

## Disaster Risk Management: Taking a leaf from the priestly legacy and the African worldview.

Canisius Mwandayi <sup>o</sup>  
Africa University, Zimbabwe  
University of South Africa, South Africa

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Published online, 2024

### ABSTRACT

Each moment a devastating disaster strikes, the age-old problem of evil inevitably comes to mind. God's omnipotence and omniscience are once again called to question. The devastating 2019 Cyclone Idai, Covid-19, Cyclone Freddy, temperatures hitting unprecedented record highs across the world in 2023 for example, remain mind boggling disasters that call for explanation and by default efforts to avoid or minimise the repeat of such disasters. Faced with the remarkable, unprecedented and terrifying reality of climate change, repeated warnings of global boiling have been issued and calls to adopt United Nations SMART based plans of action are becoming louder as well. As the world pins its hopes on SMART action plans so as to unplug the tragic consequences of climate change, the paper bemoans what one views as a deliberate sidelining of religion in all these efforts. Through a comparative analysis, the paper interrogates the Priestly legacy and the African worldview in an attempt to salvage lessons from them on how ancients were tackling disaster risk reduction. Both emphasize a vital starting point to disaster reduction, namely: the concept of collective responsibility. Humans, according to Priestly teachings, are in control of their destiny and every act of social exploitation, moral corruption, pollutes the sanctuary until such time God is driven out entirely and human society is devoured by its own viciousness and death-dealing. Similarly, from an African worldview, man is created a moral agent in relation to God his Creator and fellow men. If a person performs antisocial actions, they cause displeasure and harm to other members of the God-ordained society and such evil will not go unpunished. The underlying argument thus in this paper is that not belittling the advances that have so far been made in the sciences to avert disasters, in order to offer a comprehensive response to disaster risks, there is need to tap lessons from the religious traditions of the ancients.

**KEYWORDS:** Priestly writers, disaster risk management, SMART, global boiling, African worldview, Sendai Framework, moral corruption!



## Introduction

Disaster has remained a challenge that humanity has been grappling with since time immemorial. In as much as it has remained a challenge so also have been efforts to abate future occurrences of disaster. In contemporary times, and following stakeholder consultations initiated in March 2012, and inter-governmental negotiations that were conducted research between July 2014 and March 2015 at the behest of the United Nations General Assembly, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30 was adopted by Member States in 2015 (UNDRR 2015). The Sendai Framework, however, has come not without its shortfalls. In the most popularised Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Time-bound (SMART) approaches to disaster risk reduction, I see a lacuna of the wisdom of religious traditions and it is this gap that this research aims to fill through tapping from the Priestly legacy and the African worldview. Before tapping into this wisdom, the first part of this study shall provide a critique to the Sendai Framework highlighting its strengths and shortcomings in trying to provide a comprehensive plan to abate future occurrences of disaster.

## Conceptual Framework

As stated above, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30 was adopted by Member States in 2015 (UNDRR 2015). Though the Sendai Framework appeared a new baby in the house, it actually was built upon the foundations of an earlier instrument: the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (Calkins, 2015). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 aims to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks through:

- i) *understanding disaster risk;*
- ii) *strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;*
- iii) *investing in disaster reduction for resilience and;*
- iv) *enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'build back better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction (UNDRR, 2015).*

Undeniably, the world owes much to the brains behind this framework as it provides bedrock to cutting edge scientific apparatus to avert and minimize the future occurrence of disasters. Following the calls to adopt United Nations' SMART based plans for action; disaster risk reduction (DRR) is seeing an increase in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).

AI and ML are providing useful and reliable information; from the creation of hazard maps and forecasting of extreme events to the real-time event detection, situational awareness, and decision-making support. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also taking progressive steps in developing Multi-Danger Early Warning System (MDEWS) models which proffer precise early warning signs of windstorms, hailstorms, cyclones, hurricanes or any other disasters that may likely strike communities. As a result, communities, infrastructure and livelihoods are exposed to fewer or almost nil natural threats (Saxena, 2023).

While the above-mentioned cutting-edge developments in science are quite uplifting, as a global community, Zimbabwe still has a long way to go before we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from disasters. Not turning a blind eye to these commendable aspects which came as a result of the adoption of the Sendai framework, what stands as a worry to me, however, is what appears a deliberate relegation of religion. Since time immemorial, religion is what defines humanity and thus, any solution to human problems which does not involve religion is more of a fugacious adventure. Having provided a critique to the Sendai Framework, the next sections are an attempt to salvage lessons from ancient religious traditions, starting with the Priestly legacy and posterior, the African worldview.

### **The Priestly Material**

The struggle to appreciate how a supposedly benevolent deity allows evil to flourish on earth has taxed the human intellect since the beginning of history. The existence of a deity who is just and merciful should, it seems, preclude all evil. The undeniable presence of evil in the world necessitates different responses, depending on whether the universe is perceived as an accident or the product of intentionality. The effort to balance these qualities of justice and mercy in describing God's interaction with a covenanted people permeates much of the bible (Crenshaw, 2005). It is common knowledge that the bible is a fragmented unity that has been brought together to serve a unitary purpose. In this section, I explore how Priestly writers have tried to give a rationale to the existence of evil in the world. The priests were concerned with providing plausible reasons for all challenges that befell to Israel. The Priestly narrative grapples with why evil exists and attempts to respond to the problem in affirmation to the Gen. 1:31 account that this creation is very good and indeed that it is the creation of a good God (Southgate, 2008:14).

In biblical studies, the Priestly materials, traditionally attributed to the 'P' Source, have admittedly for a long time not received serious attention from scholars. They have been a devalued part of the Hebrew Bible given a deep-seated bias that considers purity and impurity rules as primitive and irrational taboos. The tendency has rather been to consider religion/s without such rites as rationally superior and more spiritually meaningful. The later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has, however, witnessed a renewed interest in studying danger avoidance practices, taboos and rituals of different cultures by anthropologists and ethnographers. Given the new awakening, Bible-related danger avoidance practices began to draw the interest of scholars as well. Leading in this endeavour were Mary Douglas, Jacob Milgrom, Jonathan Klawas and other subsequent scholars. It is in this spirit that this current research seeks to tap into the wisdom of the ancients concerning danger avoidance practices as an answer and solution to the disasters we are experiencing in our contemporary times.

## 2. Key ideas and the key themes of the Priestly material

### 1. *Priestly material as a programme for the cult*

While it is not possible to be precise about the time and place at which the priestly material came into effect, the Priestly material, is as Von Rad (1962 p. 78) puts it, a programme for the cult. Its purpose is unmistakably to lay down the ordinances of YHWH revealed for Israel's salvation during the history, and to legitimate them by showing their specific place within the saving history. /P/ looks on the camp where the clans gathered round a tent of revelation, as Israel's original sphere of revelation. This camp is strictly a sacral sphere, in whose holiness Israel can only live so far as she observes detailed cultic regulations.

### 2. *Sin tainted and irreparably altered us as earth inhabitants*

Pre-supposed by the Priestly material is that the first human 'pair' enjoyed fellowship with God. As opined by Creegan (2013), the divine image bearers (first human pair) enjoyed fellowship with God and experienced harmony with all creation which shows that humanity had unlimited access to the creator. At the same time all creation had abundant liberty for interaction. It is through failure (sin) that the world was tainted and irreparably altered us as earth inhabitants.

### 3. *Effects of sin on God's sanctuary*

In terms of the cultic system, Israel was not unique from the rest of the ancient world. This cultic system included a sanctuary and high twilight ancients, shrines or sanctuaries were the dwelling places of the deity, hence the deity was sacrificed in his or her sanctuary. More like other cultures surrounding her, Israel believed God to be present in the sanctuary and this presence often took the form a cloud that filled the tabernacle. It was this presence which they believed made the sanctuary holy.

From the temple's architecture, holiness increased as one entered the deeper portions of the building. The idea basically was that holiness grows as closeness to God increases and this idea was shown graphically using spatial concepts. Thus, according to the Priestly writers, the territory outside of the Israelite camp is essentially common, unclean country.

In the Priestly conception, the concentric circles of holiness characterising the sanctuary extended also to time. There is regular or common working days and holier than these days on the Sabbath which is distinguished by more regulations and observances and there are other holy days, like the Passover or New Year's celebrations. These occasions are distinguished from regular time by unique laws that serve to identify them as holy days. The most holy day is Yom Kippur, also referred to as the Sabbath of Sabbaths. Due to its extreme holiness, this day is distinguished from all other days by special laws and customs. Yom Kippur is the sole day of the year when all of time, space, objects, and people are holy. This is the most revered day of the year given that the high priest, who is the most holy person, enters the deepest shrine and performs cleansing rituals on the mercy seat and ark itself as a way to placate God's anger.

According to the Priestly perception, sin arouses God's anger. The function of God's anger was mostly directed against the Israelites and was always a reaction of disobedience or worship of other gods. Anger became synonymous with judgment. Wrong conduct would attract some form of judgment because God had chosen Israel for Himself. Thus, Israel was bound to lead a holy life. In Leviticus 19:2, God invites Israel to "Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy." The Israelites undoubtedly desired a benevolent deity's unending assistance, blessing, and protection. When God was present in the midst of the community in his sanctuary, there was blessing. Blessing and beneficence came from his presence. Thus, rituals and sacrifices which the high priest made on the sanctuary were designed to ensure God's continued blessing and residence within the community (Klawans, 2005).

In the Priestly understanding, purification of the sanctuary was essential to the health and well-being of the community for failure to achieve that the sanctuary would become polluted to the point when God was driven out entirely and the community would be devoured by any calamity since it would have been left in a godless state, without blessing and protection (Milgrom, 2000).

The Priestly material uses the term atonement which denotes to the significance of reconciliation. It means to be at one with one another (at-one-moment). There is an element of “covering over”. Priestly material refers to this salutary effect of offerings of purgation and purification that cover sin and pollution, and their consequences so that Israel (who sins and pollutes) and YHWH (whom sin and pollution offends) may be reconciled to each other. These priestly texts take sin, and pollution, with profound seriousness, therefore, covering as a remedy for sin and condition of rehabilitation is approached seriously and enacted carefully according to detailed instruction. Brueggemann (2002) contends that the twin act of purification and purgation complete the process whereby Israel is freed of its sin and the holy place is made habitable for God. Accordingly, this action restores the right relations with God and allows the resumption of life under blessing.

Summing up the Priestly conception is the idea that the reign of evil and death, or the reign of righteousness and life, is the sole responsibility of humanity. What people do, in other words, determines the degree to which God can dwell on earth among humans. Disasters of any nature therefore cannot be blamed on God but peoples’ sinfulness. It is almost the same idea that one finds shared among Africans. It is this African worldview that becomes the focal point in the next section.

## The African Worldview

To understand the African worldview, concerning sin, there is perhaps need to begin first by clarifying what African traditional religion is all about. Simply put, African worldview, it is a religion that is indigenous to Africans and which Africans up today have made it theirs by living it and practicing it after having received it from their forbearers. As captured in the remarkable words of Awolalu (1976 p. 275), it is:

*a religion that has no written literature, yet it is ‘written’ everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the peoples’ myths and folktales, in their liturgies and shrines and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped; it is a religion that has no zeal, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young and old.*

In terms of its spirituality, ATR celebrates the presence of the divine in the environment, thus every plant, animal and natural phenomena are taken as bearers of the divine. Africans hold that this is God's world and that the divine created deities, spirits, and ancestor spirits for the universe's orderly administration.

The Deity and the created agents have established guiding principles for people to follow in society because they are concerned with the moment-to-moment actions of men and women. In African understanding, humanity is able to follow the established guiding principles because by nature men and women are moral agents with a conscience and the ability to discriminate between good and evil. Further, in African conception, humans were made as beings-in-relation to both God, the Creator, and fellow humans. The communal idea is so prevalent in African society and the links include close ties with the one's ancestors who are concerned about the day-to-day lives of their living children, extended family members, the clan, the village, and different societies and organizations in the community.

As a result, every child who is brought up in African traditional religion is schooled in the tradition of the elders where the curriculum emphasizes *Unhu* or *Ubuntu*. This encompasses values such as respect for everyone and in particular elders, the need for unity in decision making, the science of the environment, the dos and don'ts (taboos), and other activities which do not offend the spirit world.

Seen as a whole, can find that Africans have a strong sense of sin and understand the difference between ritual mistakes that are intended to offend the gods, neglect of parental responsibilities that may infuriate the enraged ancestors, and disobeying the god's commands that results in death.

Due to a strong sense of sin in African culture, certain practices are classified as 'unheard of things' or abominable practices which the African child is instructed to shun off from lest the wrath of the ancestors and gods/God is avenged on people. *Makunakuna* 'incest', for example, is rated among those things which bring the Deity and ancestors' anger upon humanity. Among the Shona people, their ancestors are said to frown at such a practice and if unpropitiated, they bring misfortunes to the land such as lack of rainfall.

The same is shared by the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Writing about the Yoruba, Awolalu (1976) says that a person who commits incest will have to undergo an elaborate cleansing ritual lest he is overtaken by disaster. If the culprit is not

discovered and no cleansing ritual done, the earth will not yield its increase and all sorts of misfortunes will not only befall the culprit but also the whole community. This resonates with the perception among the Yoruba that, 'if the earthly king does not see you, the heavenly King does' meaning to say He sees and passes judgment (Awolalu, 1976).

### **Commonalities between the Priestly and African worldviews**

The Priestly material is so concerned about God's holiness, purity of the people and land, hence it's focus on elaborate rules and rituals aimed at creating and preserving holiness. As has been noted above, God chose Israel for Himself, making it a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. What this meant, therefore, was that Israel had to preserve its identity by avoiding intermarriages with non-Israelites. According to the Priestly material, intermarriages with non-Israelites was going to be an entrance way for the defilement of God's chosen people. This explains why this practice was strictly forbidden. The reasons had to do with preserving the holiness of God's chosen people and curb evil. For Throntveit (1992), this Priestly material was the one that was used by Ezra and Nehemiah in their reformation oracles, as they vehemently proscribe against intermarriages as well as commanding the sending away of foreign wives (Ezra 10:6-44; Nehemiah 11:1-13:31). Marrying foreigners was understood as the snare to the people of God that could trap them to evil, especially the evil of worshipping idols and consequently lead to God's withdrawal from the sanctuary and leaving people exposed to any form of danger.

Similarly, in African culture, the dangers that came with intermarriages were traditionally a crucial topic. Marriages done outside communal spheres were unacceptable, especially among the Shona people, hence the idiom, *Romania emoting*, 'marry from known peoples/clan.' The fears that our African elders had were that marrying anyone outside the well-known communal circle could give room to the bringing of foreign elements and unacceptable behaviours that could end up defiling the family in particular, and community at large. Once the family and community customs had been defiled it meant the wrath of the ancestors could be unleashed on people. So, in preserving the holiness of the family and community, *roorantai vematongo* was the norm every community member had to master.

Furthermore, according to Leviticus 19:2, God is Holy, and in Him there is no evil. Evil can only find its way as God's people fall short of the dictates of God



as is spelt out in God's statutes. Reading through the Book of Leviticus one appreciates how God in his holiness has tried to safeguard Israel from being defiled by any form of impurity. In this regard, it is humans themselves who can bring evil upon themselves and upon the land. In other words, there are human activities that cannot only tarnish their relationship with God, but their being committed also defiles the land which God created as holy, and which they live on leading to its unproductiveness. However, God put in place particular rituals as remedies to people's impurities so as to bring back good relationship with them as well as bringing healing upon the land. In the Israelite tradition, rituals were carried out for two critical purposes. They were carried out so as to curb the defilement of people as well as cleansing them from whatever foreseen, unforeseen and unavoidable defilement. In the same way, in African traditions, rituals, as such always at the centre stage of living. Failure to carry out such would bring misfortunes. Of interest to note is that as it was with ancient Israel, there is always a remedial ritual to be carried out so as to prevent or to reverse the effects of such defilements.

**A**s noted earlier, regarding Priestly material, there was a clear-cut distinction between ritual impurity and moral impurity. Ritual impurity arose from physical substances and states associated with procreation and death but not in themselves sinful. Such impurities are in general permitted (if not unavoidable or obligatory). Examples of ritual impurities mentioned in the Priestly material and also having significance in the African worldview of misfortunes are such issues like sexual intercourse among couple, burying the dead. The issue of emissions from sexual organs, especially women's menstrual discharge was also rated as ritual impurities. Emissions could be divided into two main classes: normal emissions (discharges of semen from the male and menstrual blood from the female) and abnormal emissions (diseased discharges of non-menstrual blood or pus).

**F**or the Priestly writers, normal emissions were less severe, conveying impurity only for the period of the discharge itself: one-day for an emitter of semen and (an idealised) seven-days for a menstruant. Semen (the least defiling genital flux) defiled clothing, but since emitters of semen did not convey a secondary impurity, the semen-defiled were restricted only from the sphere of the holy (the sanctuary area and holy items outside the sanctuary such as sacrificial meats). Purification for a semen emitter was achieved through bathing, laundering, and waiting until evening. Sexual intercourse conveyed a one-day semen impurity to the female partner as well as the male. This was removed by bathing and waiting

until evening. The ritual impurity of a menstruant was slightly more severe, defiling both persons and objects for one day. Objects or furniture on which a menstruant sat on or lied down on could convey impurity by contact. Sexual intercourse with a menstruant conveyed an equivalent seven-day impurity to the male partner (Lev. 15:24). Leviticus 18:19 actually prohibits sex with a menstruant). Purification from menstrual impurity did not require a sacrifice. The menstruant only had to bathe and launders on the seventh day and waits until evening although this is not explicitly stated. Leviticus 15 which contains the impurity regulations for genital emissions, normalizes and regularizes menstruation on analogy to the emission of semen. These regulations do not banish the menstruant from her home and they contain none of the rhetoric of disgust for menstruation evidenced in other biblical texts such as Ezekiel 36:17.

Impurity from emissions related to sexual organs raised by the Priestly writers is found also in the African worldview. For Bongmba (2012), among the Karanga people of Zimbabwe, one word for semen is the same as something unclean on the body or excrement (*tsvina*). There were consequently important taboos to be respected about touching these fluids, and about women avoiding sex or even proximity to men and men's property (cattle in particular) during menstruation. Coming closer to men or men's property by women during their menstruation was said to cause misfortunes to men to the extent of causing unproductiveness to livestock. Furthermore, in the African tradition, menstruants are not allowed to perform any public services as they are considered unclean. They are not even allowed to be at sacred functions. For example, in the events of rain making ceremonies, Africans make sure that the whole process of brewing beer is carried out by very old women whom they know that obviously have passed the menstrual phase or young girls who have not yet started their menstrual flows. The idea is to make sure that by so doing they do not in any way mistakenly involve menstruants in the process as by doing so would bring misfortunes instead of blessings. Menstrual blood is said to infuriate the ancestors, hence the misfortunes.

The practice of keeping away menstruants from that which is considered sacred has also found its way even into the Christian religion. In many churches, especially mainline ones, women who are within the menstrual ages are not allowed to prepare the Table of Holy Communion. The reason is that menstruants are regarded as unclean, and therefore, their involvement on the preparation of the Eucharist defiles the Holy Table and bring misfortunes to

the partakers. Sacred issues are to be handled by those who have passed the menstrual age.

When it comes to moral impurities, they arise from prohibited acts; the commission of certain heinous sins, specifically idolatry, bloodshed, and sexual transgressions. For the Priestly writers, they generate a moral impurity that symbolically defiles a range of sancta including the land of Israel itself and the sanctuary. In addition to originating in sin, moral impurity differs from ritual impurity in that it is not contagious (one does not contract moral impurity by touching a murderer or a thief). Moral impurity, according to the Priestly writers, is not removable through ritual baths, laundering, and the like. Depending on the gravity, some moral impurities could be removed through a process of atonement. In some cases, a repentant sinner could bring a sacrificial offering to purge the sanctuary of the defilement caused by his sins. In very severe cases, however, moral impurity was absolved only with punishment and/or death.

Just as in the Priestly writers' conception that there were the profane masses as well as the holy priests and that there were ritual and moral impurities, so it is in the African setting. There is always the culprit and the innocent elder, that is, a traditional leader or head of the house. Any wrong act by the culprit cannot go unattended as doing so can lead to the whole family or community facing misfortunes. A sinner in the African context is not affected alone by their wrongdoing but it does affect the whole community and according to African spirituality, the African community involves also the living dead. The dead are understood as occupying both the underworld and the air space, hence, *varipasi* or *varikumhepo* 'those' in the netherworld or those in the spirit world. *Varipasi* can be angered by the sinful acts of the living individuals and that can cause misfortunes to befall the community.

Just as was prescribed by the Priestly writers, a repentant sinner in the African context has to pay for his/her sins for the betterment of the family and community at large. Some of the misfortunes emanating from defilements have to do with ecological disasters such as *dutu* (hurricanes), *mhare* (droughts), and other occurrences such as pandemics, deaths among family members as a result of avenging spirits (*ngozi*), and so on. However, as it was with the ancient Israelite system, dealing with such defilements in the African context depended on the nature and gravity of the case. In the Shona culture, for example, if a child beats or scolds their mother it does not just end like that until a certain ritual is performed known as *kutanda botso* appeasement of an offended deceased's spirit (usually the mother or grandmother).

As opined by Shoko (2007), if the mother dies before rituals of *kutanda botso* are conducted, the spirit of the mother will pester the son's family with illnesses and cause mental problems to the son. The only therapy to it consists of the son undergoing *kutanda botso* where they become a public disgrace by dressing in rags and begging for food. This is believed to show the 'son's' contrition and the spirit of the mother would then stop causing illness.

Assaulting the father has got its own remedial rituals, and in some cases the culprit has to brew beer and slaughter a goat which the father, and his brothers, would drink and eat while requesting for the pardoning of the culprit-child by the ancestors as it is believed that whatever wrong of that nature committed has not been committed only to the living but also the dead, hence, the Shona idioms *kutadzira ivhu* and *ivhu ratsamwa*, 'sinning against earth' and 'aggrieved earth.' Ukpokolo (2017 p. 64) reverberates the same when it is argued that:

*...traditionally speaking, one's selfhood is partly a function of communal relationships with ancestors, the morally wise progenitors of a clan who have shed their bodies and continue to interact with those of us in the visible world.*

Once *ivhu ratsamwa*, productivity is also staled and geophysical, hydrological, climatological, metrological, biological and even extra-terrestrial disasters may strike the community. In cases of murder wherein the *ngozi* spirit is now involved, it can only be addressed by paying whatever the bereaved family would have demanded, and in most cases, it involves paying in the form of a woman and beasts. Of course, there are some people who may decide to refuse the demands of reparation using different means and rituals. In the Karanga tradition, one could get rid of *ngozi* through *kurasirira* 'driving away ritual.' In this ritual, a scapegoat, usually in the form of a black goat or black fowl is taken and the illness brewed by the *ngozi* is transferred onto it with the aid of a skilled practitioner. This is almost similar to the scapegoat (Azazel) mentioned by the Priestly writers (Leviticus 16:8-10).

According to the Karanga (among the Shona people of Zimbabwe) beliefs, the illness or misfortunes is transferred to the family of anyone who tampers with the evil-laden animal. The avenging spirit (*ngozi*), would thus find a new home and the family would have to deal with the death-dealing effects of the avenging spirit. This is probably why the majority of the Karanga, and the Shona peoples in general, do not have anything to do with lost items. It is the fear of the lethal misfortunes brought about by the determined avenging spirits

which drives away people from lost items. Whilst *kurasirira* is efficacious, it may only be temporary and does not guarantee a prolonged settlement. Usually after this temporal reprieve, the avenging spirit comes back regenerated and will cause untold suffering through inexplicable and unyielding misfortunes. According to Shoko (2007 p. 60), a permanent cure for ngozi is compensation. In such cases, usually a specified number of cattle, and *soro* 'a virgin girl' were traditionally paid to the bereaved family as compensation on the understanding that the girl would be married to one of the family members and anticipated to give birth to a son who would replace the murdered victim and perpetuate the genealogy. It is of interest to note that just as in ancient Israel, in all the cases of *kudarikira* 'defilement' in African tradition, there is blood involved, i.e. chicken, goat, cattle, etc. Failure to do so can bring misfortunes to the family and the land in the form of disasters in all their classifications.

## Conclusion

As reflected in the foregoing discussion, since time immemorial, each time a disaster strikes people tend to seek answers from the 'Great One', questioning, at times, even God's benevolence and omnipotence. While Priestly writers, and African, wisdom trace evil right to the door of humanity itself, humanity, as argued by the ancient gurus, is largely responsible for what it faces. As humanity continues to face the threat of myriad disasters, it is important to take a leaf from that ancient wisdom. Based on their teaching, there is a need to carry out a self-introspection and come up with ways of reducing disasters. There are deadly and varied crimes against humanity being committed in contemporary times. In religious terms, therefore, God and the 'earth', stand against such crimes as such demand repentance to the sins committed, and payment of reparation to cleanse the earth of such ills. Ignoring such can open doors to more disasters in all their classifications. What can be deduced from all this is that human activity is the main culprit behind disasters as well as the solution to those disasters.

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