

SELFISH INTEREST IN THOMAS HOBBS VIS-À-VIS THE UNDERSTANDING OF GOD IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: ATR AS A CASE STUDY

BY

¹Rev.Fr.Dr.Innocent Ogbonna Nweke & ²Mr.Ezekiel Mbama M.A.

¹Dept. of Religion and Human Relations, Faculty of Arts chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus

²Duquene University of the Holy Spirit, Pitsbuhg USA



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Corresponding author:

Rev.Fr.Dr.Innocent
Ogbonna Nweke

Abstract

There has been contention on whether whatever people do has selfish interest. A lot of people were of the opinion that whatever people do in this world has a lot of selfish interest.

Thomas Hobbes, one of the modern philosophers has a diction that there is some element of selfish interest in whatever people do. He explained that even going to church has this interest. In this work, the author tried to x-ray the opinion of Thomas Hobbes and he tried to relate it to the African Traditional Religion and its way of worshipping their god. In the work, the Africans worship their god and their aim for worshipping was x-rayed. He did this by juxtaposing the opinion of Thomas Hobbes with African way of worship and their aim. The work used the socio-cultural and historical approach for its findings. In doing this, it was discovered that Thomas Hobbes accusation still hold water. It was also concluded that whatever Africans do as its regards worship has an element of selfish interest in them and this interest helps them in the different effort they make in worshipping their gods.

Keywords: Selfish, Interest, gods, Contemporary,World.

Introduction

Thomas Hobbes, a modern English philosopher declares in his political and moral philosophy that man has his self-interest at heart in every of his action and deeds so that in every society, both the government and the individuals have, each their individual self-interest. Self-interest becomes selfish interest when such interest hinders another from achieving the same particular thing the other achieved. That is why Asouzu, (2003, p.5) avers that "Human interest is ambivalent because it has a double capacity and as such can represent something negative at the same time." Hobbes believes that man is by nature selfish for "... men are naturally egoistic and always remain so," (Copleston, 1964, p. 56). According to Hobbes, even the obedience of the individual citizen to the sovereign is not for its own sake but his self-interest in obeying the law and statutes of the sovereign. And "in the act of self-interest, a person places himself always before and above others and thus, regards his interest as supreme. He habitually, and in some cases arrogantly places his interest first in the firm belief that he deserves it more than others do. ... This ... is selfishness" (Asouzu, 2003, p. 20). In this work, therefore, we believe as Hobbes asserts that man is incurably egoistic, supported by

Dawkins quoted by Midlgey (2009)that man was born selfish and he has selfishness in his genes, that God who created man in his own image and likeness would have the same likeness of selfish interest of man. And according the concept and description of God in African Traditional Religion as the being who like to force others to accept his own will and debar others from attaining the same height with him, we try to look into the selfish interest of God, especially in African Traditional Religion. However, according to Midgley (2009), it is not proper to agree entirely with Hobbes that all human action has an element of selfish interest it. For her, "to say that self-interest is in some sense the core of all human motivation, we wonder how, if this is so, the word could ever come to be invented at all? Just as there would no word for white if everything was white, there could surely be no word for selfish if everyone was always selfish. Yet one thing that needs to be understood by Midgley is that every word and language that we use today was invented by man. Someone, therefore, must have invented the word 'selfish' to derogatorily express or explain another person's action towards him, that is, the person who invented this word. Yet, that does not mean that such act of

'selfish' cannot be noticed in the same person's action who invented the word 'selfish'. To show that selfish interest is a universal condition as against Midgley argument against its universality, she writes to sell her interest that selfish interest is not a universal condition but we write convince the reader that selfish interest is universal condition. That goes to mean as Hobbes has established that there is always self-interest in every act of man. And if it is believed as have been accepted by many religions, ATR inclusive that God created man in his own image and likeness, we needless argue that God is not selfish ruit. for the apple tree cannot bear mango fruit; it can only bear apple fruit while mango tree can only bear mango.

Clarification of key concepts

Clarification of concepts helps us to understand the key concepts in a work, especially in the context they are used.

Selfish Interest

Selfish interest can see as the pursuant of a person's desire without minding such desire of his may hut others around him. It means one putting oneself first over and above others. Defining selfish interest, Asouzu, says, "Self-interest is the disposition always in all situations to desire undue advantage for and solely for the person or persons involved, in total regard of the common good" 2003, p.20). According Aristotle, quoted in Stern-Gillet, selfish interest is when one's desire hinders another person or others from obtaining the same desire. In his words, "Indeed, it only makes sense to call my desire selfish if my obtaining what I desire is likely to debar others from" (1995, p. 70).

Attribute

Attribute refers to something that is not contained in a necessary part of or a being or a thing but it is assigned or ascribed to it due to environment or by human beings due certain actions of the being or the thing. In another sense, attribute is sign or something significant with which a thing can be distinguished from another.

Nature

Nature ordinarily refers to something as it is. It points to something in its originality. It is that essential qualities or characteristics by which something is recognized

Life and Influence of Thomas Hobbes

To be able to discuss the idea of Thomas Hobbes we need to know briefly who he is and his influence. The biography of Thomas Hobbes is this work will be culled from Frederick Copleston's 1964, A history of philosophy, Modern Philosophy: The British philosophers, volume four, and Samuel Enoch Stump's 1977 Philosophy: History and problems, second edition. These authors made us to understand that Thomas Hobbes was born into Christianity. He was born at Westport near Malmesbury in 1588. His father was a clergyman. Thomas Hobbes in Oxford and his education in Oxford stirred in him a fascination for classical literature. In 1608, Hobbes entered the service of the Cavendish family and spent the years 1608 to 1610 traveling in France and Italy as tutor to the son of Lord William Cavendish. His association with the Cavendish family really influenced Hobbes' life and work prominently as it afforded him the opportunity of traveling wide

and meeting with great thinkers of his time. He later returned to England. And on his return to England Hobbes engaged himself in literary pursuits and translated Thucydides into English, the translation being published in 1628. From 1621 until 1631 Hobbes was again in France, this time as a tutor to the son of Sir Gervas Clifton, and it was during a visit to Paris that he had an encounter with the element of Euclid. It was this encounter with geometry which equipped him with his lasting idea of scientific method. During his visit Paris his attention was also drawn to problems of sense perception. It was then that he was introduced by Mersenne into philosophical and scientific circles. He thus had an acquaintance with the Cartesian philosophy at the time which developed Hobbes mind and determined his philosophical interest. Hobbes, until the end of his life, occupied himself with literary work, translating the whole of Homer into English. Thomas Hobbes died at the age of ninety-one in the winter of 1679. Hobbes wrote so many philosophical works among which is his renowned Leviathan.

Selfish Interest in Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes emphasized the practical purpose of philosophy which is for him to improve man's material prosperity and to enhance social peace and security. He is an empiricist, beginning with the empirical data from what he calls 'effects' or 'appearances'. Hobbes believes that man is by nature egoistic. And man being naturally selfish, the only control that can be attained is through an established selfish institution. For "if men are naturally egoistic and always remain so, the only factor which can hold them together effectively is centralized power, vested in the sovereign" (Copleston, 1964, p. 56). The sovereign in the view of Hobbes is selfish as described by Copleston, if "The power of the sovereign being to all intents and purposes unlimited, the question arises, what freedom, if any, is possessed by the subjects or ought to be possessed by them" (1964, pp. 53-4). And a free man for Hobbes is "he that in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to do" (1946, pp. 196-7). Thus, any entity that hinders the right of another to do what he has a will to do is selfish.

However, in obeying the sovereign, man does so, not because he wishes but because he has his own self-interest at heart. For instance, "To lay down one's right to anything is to divest oneself of the liberty of hindering another from enjoying his own right to same thing. But if a man lays down his right in this sense, he does with a view to his own advantage" (Copleston, 1964, p. 46). Hobbes asserts that it is possible for a man to lay down his right to defend his life "because he cannot be understood to aim thereby at any good to himself" (1946, p. 17). Thus, to lay down his right, man have an interest for doing so, if not he would not do so. Just as the man who obeys the sovereign is selfish so also the sovereign is selfish, each protecting his own self-interest. In the expense of the subject who obeys, "...it is the State, or more precisely the sovereign, that determines good and evil" (Copleston, 1964, p.57). And according to Copleston, "Hobbes certainly speaks as though the sovereign is in some sense the representative of God" (1946, p. 57). For despite that it may be admitted that Hobbes accepts the notion of natural law in his political theory, "...it remains true that

for him it is the sovereign who interprets the natural law just as it is the Christian sovereign who interprets the Scripture” (Copleston, 1946, p. 57). Just as God says what happens over the life man and determines what is good and what is evil or when he is offended and when and how to be appeased, and what pleases him, Hobbes says “In commonwealth, however, it is the person who represents it; that is, the sovereign, who determines what is good and what is evil” (Copleston, 1946, p. 38). Thus, just as the sovereign in the law determines or decides the liberty and the extents of freedom of the subjects so also God in the commandments determines the extents of freedom and liberty of the people. For example, as the liberty and freedom of the people lies in obeying the commandment of God, so the “The liberty of a subject lieth therefore only in these things which in regulating their actions, the sovereign hath predetermined: such as is the liberty to buy and sell, and otherwise contract with one another; to choose their abode, their own diet, their own trade of life, and institute their children as they themselves think fit and the like” (Hobbes, 1946, p. 199). And “The obligation of subject to the sovereign is understood to last as long, no longer than the power lasteth by which, he is able to protect them” (Hobbes, 1946, p.208). Yet, God is understood to be everlasting sovereign with everlasting power which results to an everlasting obligation from the people. Thus, it is “the unity of the representer, not the represented that maketh the person one” (Hobbes quoted in Copleston, 1964, p. 48). That is to say, man is not his own person without his attachment to the person of God.

Contemporary Universal Understanding of God

Generally, God is understood to be omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is very powerful. He has every power and he exercises his power as he wishes and does whatever he wishes. Every religion believes that God is all in all. For Judaism, God is that whose name should not be mentioned by man due to his greatness and perfection. God for them is the owner of the whole world and all the things in it whose name deserves to be praised by man every day, (cf Ps. 21). For the Hindu and Buddhism, at death man loses his identity in God. Man is thus nothing except in God. For them, therefore, though, “Infinite striving after perfection is one’s right. It is its own reward. The rest is in the hands of God” (Gandhi, 1927, p.83). for the Christians, God has the final say on man’s life; man has no opinion in God’s decision. After all, “who indeed are you a human being to argue with God?” (Rom. 9:20). For the Christians therefore, God is the being who does not and cannot take instructions or listen to suggestions from any other being and no one could know his mind “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” and his ways are always vague or obscure in nature (Rom. 11: 33-35). In the view of the African Traditional Religion (ATR), God is clothed with lots of qualities and glories that differentiate him from other beings (Nweke, 2017, p. 112). He is like a king with high chiefs around as errand boys or messengers. He is guarded so securely that he cannot be approached directly by man except through those high chiefs or messengers. Those high chiefs and/or messengers however are those who have lived good lives on earth, have died, and are now ancestors. So, for African Traditional Religion, God is

so majestic that without going through these ancestors, he cannot be accessible.

Contemporary Understanding of God in African Traditional Religious Society

Mbiti, (1975), Ezekwugo, (1992), and Nweke, (2017) assert that the Africans believe in one Supreme Being – God. According to Nweke, 2017, P.110), “The concept of God in the traditional African setting is not new as most of the African myth of existence has always begun with God the Creator.” For Nweke therefore, “Africans believe in the existence of a supreme being. The Universal ruler of life and all within it. This God controls all other gods ...” (2017, p. 109). So, “African Traditional Religion believes that there is only one God who is the absolute creator, owner, and ruler of all things, and the Father of all mankind” (Omogegbe, 1993, p. 152). And “African theologians in collaboration with their pastors borrow from African customs, traditions, wisdom, teaching, arts, and sciences, to express the mystery of God” (Ukwuije, 2010, p. 2). For Obinna, (2010, p.6), “CHUKWU ... is God, the Supreme Divine Reality that creates, governs, guides and controls the universe.” In the general understanding, the African God has many qualities that make him a different being from man and others gods. For example, his supremacy, omnipresence, impartiality, swift actions, and so many others differentiates him from any other being (Nweke, 2017, p. 112). According to Mbiti, (1969, p. 37), “... peoples from all over Africa ... without a single exception ... have a notion of God as the Supreme Being. This is the most minimal and fundamental idea about God found in all African societies.” For him, “African concept of God are strongly coloured and influenced by the historical, geographical, social and cultural background or environment of each people. This explains the similarities and differences which we find when we consider the belief about God from all over ...” (Mbiti, 1969, p.38). For the Igbo people for instance, God is conceived as big and does big things: they call him ‘Chukwu’ meaning ‘big God’ or ‘Great God’. They call him also ‘Chineke’ meaning, ‘God that Creates’. Smith avers that God in African Traditional Religious notion is “He who is of Himself or He who came of Himself into being” (1961, p.109). In African Traditional Religion theology according to Kasper (1990), God is spoken about as the ultimate reality, determining and encompassing all things. For Gikuyu people God has no father nor mother, nor wife, nor children; he is all alone. (Mbiti, 1975, p. 43). Even Schebesta said that “Gikuyu people go as far as pointing out that God has no messenger” (1936, p. 171). This explains clearly why God is in desperate need of people on earth to come to heaven where he lives; he needs some people to keep him company. Mbiti is of the view that the Gikuyu people’s expression of God “... indicates that God is self-sufficient, self-supporting, and self-containing, just as He is self-originating. In human terms, it is clearly emphasized that God is uncreated, without parents, without family, without any of the things that compose or sustain human life” (1969, p.43). Yet this could also indicate the lack in God or his interest which triggers his quest of compelling people to choose to come to heaven. It is, therefore, possible, following Mbiti’s expression that the environment where he lives has little or lack

things that sustain life and since he has no members of family, he needed people around him, at to be his be his messenger and also cheer him up in his loneliness. In African Traditional Religion, "God is conceived like a Monarch, an absolute Monarch surrounded by his chiefs (gods) who are at his service. It is the gods that execute his orders and carry out his wishes ... God (The Great King) is not worshipped directly but through the mediations of the gods (his chiefs)" (Omeregbe, 1993, p. 152). "African conception of ultimate reality is therefore shaped by the African material condition ..." (Oguejiofor, 2010, p.103). In the understanding of the African Traditional Religion,

The origin of religion can be traced back to the Greek Euthemerus who wrote to say that religion started from the deification of heroes, ancestors, and those who one way or the other had distinguished themselves by their achievements. In this vein, it will be commonsensical to say that if Africans believe that God created man and controls his being here on earth it simply means that if some men were deified because of their distinctiveness, then God is bound to receive high sacrifices (Ugwu, 2014, p. 17).

Following the description of the understanding of God in African Traditional Religion by the contemporary African Traditional Religion Professors and authors above, it is crystal clear that God in general and in African Traditional Religion is concerned with his glory and worship from man yet it is believed that man is the friend of God. He cannot be approached directly by those that it is claimed he had loved so much. He is very quick in his judgment and action; very hot-tempered. It is possible to say that the acclaimed friendship of God with man is established for benefit of God; for the selfish interest of God and not about any concern of man or other creatures. He loves to control man and orders him to kill other lesser beings (animals) for his (God's) sacrificial interest.

Selfish Interest of God: An Attribute or Nature?

In critical thinking, one may be pushed to ask whether this selfish interest and other qualities of God are attributes from the outside of the being of God or in his nature as a being. Looking at the description of God by the anthropologist as Omeregbe observed, we will discover that

Man alienates himself in the process of forming the concept of God. He strips himself of his best qualities – his goodness, his justice, power, wisdom, mercy, etc. - and projects them outside himself into an imaginary being, called God. ... man removes from them the human limitations and therefore sees them as limitless – infinite goodness, infinite justice, infinite wisdom, etc. thus all the divine attributes are in fact human attributes removed from man and projected into the idea of God (1993, pp. 4-5).

But it is not surprising to say that the selfishness of God is something assigned or attributed to him by man. Still, it will not be wrong at the same to say that God's selfish interest is part of his nature. The former can be understood from the fact man believes that God created him (man) in his (God's) own image and likeness. And owing to fact that man has not actually seen this, his creator (God) physical, he can therefore believe equally that whatever quality he (man) has, God, should have the greater or even the greatest part of it. Therefore, to say that the selfishness of God is attributed to God by is as simple as saying that man uses his nature and qualities to measure and assume the qualities of the God who created him. On the hand, the latter can be understood from the fact the God who created man cannot impute in his creature what is not in him. That is to say, God can only give to his creatures an aspect of what is him rather than something that is not in him, for one does not give what he has not. In other words, the selfish interest of God is in his nature as can be witnessed from the selfish interest of man whom he created in his image and likeness. There is no place where the selfish interest of God manifested in his nature much clearly than in the second account of creation of man where God demonstrated his selfishness on the same man said to have been created in his image and likeness. He does not want man to know what he (God) knows. Thus, he warned man that "... of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2:17). God went to the point of threatening the life of man in order to limit man's knowledge. He does not want man to know his left from his right or to know what is good and what is evil so that he, (God) will be dictating for and controlling man. By implication, God threatened the life of man for his (God's) own selfish reasons just because he does not want man to possess the same knowledge with him. This can be observed from the words of the serpent according to the narrator of the story of creation that the serpent told the woman to eat the fruit, for "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). This fact can be concretized from the fact it was even after eating of the fruit that man discovered that he was naked. That means that God out of selfishness has been hiding man's nakedness from man. We were even made to understand and believe that God created man and gave him free will and reason but it can be observed that "God granted him reason and free will and he ought not to act by his instincts but with reasonable service to Him (God)" (Asomugha, 2021, p. 6). That is to say that the acclaimed freedom and reason given is but God's own services, not for man's own goodness. Little wonder he was so quick in condemning man when he ate from the fruit of knowledge the good and evil. If God loves man so much for man's sake and the acclaimed freedom is not for his (God's) self-interest, "why [then] our loving God who created us for Himself stands aloof when pain and torments are getting a better part of us" (Asomugha, 2021, p. 7). If God is really not concerned about his own self-interest, why is he so quiet in the presence of injustices meted on others by other selfish beings? It is this that triggered Asomugha's lamentation, asking;

Where is our God when terrorists and bandits are kidnapping and killing us? Does God still

care for us when the rich and the powerful are keeping us in perpetual misery? Why has taken flight, only to leave us to perish in the hands of the wicked and political rulers? Why are suffering and pain suffocating us in the midst of plenty and abundant wealth? Why is God quiet and not avenging the killings around? (Asomugha, 2021, p.7).

Maybe because man has decided to think reasonably outside the way God willed him to think. Thus, “his life and the life of generations after him has become fatal and overburdened with misery and suffering” (Asomugha, 2021, p. 6). It can be posited as Asomugha, (2021, p.5) noted that God’s purpose for refraining man from assessing the other tree in the garden of Eden was because “the second tree of knowledge of good and evil will help him obtain an increase and useful knowledge” and as such man would attain the level of knowledge possessed by God. This is what Hobbes and Asouzu call selfishness – hindering others from attaining the same thing you obtained. We can rightly say that “The wish of God for man to refrain from the tree of knowledge was ... to assert God’s right to rule humanity, avoiding any will of ours to contradict his own, or even to pose competition with him” (Asomugha, 2-21, p.6).

Selfish interest in the nature of God again manifested in (Num.13:1) where he planned with Moses to snatch the land of Canaan which was reported to flow with milk and honey from its original owners and to give it to Israelites for his personal glory with considering where the Canaanites would go to.

The same selfish interest is also observed in the person and activities of Jesus Christ who is believed to be the son of God, God incarnate – another clear image of God or God himself. For instance, during the sickness of his friend, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, Jesus, when he got the information said that “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the son of God may be glorified through it” (John, 11:4). We can possibly say that God inflicts sickness on people for his own glory. Even Jesus his son imitates him in the act of selfish interest. Thus, when he wanted to call Lazarus out from the grave, Jesus said in his supplication to his father, “I know that you always hear me, but for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me” (John, 11:42). That means Jesus allowed Lazarus his friend to die because “he was motivated by a passion for the glory of God, displayed in his own glorious power” (Piper, 2007). Yet we most times claim that “both the decision to let Lazarus die and the motivation to magnify God were an expression of love for Mary and Martha and Lazarus” (Piper, 2007). But a critical look at the action of Jesus who is seen as the son of God and God himself, it can be possibly understood the he was doing all he did so that Mary and Martha, Lazarus, their neighbors, and other people around could recognize him and acknowledge that he is the son and was sent by God. “In other words, God’s love for us keeps God at the center. God’s love for us exalts his value ... If God’s love made us central and focused on our value, it would distract us from what is most precious – namely himself” (Piper,

2007). And it can be recalled that whatever did was exactly what God his Father does as he recounted in John (5:9), “very truly, I tell you, the son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing: for whatever the Father does, the does likewise.” Thus, Jesus does everything he does to create awareness for the people’s astonishment so that they may believe and follow him. All his miracles were done for selfish reasons, not actually for the interest of the people.

Image of God and his likeness in Man: The Picture of God’s Selfish Interest

Most of the African Traditional Religion’s myth of existence according to Nweke (2017) begins always with God the creator. In the same vein, the Christian Scripture reveals that prior to the creation of man; God the creator called a conference and announced the creation of man. In the conference he said, “Let us make humankind in our image according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over ...” every other creatures on earth (cf Gen. 1:26). Three significant things can be observed from the above; First, God calling a conference indicates another person outside his person who shares his qualities present in the creation of man; possibly his son Jesus and possibly any other being that shares the same image with God. Second, God created human beings in his (God’s) own image to be and behave like him. Third, it is in the nature (image) of God to dominate for self-interest sake. That is to say that every action of man depicts the action of God since he created man in his image and breathed into man his domineering spirit and selfish interest. That is why man in every of his relationship another strife for his personal interest. “Even at our best we are only out for ourselves ... Everything we do – from the considerate to the heroic, we do ultimately for our own benefit. In some instances, the personal gain is obvious, such as when we reap public admiration or praise. In other instances, it’s not so obvious. Consider this: you are walking down a quiet road one evening and suddenly come upon a horrible scene. Ahead of you is a truck turned on its side and lying on the pavement is the driver, a young man. His face is bloody and he is barely moving. What do you do? You help. But why do you help? What exactly is your motive? You are like to reply that you helped because you wanted to reduce the man’s distress. But many psychologists would offer a different explanation: when we see someone in distress, we ourselves experience feelings of distress, such as shock, alarm, worry, or fear. This emotional arousal leads us to want increase our own well-being by reducing these feelings. One way to this goal is to reduce the other’s interest. Helping, then, is only a means of reducing our own distress. What appears to be altruistically motivated behaviour is really only self-interest in disguise” (Claire and Yelasquez, 2014). Even Richard Dawkins quoted in Midley, (2009) sounded it clearly that we are born selfish and that we should understand what our own selfish genes are up to. In view of that Hobbes seeing man as machines according to Sparknote editors (2005), “... human beings pursue their own self-interest relentlessly...” Even Hobbes argued that “Man does not desire social interaction for its own sake (i.e., because such interaction is inherently desirable or pleasurable) but because of the personal advantages he hopes to acquire. In addition to the desire to profit

from commerce and the like, which is motivated largely by our jealousy toward those who possess more we do, social interaction also caters to our vanity as we revel in the attention, praise and esteem we receive from others” (Smith, 2014), we can equally say that God is really in need of the company of man due the praises he receive from man.

Again, let us look at it from the perspective of human friendship. Before man – the image and likeness of God enters into a relationship, he considers what he benefit from the friendship. “Indeed, the natural oneness that characterizes the relationship that a person has to himself is closer than the oneness of disposition that prevails towards a friend” (Aquinas, 1909). “As far as friendship’s cognitive dimension is concerned, it has been argued ... that it lies in the self-actualization and self-awareness that each ... friend gains through his intimate acquaintance with his partner’s ... virtue” (Stern-Gillet, 1995, p. 57). According to Stern-Gillet, despite his argument for friendship for its own sake, “Aristotle’s claim that the virtuous person loves his friend for their own sake ... does not simply mean that primary friendship is fully disinterested” (1995, p. 39). In the same vein, Nussbaum avers that “we do not even love particular individuals in the Aristotelian way without loving, centrally, repeatable commitments and values which their lives exemplify” (1986, p. 306). Even Cooper (1976, pp. 633-4) argued that in a relationship, it is “... those who have enjoyed one another’s company or have ... mutually benefited through their common association, will, as a result of the benefits or pleasures they receive, tend to wish for and be willing to act in the interest of other person’s good, independently of consideration of their own welfare or pleasure.” Therefore, it will not be a surprise to hear Pascal (1966) say bluntly that it is not possible for one to do something or love a person for that person’s self sake without an attachment to certain qualities of the person being loved, “how can one love the body or the soul except for the qualities which are not what makes up the self, since they are perishable? Would we love the substance of a person’s soul in the abstract, whatever qualities might be in it? That is not possible, and it would be wrong. Therefore, we never love anyone but only qualities. Let us stop scoffing at those who win honour through their appointments and offices, for we never love anyone except for borrowed qualities.” To validate the veracity of Thomas Hobbes assertion of selfish interest in every human act, Adkins (1963, p. 39) refuses to accept Aristotle’s distinction of friendship or the idea that one can do something without any personal interest. He points out that Aristotle is playing a linguistic trick on the people to deny the fact that there is no atom of self-interest in every actions of one to another. In the same manner, we cannot agree that God who created man in his image crave for relationship with man for its own sake if not for what he will make out of it. Otherwise, if God is almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent, wise, powerful, and so on as we claimed, why does he need the worship of man, and if man refuses to believe and worship him he himself would decide for man where to end his life – hell fire? One can comfortably say that it is selfish of God to worship him and follow his rules or perish.

Evaluation and Conclusion

God’s selfish interest appears clearly in Asomugha’s assertion that “When man respects and obeys God’s will, he will live but if he disregards God’s wish, he will loose his happiness and will die including his generations to come” (2021, p. 6). Even most times when we target a goal but could not achieve it or pray and did not see the result we are persuaded to believe that it is the will of God. That is why Umoh, (2021, p. 10) asserts that “‘Thy will be done’ has always been the format of good ... prayer. For the will of God to done, it does not mean it is going to be what you want. God’s will can never bend to our will. So we have to bend our will to correspond to the will of God. We cannot be thinking that God must give us what we want.” The question will always be: why is does he tell man that whatever I hear you say I will do when he knows that his will must be man’s choice.

God’s selfish interest can be described in many aspects. For instance, God absconding from his duty is selfishness. Elli’s view concerning the notion of the Supreme Being in African Traditional Religion exemplifies this. According this author quoted in Ajayi (1981, p. 29), “The native says that he (olodumare) enjoys a life of complete idleness and repose ... and passes his time dozing and sleeping ... man on his own side does not waste his time endeavouring to propitiate him but reserves his worship and sacrifices for more active agents.” Olodumare is the African Traditional Religion name for God in Yoruba language. So, if we are to ascribe to the God of African Traditional Religion as “dues abscondus” (Westermann, 1937, p. 15) as described by European writers, that is, a God who has absconded from his duty, then God can be said to be selfish by leaving his duty to humans while he takes the glory. Secondly, God is in desperate need man’s company, yet he makes look as if man in dire need of him. For instance, Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics says “... vicious people seek others to pass their days with ... For when they are by themselves they remember many disagreeable actions ... but they manage to forget these in other people’s company” (Stern-Gillet, 1995, p.84). So, if the Christian God and the God of the African Traditional Religion is the same, then his actions towards the Canaanites and many others are actually taunting him. And coupled with the fact African Traditional Religion said that he has no family, it can be observed that God show his selfishness in his most interest to spend the rest of his life in the company of man to forget certain disagreeable actions and fill his loneliness, yet wants to be receiving glory, adoration, and praise. Thirdly, according to Aristotle in Stern-Gillet (1995), desire can be seen as selfish when one obtaining his desire is likely to debar others from obtaining it. If then, desire can be selfish when it hinders others intentionally from obtaining the same desire, then God is strictly in a sense selfish for debarring man from having the same knowledge he has in the Garden of Eden. Finally, in his domineering spirit, God wants to exist against and control every other being. Arazu, (2010, p. 21)’s reference to God as “the God before whom there is no other ... who does not belong to any genus as its specie” seems to suggest the selfish interest of God who does not want to have anything in with other beings. We may not say that God is not

selfish but we can agree that his own interest serves as that of the Leviathan to the interest of men so that man cannot be left to be the judge out of selfish interest, and executioner in his own case as Hobbes envisaged in the state of nature. Thus, Lloyd and Susanne (2018) assert that “Hobbes invites us to consider what life would be like in a state of nature, that is, a condition without government. Perhaps we would imagine that people might fare best in such a state, where each decides for herself how to act, and is judge, jury, and executioner in her own case when dispute arises.” In Hobbes view, therefore, just as the Leviathan claims to control and calm the society, in its own self-interest, God’s control over man is his selfish interest in disguise.

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