression of a struggle between the two sisters. Rashi himself interprets that Rachel wanted to express her stubbornness through her prayers, thereby showing that her stubbornness paid off, and Radek sees the name as Rachel's expression to show the power that Leah and Rachel have together as partners in building the nation of Israel. For the sake of comparison, we emphasized that Rashi does not see the partnership between the sisters, but a comparison between them that indicates a struggle. We noticed another type of struggle in Rabbi Hirsch's commentary, where he shows that there is indeed a struggle between Rachel and Leah,

but it is a divine spiritual struggle over a sacred matter, and thus the calling of the names comes to reflect the scene of the struggle of the mothers (Malbim, 1956).

The sixth and last mother is less well known, and she is Bat-Shua, Yehuda's wife who calls the name of her third son "Shela". We have not found many interpretations referring to the name or the mother who gave it. We saw that the Sphorno writes about the name which is not appropriate and expresses her disappointment with her husband Yehuda. In addition, a note is added that Yehuda had to change the name. We may be able to learn that there is the opportunity to delegate a mission and meaning to the child and there is the possibility to leave a mark on him of a fleeting and meaningless event for the child (Soforno interpretation, 2005).

In the commentators' reference to the reading of the name among the ancestors, it is evident that there is a greater reference to the matter of continuity. The name expresses the continuation and belonging to the family line. Another interpretive facet is the name as indicating an unusual and significant event that happened near the birth or hope for a change that will happen. These aspects are also found in some of the commentaries on the reading of names by mothers. What is not found in the calling of names with ancestors is a personal expression. Most commentators see the calling of names by mothers to express themselves. The personal expressions can be divided into several groups, where there are commentators who in one place will interpret in a certain way depending on the situation or the woman calling by name, and there will be commentators whose interpretive way is consistent: Onkalos,

Rashi and Radak, bring in their commentaries a reference to the fact that the calling of the name by mothers gives an expression to the relationship between the mother and God. In addition to this method of interpretation, Rashi shows that sometimes the woman expresses her character traits and personality by calling her name, this way of interpretation can also be found in the commentaries of Radek, Soforno, the "Hafetz Chaim," the Naziv, Kiel and Caspi.

The Radak and our commentators show in their interpretations that in addition to personal traits, sometimes the woman expresses a personal process or a personal event that happened to her, through the reading of the name. R.D.K. and Sphorno are not the only ones who interpret in this way, and we can see a similar interpretation in the commentaries of Menachem Sarok, Malbim, and Rasher Hirsch. Calling the name is also an expression to express a connection with a certain figure, as we also see in the Hezkoni interpretation. We also cannot ignore the fact that there are also interpretations that emphasize that the mothers were imbued with a mission, which they also expressed in the child's name, which can be seen in Rash's interpretation. Yes, but this is also their private mission. We can summarize and say that, unlike fathers, mothers also see the reading of a name as an opportunity to express their personal feelings and personal events that they are experiencing (Porush Spurno, 2005) (Hirsh, 2002) (Melbiim, 1956) (Hafetz-Haim, 1991) (Kiel, 1999) (Caspi, 1991).

## 7. Calling the prenatal name

Isaac and Ishmael are the only ones in the Book of Genesis whose names were given to them even before they were born. Both are Abraham's sons from different women. Yitzchak the son of Sara the mistress and Ishmael the son of Hagar the slave. There is an abysmal difference between them precisely in the matter of their death being commanded even before they were born. It seems that Hagar is the first to be called by name. So far, we have seen that the name was given by the parents out of various considerations, but in any case, the reading of the name was the property of the parents' right without external intervention.

## 8. Ishmael

The 16th chapter of Genesis is told about the calling of the name to Ishmael: “And the angel of the Lord said to her, “Behold, you have conceived, and you will give birth to a son, and you will call his name Yahweh Yahweh, for the Lord has heard your affliction” (v. 11) ... “And Hagar gave birth to Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son whom Hagar bore Ishmael” (verse 15). Hagar flees from the servants of her mistress and the angel of God finds her at the eye of the water in the desert. The angel orders Hagar to return and fast under her mistress, and he informs her that a son will come out of her pregnancy, and orders her to name him Ishmael. A few verses later the scripture says that indeed Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram calls the son Ishmael. Rashi says that although Abram did not hear Hagar’s commandment about the name, by the power of the Holy Spirit that ministered to him, he named his son Ishmael. This interpretation emphasizes the importance of the match between the name and the child, that the angel bothered to come to Hagar and tell her the name, and not only that. But the matter was so important that Abram, in his holy spirit, also accepted the match between this name and his son.

Even the Soforno insists on this difference and says that there was a match between the name of the child on the part of both of his parents, and therefore the scripture emphasizes twice that the child is Hagar’s since she was commanded by the angel to name it, and together with that, in the end, Abram called the child’s name because for him, too, it was an appropriate and proper name. The Radak, in contrast to the previous interpretations, does not talk about compatibility between the parents’ wishes but says that Hagar told Abram about the mission and he called by the same name, and the Radak continues and explains that sometimes when the mother calls by one name and the father calls by another name, it seems that there was importance here because of the words of The angel that the child will be called by one name, therefore Hagar shares with Abram so that there will be no other name than the name she commanded. From the Ramban, it appears that the agreement regarding the name between Abram and Hagar stems from another reason. Hagar was indeed commanded and she should have called by her son’s name, but she was afraid to call by name since she is a slave and it is not in honor of Abram the master that she should call her son by name, and that is why she told him about the revelation of the angel, and he called by name, because he respected God’s word. With Rachel and Leah, we note that they called by the names of the sons of the handmaids, and it is possible that this was customary, and Sarah, as Hagar’s mistress, expected her to name the child, since she wanted to be born from her and that part of the process, and yet it is not Sarah the mistress who calls by name, nor the slave mother who calls by name but Avraham the father calls by name. It seems that the calling of the name by Avraham himself prevents further discord between the two women, whose relationship is already unstable.

Ishmael is given his name by God’s angel who informs Hagar and orders her to give the name Ishmael. The angel tells Hagar that God heard her prayer, and indeed she returns to Abraham’s house, and in fact to her torture by her mistress, but she also returns with a promise to the child that she will bless him. In this child there is evidence that God heard her, this child ties her by blood to his master Avraham, who himself names the child as a kind of consent to connection and sharing in procreation. This child also ties her to the Hebrew nation. Ishmael is indeed not the spiritual successor of Abraham, but he will always see himself as the firstborn son who bears the sign of the covenant that his descendants also bear. Ishmael is the first that God commands to call him by name even before his birth, his brother from his father will be the second (Hirsh, 2002).

## 9. Isaac

In chapter 17, he blesses Abraham because he will have a son and commands him to name him Isaac even before Sarah was pregnant: “And God said, But Sarah your wife will bear you

a son, and you will call his name Isaac...” (Ps. 19)... “And indeed this is what his father calls him: And Abraham called the name of his son born to him, whom Sarah bore to him Isaac” (21:3)

Compared to Ishmael, no explanation is mentioned for the name as it was in the commandment on Ishmael’s name, that God heard the poverty of the Hagar. Although laughter appears several times in the context of the birth of the long-awaited son, the scripture itself does not directly link the laughter mentioned earlier and the name. After her birth, Sarah says: “God made me laugh, everyone who hears will laugh at me” (21:6), but this could be a connotation that arose in Sarah’s heart and a connection between the name that had already been given to her feelings because the son’s name was first given by G-d and the Torah No explanation is attached to this. The Ramban says that Isaac was named after Abraham's laughter in that situation, and this proves that this laughter was positive out of awe and not out of contempt.

Both Abraham and Jacob had a change in their name, while Isaac is the only one among them whose name did not change, which is because Isaac is the only one among them whom G-d Himself called by name.

Rashi states that the name Yitzchak contains hints: 10 – Ten trials that Abraham experienced. 3 – Ninety years during which Sarah was barren until the birth of her son. 8 – He was eight days old when he was circumcised. K – Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born. relate to the birth of Isaac, the son who will continue Abraham’s legacy. Abraham was blessed to beget Isaac and from him, the nation of Israel would emerge, by being faithful and withstanding all ten trials. The birth of Sarah at the age of ninety is a miracle, for Isaac to be born from her a special miracle had to be performed because Sarah already testifies to herself that biologically she is unable to give birth. It is circumcision that binds Abraham’s descendants to their divine destiny, and Isaac is also the first to be circumcised at eight days old, thus beginning a tradition that has lasted to this day for thousands of years. These hundred years are the strength of faith of Avraham in God, to wait all these years until the very son that God intended to be his successor was born to him.

Below it can be noticing the differences between the reading of Ishmael’s name and the reading of Isaac’s name:

Table 1.

Remarks	Isaac	Ishmael	
	God	Angel of God	<b>through revelation</b>
	Abraham	Hagar	<b>who commands</b>
With Ishmael a direct explanation and with Yitzchak it is understood according to the context.	fell on his face and Isaac...	”Because God heard...”	<b>An explanation for that</b>
	Abraham	Abram	<b>The reader is named</b>
	-	Wild Adam, son of the Egyptian Hagar	<b>Other names, nicknames</b>
	Sarah is still barren	Hagar is already pregnant	The time of revelation

The names of Yitzchak and Ishmael are names commanded by G-d and yet what a difference. A command that comes from revelation and prophecy is not like a command that comes from God’s messenger. There is a great difference between a command revealed by a slave running

away from her mistress, after relieving her, and a command revealed by the father of the nation. These differences have the power to indicate a fundamental and essential difference between the two names. Abraham's name illuminates another difference, which we will discuss later, but there is no doubt that there is a difference in the process and in the spiritual state of Abraham when he calls his firstborn son by name, while he is still Abraham, and when he calls the son of his elders as Abraham – the father of many Gentiles. When the angel appears to Hagar, she knows about her pregnancy, and perhaps even because of the pregnancy she dared to relieve her mistress, so now she runs away. Yitzchak's name was given as part of the promise that there would be a pregnancy, because, at the commandment of God, Sarah was still barren and even old. The name hovers over all the flaws and problems, and seals that there will be a son in a year and his name will be Yitzchak.

We saw, therefore, two figures whose names were given by God, both figures placed after them glorious nations and yet, the difference between the figures and the nations is great. Ishmael was expelled from Abraham's house for his actions, and even though he repented, he was not allowed to continue Abraham's legacy, while Isaac followed his father's ways and even worshiped the altar (HaCohen, 1978).

#### 10. Change of name

It is stated in the Midrash: "Rabbi Eliezer says: Three things nullify a hard decree, and these are: repentance, prayer, and charity. Rabbi Yossi said: even if the name is changed." (Emphasis mine. CZ)

According to the Midrash, changing the name has the power to change a decree, then You can click and say that a name equals a decree, that is, a given name decrees a person's fate, and hence changing the name can change fate. This Sage article points to the possibility that a person can be passive and only changing his name will bring about a revolution in him, without him investing efforts to bring about the change. On the other hand, it is also possible to understand that changing a name is an inclusive name for an internal change that a person makes, just as repentance, charity, and prayer are long-term actions and create a process and not a one-time event (Samuel, 2003).

#### 11. Abraham and Sarah

The name Abram, even if the meaning of the name is not clear, it is a Mesopotamian name since his parents were from Mor Kashidim. The name is related to the Mesopotamian culture, therefore if Abram bears the name of his cradle, he is part of the Mesopotamian culture with which his name is associated. Changing the name from Abram to Avraham does not create a substantial linguistic change in the explanation of the name, and the explanation given "because the father of many Gentiles has given you" does not answer the change made in the name thanks to the addition of God, the name is changed, but the new linguistic meaning is not understood. Some believe that by adding the letter "H" a literary adaptation is created for the phrase "and magnify your name" but this does not indicate a change of essence.

With Avraham, it seems that there is a frame change in all of Avraham's attributes according to the commandment "Go go..." The change that occurred with the last experience is fundamental and personal, and only after that comes the name change. Circumcision constitutes a physical change that completes the essential change that Abraham makes. Avraham completely detaches himself from his past and joins his body and name to another life, in which "the whole world consisted of one transition, and it is another transition."

The name change came to indicate Avraham's disconnection from the culture around him. The disconnection is in the mental and mental-religious sense, which is also expressed in a

physical change by the word. There is a combination between Abraham's actions and his stubborn and clear following of God, and at the same time God leads him and commands him to change his place, and after a process, also his name. Changing Abraham's name is so fundamental that the Gemara says that one should not call Abraham by his former name.

According to the surrounding the changed name is a symptom of the change and not the cause of the change. According to him, it is so necessary to forbid calling Avraham by his old name because in changing Avraham's name there is a disconnection from the past and the granting of a new essence, and if there is a return to the old name, then this is not a complete disconnection. Because of the change in the soul, it is necessary to change the name, when Abram and Sherry worshiped God and walked before Him, it is necessary to adopt a new name to them.

The meaning of the name Sarah comes from the word "lady" (Samuel, 2003; Segal, 1938).

Rashi claims that Yeschah mentioned in chapter 11 is Sheri and the meaning of the name Yeschah is princess, which means that the two names have a similar meaning (Hirsh, 2002).

Kiel interprets Karshi as the language of sovereignty and royalty and he cites as a reference the word *sarru* from the Akkadian language which means "king". Changing the name from Sherry to Sarah did not significantly change the name from a linguistic point of view, but rather expanded the meaning from Beloved of Sharara over her people from Chalcia, to Beloved of Sharara over all nations. Thus, it is stated in the Midrash that the name Sarai expresses greatness as well, but greatness and a limited reign about her "nation", whereas now Sarah is required to be greatness about all the nations and therefore a change in her name is required. The change of Sarah's name came to confirm her "majesty" over her slave and thereby on Her faith in God's promise, that Abraham's seed would be from her. The name change expresses a change of essence from a submissive and passive woman to a woman who takes responsibility and demands the fulfillment of the divine promise (Kiel, 1999).

So, we saw about Abraham and Sarah that their names were changed by God in His honor, and changing their names indicates an internal-cultural change that they made, and from the essential change that they went through, it was necessary to change their names, like a hammer blow on the process of changing their personalities. The change is not in the name itself and by giving a completely different literal meaning, but the change is the very intervention of God in their name and the commandment not to call them by their former name from now on forever. Adding or replacing a letter in the original name does not necessarily change the explanation for the name, but the very change constitutes a symbolic change indicating a fundamental change (Segal, 1938).

We will see the name change of their grandson Jacob to Israel, and we will try to find out whether the name change represents the same ideas we saw above.

## 12. Jacob

Jacob's name changes twice. The first time (Bereishit Lev, 29) by God's angel during a struggle, and the second time (Bereishit La, 10) by God, when he appeared to him in Bethel on his return to Canaan. The first time, the angel adds an explanation to the name: "Because with God and with people you will be able..." Whereas the second time God changes the name without giving any explanation.

Rashi explains the name "Israel" and says that if up until now the blessings were indirectly given to Jacob, by deception, from now on the blessings will come in abundance and with honor by an open face. According to this, changing the name of Jacob also indicates a difference in his way of acting, and in the way in which God guides him (Hirsch, 2002). The Radak on Ether differentiates between the two times and says that the first time Israel was called by the

angel, it was good news and not a commandment, and therefore the angel says, “No more Jacob shall be your name” whereas when God revealed himself for Jacob it was absolute: “And he shall call his name Israel” (Kimhi, 2005).

The name change expresses a change in essence from a private person and a family man to the father of the nation, but it also seems that the initial meaning is not canceled, and Jacob remains the man of the family and adds another layer to his identity, being the father of the nation. The name Jacob was given for an event that occurred at the time of his birth. Jacob was born with his hand grasping the heel of his elder brother, while the name Israel does not indicate a previous event but encodes with it the future that will be discovered later by his descendants bearing the name of Jacob. If we dig deeper, we can notice that changing Jacob’s name for the second time takes place shortly before the birth of Rachel, whose birth will complete the number of sons to twelve, thus laying the foundation for the nation of Israel, and Jacob will turn from the private man of the family into the father of the Israeli nation, who will also be named after him.

It is worth noting that in contrast to Abraham whose name was changed and henceforth appears only under his new name, Jacob’s name is mentioned several times and not only under his new name Israel. To this day we use the former name of Jacob, the father of the nation, and what’s more, the Torah continues to mention the name of Jacob quite a few times, and this name is repeated in the prophets and the scriptures. Sages have already maintained that even though Jacob’s name has been changed, both names are still used: “As it comes to him, and your name will no longer be called Jacob... The name of Jacob will not be destroyed, but Jacob will add to Israel, Israel is the main, and Jacob will take care of it.”

When the name Israel is the primary name, while the name Jacob is a secondary name, beyond ranking, the Sages convey the message that there is no prohibition to use the name Jacob as a name that there is a prohibition to call by the previous name of Abraham. Ibn Ezra, in his interpretation of the verse “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob,” adds the word “alone” and it means from its interpretation that the name Jacob will no longer be the only and exclusive name, but the name Israel will be added to it. Rabbi Hananel does not see the need to add the word but explains that the word “more” in the verse means “only” and therefore the verse must be understood because from now on it will not be read His name is not only Jacob but also Israel, and for this reason he brings in his commentary additional sources that prove his opinion (Samuel, 2003).

Segal in his comprehensive article brings several opinions and hypotheses to the phenomenon that Jacob’s names appear alternately, but he rejects all the opinions and gives strong opinions about it. At the end of the matter, he claims that the inconsistent use of Jacob’s names stems from literary aesthetics, and there is no logical explanation for this, that there is a lofty idea behind it. Although Segal’s words are convincing regarding the other opinions presented in his article, after such an in-depth discussion his opinion is also not convincing, what is more, from our point of view the writing of the Torah does not come to satisfy any aesthetic side and not just a literary idea. From a comparative study of the verses between the change of Abraham’s name and the change of Jacob’s name, it seems that we have found another difference. With Abraham, the opening is “he shall not call...” and then comes the commandment “and your name shall be Abraham...” With Jacob the wording is different: “And G-d said to him your name is Jacob...” and under the word Jacob there is the sense of Athanatha and only then does the scripture continue and says, “Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel will be your name and his name will be called Israel.” From the simplicity of the scripture, it can be understood that his name remains Jacob and God agrees with this and adds to him the additional name which, as the Sages say, will be the main name or the one with the main meaning (Segal, 1938).

### 13. Esau

In this chapter Esau's name is mentioned: "...therefore he called his name Edom" (verse 3). It is not written in the Bible that he changed his name to Edom, but it seems that the nickname "Edom" was added to him, and his descendants and his place are named after the nickname and not after the name of his cradle – Esau.

It is interesting that even before mentioning Esau's nickname, the explanation appears in the same verse. Compared to his twin brother Israel, whose name was changed with a view to the future, in the change that will be with his people and his seed after him, Esau's name is changed following an event that does not elevate Esau to a miracle of heroism and glory. Moreover, the change of name came after he sold his birthright in exchange for the lentil seed, whose color he bears his name, and thus the change of name probably indicates a decrease in his status and not an increase like his brother (Samuel, 2003; Segal, 1938).

### 14. Benjamin

Benjamin was called "Ben-Oni" by his mother, just as the other names of Jacob's sons were called by their mothers, but this is the first time we read of a reaction on the part of Jacob to a name from one of his sons' names, and not only that, but his intervention comes to push the name that mother Rachel gave to her son and to give him the name "Benjamin". Jacob sees the name Rachel gave as a bitter and difficult name, so he prevents Benjamin from the fate attached to that name. It means from his words that giving the name influences his son's fate in the rest of his life. The other names of his sons, even if there is an explanation behind the name that is not necessarily negative, the name itself could be interpreted differently.

The two names given to Benjamin reflect the two events that happened at the same time: Rachel's death and Benjamin's birth. Rachel pronounces her son's imminent death in her son's name and says "Ben-Oni" meaning the son of my sorrow and my sorrow (and perhaps even my strength, since she gave him and invested in this birth all the last strength of her life.) Yaakov sees the death of his beloved wife and hears the fluttering of her last words in which she calls her son's name, But Jacob also sees the birth as a reflection of the loss of his beloved wife and he also commemorates his wife in his son's name. In doing so, he elevates life to a miracle, not despair, awakens hope, and covers grief and sorrow (Samuel, 2003).

According to the Ramban, the name "Ben-Oni" is ambiguous: Oni = my sorrow, but also Oni = my strength. Jacob does not change the name but emphasizes and gives validity to the meaning of strength and thus preserves the name given by Rachel, and at the same time emphasizes its positive meaning. On the other hand (Commentary of the Ramban, 2005), the Radak sees the name Benjamin as a change from the previous name given by Rachel and thus also changes its meaning, and explains that Benjamin means the beloved son and adds to this an explanation, that he was born in the old age of Jacob. This interpretation of the Radak puts a question mark regarding the name given by Rachel and Jacob's relationship with Rachel, and there is even in his commentary to belittle his appreciation for Rachel and preserve her memory in the name of their common son (Kimchi, 2005).

David ben Raphael Haim HaCohen analyzes Benjamin's name and strives to get to the root of the words "on" and "right". He shows that two words have additional ancient meanings: the word "On" is interpreted as deception and the word Benjamin is interpreted as the language of an oath. The priest links the two meanings to the event that connects Rachel and Jacob with Rachel's death and is immortalized in Benjamin's name. When Laban chases Jacob and accuses him of stealing his God. Yaakov denies the act and even uses the language of an oath to strengthen his words. The therapies were at Rachel's. Both Jacob and Rachel understand the meaning of this, they attach great importance to Jacob's oath. When Rachel takes her last breaths, she doesn't want

Jacob to feel guilty about her death, so she states on behalf of the child that she cheated on her father and that she is to blame for her death. According to the priest's interpretation, Jacob is not ready to accept Rachel's sacrifice and he takes the responsibility for her death on himself and calls on Benjamin, thus making it clear that it was his oath that overcame his beloved wife. Beyond the fact that this interpretation is exciting, it explains why it was so important for Jacob to change the name and explains why there is no explanation in the scriptures for Benjamin's names. It seems that this has some of the intimacy that the scripture leaves for Jacob and Rachel, rather the silence and the folding of the words expands the size of the sacrifice. Benjamin's two names, and the very change of name, express the special connection between Rachel and Jacob (HaCohen, 1978).

#### 15. Joseph

After Yosef solves Pharaoh's dreams and gives him advice on how to manage his kingdom before and during the famine, Pharaoh calls him "Tefnat Panach."

Ramban – The meaning of the name "reveals the north", and this name is not Egyptian but Hebrew (the Ramban raises the possibility that Pharaoh asked Joseph to translate the name into the language of the land of Canaan, and another possibility is that Pharaoh knew the language of the land of Canaan and called Joseph that way. Later, Joseph was not called by this name but by his name Yosef, this word comes to strengthen the opinion that changing this name to Joseph is to show Pharaoh's ownership of him. Before Pharaoh stands a wise man, who is about to cause a coup in his country, and therefore Pharaoh feels the need to show his superiority over Yosef in the fact that the name is changed. There is This is the main part of our work, but it is interesting to examine the question of whether the lack of assimilation of the name shows that Pharaoh failed in his desire to surpass Joseph. (Kamhi, 2005).

According to "Da'at Makra" the name indicates a significant change that applies to the status of the reader, and the name Tsefnat Panach is translated, and it means a person to whom all hidden things are visible. The name change came from the Pharaoh trying to prove that Joseph's ascension was due to him, but Joseph for his part sees his greatness as part of a divine move, and the name change has no influence on him, and perhaps that is also why it does not appear once more in the reading of the name given by the Pharaoh (Kiel, 1999).

In this part, we delved into the phenomenon of name change in the book of Genesis. Avraham and Sarah's name change came to them by supreme order and from now on they are called by these names only. The change of name indicates the overall essential change that the couple went through individually and together. A change that manifests itself in their place of residence and by this, they undergo a cultural change, but do not take on the Canaanite culture but show exclusive loyalty to God. The name is a final stamp for the change already made. Jacob's name was also changed by divine revelation twice. Once by an angel and the second time God reveals himself to him and calls his name, Israel. We compared the two times and insisted on the difference between Abraham's and Sarah's complete name change, compared to Jacob whose original name and his new name both continue to appear in suits. Esau's name change does not bring dramatic changes, as well as it is not specified who changes his name and if it is indeed a name change or a nickname that is an addition to his name and only comes to describe him. After Esau's name was changed, we insisted on Benjamin's name being changed. Rachel named him at birth Ben Oni while his father changed his name to Benjamin. Samuel insists that the name given to Benjamin by his mother is a difficult name and therefore his father insists on changing the name. Rabbi Smet sees both names as expressions of a different perspective on the tragic birth. On the one hand, Rachel indeed died in it, but on the other hand, Jacob sees in her birth the son born to the mother who hoped for him so much. The Ramban proves that the name that Rachel gave has these two meanings, and according to him, Ya'akov wants to emphasize one of the two meanings and therefore changes the name. The Radak, we have brought the course of David ben

Raphael which means a weaving of significant events in the lives of Jacob and Rachel which are expressed in the names they gave their son. We have therefore seen figures whose names were changed by God's command, a son's name was changed by his father and the last figure discussed in this chapter is that of Joseph whose name was changed by Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to the Panach cipher. Commentators make it clear that the name change came to show Pharaoh's ownership and superiority over Joseph. By changing the name, Pharaoh wants to convey a message to Egypt, and Joseph in particular, that although Joseph influences what is happening in Egypt, the sole ruler who also controls Joseph is Pharaoh.

Perhaps we can argue in the light of what was said above that when God is the substitute and changes the name, there is a change that is not only intrinsically personal towards the reader, but there is a change and a universal national effect, which is not only measured in the present but has an effect for the distant future. On the other hand, when a person is the one who changes the name, then he has a say in the matter, and changing the name cannot create a nation (Samuel, 2003).

## 16. Conclusion

In the article we go through on the broad field of knowledge, we presented the topic of reading names in the book of Genesis. We came to see that people's names express a connection to family and culture. We also saw that the name expresses mental contents and qualities, which connect the bearer of the name with a spiritual source. Later we reviewed all the characters in the book of Genesis that the scripture indicates the act of calling by name and from that the reciters of the names are also mentioned. As part of the study, we examined the reading of the name from different aspects and tried to explain in each case the connection between the reciter of the name and the subject of the name, and between the name itself and the effect of the name on the person who bears it. To reach conclusions, we divided all the cases of reading the name in Genesis into groups and then discussed each group's details separately and tried to find things in common between them.

From a general observation about naming, we will notice that all the figures that the Torah mentions were called by name, established privileged dynasties. Some of the characters are the ancestors of mankind in general, and others are the fathers of the nations of the world and the rest are the sons of Jacob from whom came the twelve tribes that are the foundation of the nation of Israel. If we refer to the reciters of the names, most of the reciters are parents and most of them are mothers. We have seen that there are quite a few reasons that influence the reader to give a certain name, some national and some personal, while with the mothers we noticed that there is a considerable personal expression in naming the children. Naming in general can be a reminder of an event or belonging to a culture or religion. The name can also be an expression on the part of the name giver of guardianship or in a more extreme form of control. The very role of giving a name can be a breeding ground for a fight between parents, and less extremely reflect a marital system. If so, the name could be a form of private expression of the reciter of the name or when reading it he turns to the company and perpetuates in the child's name a message to the whole, which sometimes came from the Holy Spirit or an angel. Another possibility is that in reading the name there is a transfer of a mission and watching that the bearer of the name will realize the hopes of the reciter of the name.

As we already saw, there is a meaning and connection between a person's qualities, his personality and destiny, and his name. During the work chapters, we expanded in some cases on the effect of the name on the behavior and destiny of the person. In these cases, we saw that the person's name is connected to his essence and corresponds to his attributes.

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