

The Gibeon solution (Jgs 19-21) - a mirror to reclaiming women dignity in Zimbabwe



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Chronicling the history of gendered and sexualised violence in Zimbabwe, our article upholds the view that what transpired in Judges 19:20–48 offers the contemporary readers some important lessons that are worth pondering over. Looking through feminist hermeneutical lenses, we engage in a comparative analysis of the gender-based violations, human rights abuses, and the lack of hospitality depicted in Judges 19–21 with the lived realities of Zimbabwean women in our contemporary times. The discussion draws to a close by proffering a theology of restorative justice. It is our argument that Zimbabwe needs healing through a non-retaliative response to some wrongdoing that prioritises repairing harm and the recognition that maintaining positive relationships with fellow humans is a core human need. This is the only way forward to reclaim and restore the humanity and dignity of women exposed to diverse forms of gender-based violence in our Mother Earth.

Contribution: This article reveals the link between the violations and brutality endured by the woman in Judges 19–21 with the history of sexualised violence in Zimbabwe. It is worth noting that in African Traditional Religion, the three worlds (spiritual, natural, and human) are intertwined and make up the cosmic totality; sexually violating women is tantamount to desecrating Mother Earth.

Keywords: gender-based violence; Gibeon men; human rights; Mother Earth; texts of terror; restorative justice; Zimbabwean women.

Introduction

The story of Gibeon (Jdg 19–21) is clearly one of the most shocking narratives in the Hebrew Bible in that it not only portrays the lowest level to which men can sink in terms of their moral behaviour, but it also leaves one petrified at the thought of a dismembered female corpse. It indisputably befits to be categorised among the 'texts of terror', a term coined by Phyllis Trible (1984). The story, however, ceases to be just an age-old narrative divorced from real life when one looks at numerous similar incidents in our contemporary age. Bringing the story closer home, one can see that the irrational, uncouth, barbaric, and heartless behaviour of Gibeon men falls nothing short of what transpires in Zimbabwe especially in light of the history of violence against women since the era of Ian Smith.¹ Hence, the article chronicles this sad aspect of Zimbabwean history, 2nd Chimurenga, the Gukurahundi massacres, pre- and post-election periods, particularly the 27th of June 2008 presidential run-off poll and the 1st of August 2018 shootings. We conclude the article by applying the theory of restorative justice to the Zimbabwean situation, calling for the reform of perpetrators of violence to ensure harmony on Mother Earth.

Feminist hermeneutical lenses on Judges 19–21

Feminism in general can be characterised as the recognition that in the history of civilisation, women have been marginalised by men, and they have been denied access both to social positions of authority and influence. In biblical studies, a feminist biblical criticism will therefore be concerned with exposing means or strategies by which women's subordination has been inscribed in and justified by those texts (Clines 2015).

Among the biblical texts that have caught the attention and reaction of feminist thinkers is Judges 19 – 21. Prior to the 12th century, the common approach was to blame the woman for having

1. In their article 'A re-reading of Judges 19 in juxtaposition to the Zimbabwean women's vulnerability to "punitive rape"', Mwandayi and Chirongoma (2022) engage in an in-depth juxtaposition of the Levite's concubine and Rutendo Munengami. However, in this article, the focus is on exploring the entwinement between the Zimbabwean history of sexual violence against women with the brutality endured by the concubine.

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'prostituted herself' and consider her rape as punishment for her misconduct (Duell 2011). By the 12th century, commentators were now preoccupied with condemning the host and the Levite for choosing to protect the Levite and expose the woman to strangers. It was against this background that reformation thinkers felt the men should have died protecting her and God would have punished her own sins in His own time (Duell 2011).

With the birth of feminist theological thinking, research into and commentaries on Judges 19 expanded. Phyllis Trible (1984), writing in the 1980s, conceived of the text as an example of patriarchy in its worst form. Susanne Scholz (2010) reasoned along with Trible as she argued that Biblical rape texts are a 'sacred witness' to the evils of rape in the world then and now. Helen Paynter (2020) makes the case for a 'reparative reading' of the terror-filled story of the Levite's *pilegesh* (concubine) and how such a reparative reading can be brought to shed light upon elements of the modern rape culture. For her, this ancient victim of rape is a prophetic voice addressing the suffering of victims of gender-based violence today (Paynter 2020).

Feminist interpretation therefore not only condemns the violence inflicted on the voiceless woman but also seeks to re-tell the story from her vantage point and portraying her as embodied cries of outrage (See also, Mwandayi & Chirongoma 2020; Sande & Chirongoma 2021). Assuming that the story is familiar to most people, we deliberately avoid re-telling it all over and move straight to look at how the Zimbabwean context of feminised violence is in dialogue with the Gibeon incident of feminised violence. In juxtaposing feminised violence in the Gibeon story with the Zimbabwean women's experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, we also resonate with eco-feminist theologians (e.g. Dube 2001; Kanyoro 2022) who reiterate that there are twin connections between the exploitation and devastation of our Mother Earth and the dehumanisation of women through rape.

The Zimbabwean case

Colonial regime era and the fight for freedom

Similar to the Gibeon tragedy mentioned above, Zimbabwean women tend to be reduced to casualties of a war fought by two masculine forces. During the years when Smith was in power, his regime fought a bush war with African Marxists as part of its campaign to maintain its policy of gradual handover of power (Smith 2007). A detailed account of this war lies beyond the scope of this study, but it suffices to say that there is ample evidence revealing that many women suffered at the hands of both the Smith soldiers as well as from their own brothers they were fighting side by side within the bushes (Chung 2007).

Additionally, Irene Zindi (2012), a former Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) Member of Parliament (MP), confirms that although the contribution towards the country's independence was not based on gender, the ill-treatment of women was commonplace.

Zindi's words find affirmation also from Fay Chung (2007) who bemoans how some female fighters were expected to act as 'warm blankets' for male commanders. Pointing a finger at the commander of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) Josiah Tongogara, Chung (2007) narrates how he:

[L]ike his fellow senior commanders demanded sexual services from some of the young women who had come to join the liberation struggle as a reward for their extraordinary role in the liberation war. (p. 125)

In as much women suffered molestation from male guerrillas, Rhodesian forces also gave them a hard time. Narrating an ordeal faced by villagers in Sanyati, Mwale (2018) recalls how Rhodesian forces in one incident electrocuted elderly women and raped eight girls for four consecutive days while their mothers were made to sing as they witnessed the torture. What transpired during this war in relation to women falls nothing short of what befell the Levite's wife. The atrocities committed during the Gukurahundi era, which occurred soon after Zimbabwe gained independence is what we discuss in the ensuing paragraph.

Feminisation of violence during the Gukurahundi period

A recurring Gibeon tragedy can also be gleaned from the less talked about Gukurahundi atrocities in Matebeleland, Zimbabwe. Exposing the ordeal faced by some women at the hands of dissidents, a report compiled by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) notes that *kazhinji vapanduki vaibhinya madzimai, izvo zvaiita kuti vasafarirwe* [More often, the dissidents raped women that is the reason why they did not receive support] (CCJP 1999:8). In the same CCJP report, there is also evidence that women suffered terribly at the hands of the 5th Brigade, which had been sent to restore order in areas that were suspected of harbouring dissidents. Part of the report reads: [...] *nhengo dze5 Brigade dzaitaura Shona, uye dzaitambudza vanhu vechiNdebele, avo vaisanganisira vana namadzimai. [...] Kubatwa chibharo kwakaitwa vanhukadzi veko kwainzi kwaiitirwa kuti vakadzi ava vabereke dzinza raovana vechiShona.* [Members of the Shona speaking 5th Brigade tormented the Ndebele people, including women and children. The main reason for raping women was that they would produce a generation of children with Shona heritage] (CCJP 1999:12).

These chilling, heart wrenching, savage, and barbaric human rights abuses are reminiscent of the Gibeon tragedy. Further in the text, we proceed to juxtapose the feminisation of violence in the Gibeon tragedy with the violations endured by women during the election-motivated violent episodes in Zimbabwe.

Feminisation of violence during Zimbabwean elections

The story of Gibeon also finds a replication if one traces the path that Zimbabwean elections have followed since the dawn of

independence in 1980. As noted by Kriger (2005), Zimbabwe's elections have been marred by episodes of violence. Some rival political parties, embroiled by a spirit of unhealthy competition adopted unscrupulous means with the intention of intimidating and outdoing their opponents. When one looks back at the watershed elections that ushered the birth of Zimbabwe in 1980, wartime methods of coercion and intimidation against opponents were implemented and became a defining *modus operandi* in future elections in favour of ZANU PF. In 1980, while the Commonwealth Observers' Group (COG) that had been mandated by the Lancaster House Agreement to have a final say on the first elections in Zimbabwe endorsed them as free and fair, a contrary view came from the British Observer Group – BOG (Kriger 2005). The BOG allegedly claimed that ZANU(PF)/ZANLA had violated the cease-fire by instructing many of its armed guerrillas not to go to identified assembly points but rather to stay in their operational areas, where they worked with their war-time youth collaborators to maintain the party's military and political dominance. Brutal acts of intimidation and methods of coercion against voters that had taken place in the ZANLA-dominated areas, as noted by BOG (1980), extended from:

[B]rutal 'disciplining murders' as examples of the fate awaiting those who failed to conform, to generalised threats of retribution or a continuance or resumption of the war if the ZANU (PF) failed to win the election; to psychological pressures like name-taking and claiming to be in possession of machines which would reveal how individuals had voted; and to the physical interdiction of attendance at meetings. (p. 12)

Caught in the 'disciplining murders' were usually men who were suspected or had been sold out by others out of jealousy and malice. This finds echo in Ndawana and Hove (2018) who opine:

[S]o many people were killed by guerrillas on flimsy grounds and because they were reported to the guerrillas as traitors by those who were either jealousy or had disagreed with them. (p. 143)

These brutal disciplining murders were usually conducted in the presence of the whole village with their wives looking on. They, inevitably, were the most heart broken.

While subsequent elections in Zimbabwe were generally marked by violence and intimidation, the June 2000 and June 2008 elections witnessed a heightened level of violence that cascaded into the shedding of blood. The entry of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) into the political fray in September 1999 sent ZANU PF into a panic mode and it upped its intimidation and violence machinery (Bond & Manyanya 2002). According to Kriger (2005), over 200 000 incidents of political violence occurred in the first half of 2000 and this forced the MDC to cease campaigning a few weeks before the election in over 20 constituencies, mainly rural ones. Chirongoma (2009:8) laments how 'a climate of lawlessness ensued and rape became increasingly common, making women more vulnerable to HIV infection'. Some who were perceived as supporting the opposition party (MDC), had their

homes, shops, and other valuables petrol bombed and some actually lost their lives in the process (Meldrum 2004).

While some perpetrators of this violent activity were arrested, they were set free in no time under the rubric of presidential amnesty gazetted on 06 October 2000, and none of the known ZANU PF supporters accused of these crimes has been prosecuted as yet (Kriger 2005). On several occasions, party leaders delivered hate speeches that condoned the use of violence against the MDC, which was stigmatised as a party representing white or British interests (Hill 2003). Moven Mahachi, for example, is alleged to have told a crowd:

[W]e will move door to door, killing like we did to Chiminya [Tsvangirai's electoral agent who was brutally murdered allegedly by a CIO agent]. I am the minister responsible for defence, therefore I am capable of killing. (Kriger 2005:27)

The account of Chiminya's death and many others who suffered political violence prior to and post-2000 elections draws much sympathy when understood from the vantage points of their respective mothers. While the voices of these women were nowhere heard in the media, the pain they went through should not be underestimated in any way. Nothing surpasses the pain of a woman than to see the fruit of her own womb being wantonly put to death for flimsy reasons.

The post-election violence of 2000 spilled over into 2003 as perceived opposition party supporters and their families were still targets of the marauding ZANU PF supporters. One of the heart-wrenching acts of brutality against a political rival is the rape and physical beating, which was perpetrated against Rutendo Munengami (See Mwandayi & Chirongoma 2022). Below, we turn to discuss the feminisation of violence before, during, and after the 27 June 2008 dispute-laden Zimbabwean elections.

Violence instigated by the 27 June 2008 elections

The concubine's tragedy is indeed in common with women suffering today (Paynter 2020) if we are to look back on what transpired pre and post the 27 June 2008 presidential elections in Zimbabwe. A look at some concrete examples of what transpired in that period will help to shed light on this whole issue.² One example of such brutality against women is that of a Buhera woman who reported of rape by over 18 men during the 4 days she was detained at their base in Nhamo village, Manicaland. The woman was one of those rounded up after ZANU PF youths failed to find her husband who was suspected of being an MDC supporter (Chimhete 2008). Adding to the countless rape cases committed during the same period, a report by Betty Makoni chronicles the unbearable torture and humiliation that some women had to

2. It is important to note that the accounts of rape referred to in this research are not based on an independent verification by the authors. Most were drawn from reliable websites, and such stories tend to also find support from the 'unpenned and less-talked about discussions' of ordinary Zimbabwean citizens who were living in politically volatile areas in 2007. Given the sensitivity of such stories, ordinary Zimbabweans fear to be spied on; hence, they would not want to publicly talk about such issues or even divulge much to strangers. This makes independent verification on such issues a complex task.

go through at the hands of thugs loyal to the ZANU PF party. She reported of targeted victims being raped in front of family members, men being forced to rape their mother-in-laws, some women being stripped naked and flogged in public while others had pesticides shoved into their genitals (Makoni 2008).

While there has been no independent verification and confirmation of these reports, their credibility sounds high given an incident in which four senior female members of the former coalition government were left sobbing after listening to testimonies of several women who were raped during the 2008 elections (NewsdzeZimbabwe 2012). Present were the former Deputy Prime Minister Thokozani Khupe, former Co-Minister of Home Affairs Theresa Makone, former co-chairpersons of the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) Thabitha Khumalo, and Oppah Muchinguri. Speaking on the occasion, Theresa Makone said:

These people are not different from murderers; they must stay in jail ... I don't think there is any political party that will send anyone to go and rape on its behalf. Raping someone is like killing them and it should not be allowed to happen in Zimbabwe. (Makone cited in NewsdzeZimbabwe 2012:np)

Echoing the same sentiments is Chief Charumbira who queried why rape suspects should be granted bail. He cracked the whip:

I don't understand why rape suspects should be given bail. I don't understand why some rape convicts should be given 5 years, 10 years and others 57 years. Rape is rape and if it means one should get 57 years let that be the standard. (Chief Charumbira cited in NewsdzeZimbabwe 2012:np)

Clearly, the crime of rape sounds abhorrent to the majority of Zimbabweans across all political divides. Unfortunately, there are some bad apples in the pack who have continued to unleash this reign of terror. We proceed to discuss the most recent waves of politically motivated violence mainly targeted towards women that occurred in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

The killings perpetrated on 01 August 2018

What sparked the shootings of 01 August 2018 were the delays by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) in announcing the July 2018 presidential election results. As the situation appeared out of control after the announcement of the official results, armed forces brutally quashed the protests. As has been noted above, in most cases where such violent scenes are witnessed or recorded, women tend to bear the brunt. Among the victims of this frenzied attack on civilians was an innocent woman, Sylvia Maposa who was shot in the back. Though she was not among the protesters, a gunman fatally shot her (AFP, Zimbabwe 2018a). This signals lawlessness in the country as it is actually a criminal offense to shoot someone from the back, let alone a defenceless person.

Another victim of the 1st August shootings was Ishmael Kumire. His wife, Suspicious wept uncontrollably as she faced an oblique future without Ishmael (AFP, Zimbabwe 2018b). The pain experienced by Suspicious as a wife and mother is the same pain experienced by other women whose sons or husbands suffered the same fate as Ishmael during this post-election violence. One begins to wonder how mothers and wives of the gunmen feel if they come to know of this. As discussed further, armed forces were at it again when people tried to resist the escalating cost of living in Zimbabwe in January 2019.

Reign of terror following fuel price hikes

What started off as a public furore against fuel price increases ended up being a reign of terror targeting women on the streets and in their homes. In January 2019, petrol prices rose from \$1.24 a litre to \$3.31 while diesel rose from \$1.36 a litre to \$3.11. This sparked an outrage among the populace, followed by demonstrations countrywide that resulted in the shooting of at least five civilians and the arrest of not less than 200 people (Timeslive 2019). Cyril Zenda (2019) aptly captures the human rights violations mainly perpetrated by the state security agents as they desperately and viciously tried to curtail the protests. He notes:

In no time an avalanche of reports about rapes, beatings and other acts of gross human rights violations started emerging from other veritable sources, including the state-funded Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. It was during this crackdown that most of the rapes were allegedly committed. (p. np)

While at first the government tried to dismiss the reports as mere fabrications, live media footage proved it wrong. It is this casual approach by the state apparatus that raised the ire of human rights activists who see rape and state-sanctioned violence against citizens as the new norm in Zimbabwe (Zenda 2019). At this point, we turn to draw parallels between the plight of women in Zimbabwe and the Gibeon tragedy.

Parallels between the Zimbabwean women and the Gibeon tragedy

The first thing that is notably revealed from both case studies is that women are denied a voice by their male overlords. It is 'a men's world' so it appears and women should silently follow what males decide. In the case of the concubine, she does not even voice when to depart and it appears to be a matter between her husband and father, and when the actual day comes, she does not even give her opinion on what hour of the day to leave despite the long journey that lay before them. Being 'the world of men', every male in the story, including the male servant, speaks for himself (Jdg 19:11). Though she could have also sensed danger just like the male servant who was given a voice to reveal his fears, the concubine was given no room by the writer to speak for herself.

In the same way, most Zimbabwean women are not given a voice in decision-making processes; they wait to be informed

about what the council of men would have decided. They are considered as *vatorwa* (outsiders) when it comes to legal matters that affect the family like marriage or death; hence, only the males who are considered to be the rightful successors in the family lineage decide on such matters. As rightly noted by Manyonganise, a common Shona expression is often uttered: '*vakadzi ngavanyarare*' ['women should keep quiet'] (Manyonganise 2015). Just as in the case of the concubine, many Zimbabwean men are less willing to listen to women when they try to come up with suggestions based on their gift of intuition.

Like the concubine who was sexually abused by people who were supposed to have protected her, the same fate befell several Zimbabwean women during the various pre-election campaigns and post-election violence outbreaks. It was not outsiders who came in to rape these Zimbabwean women but their fellow kinsmen whom they knew very well and with whom they shared the same neighbourhoods. This confirms Smith's assertion that 'in contexts of perceived familiarity and/or normalcy, oppression and brutality against women and children can more easily occur with little or no interference' (Smith 2009:15) It is intensely traumatising when a person realises that one's own enemy is someone living next door. It will be even worse when the victim continues to see his or her attacker almost on a daily basis coupled with the attacker showing no remorse for the evil he or she would have done. Familiarity thus opines Smith (2009) can be employed as either a deterrent against violence or as the ideal pretext or context for the perpetration of violence.

Just like the concubine who was dragged outside and could have had cried for help but no one came to her rescue, likewise, the Zimbabwean women who were dragged to the militia bases had no one to help them except to face their persecutors alone. Worse still, others were raped in the safety of their homes while their family members were watching. Though most did not suffer to the point of physical death as happened to the concubine, their cases befit to be described as social death, a condition whereby a person is excluded and the group acts as if they were not there. A person, in other words, experiences a loss of social identity or social connectedness (Kralova 2015). The raped women are also 'dead' to the society in the sense that now they can hardly trust anyone in the society. One cannot expect them to overcome the psychological trauma they underwent unless something is done to heal them. It is in this light that we are advocating restorative justice to bring about holistic healing to these women.

Towards restorative justice in Zimbabwe

Restorative justice can be defined as a non-retaliative response to some wrongdoing that prioritises repairing harm and the recognition that maintaining positive relationships with fellow humans is a core human need (Restorative Justice Exchange 2022). In the pursuit of restorative justice, there are three core steps that help people actualise its fullness, namely: encounter, repair, and transformation. The first step of

encounter involves bringing together the victims, offenders, and community members so as to determine how to repair the harm. Verbally or silently, the offenders need to acknowledge their wrongdoing and express the desire to make amends. In the case of the Gibeon incident, after the other tribes had subdued the Benjaminites, they gathered to determine how to repair the harm by asking themselves: 'Today one of the tribes of Israel has been cut off. What can we do about the wives for the survivors ...?' (Jdg 21:6ff).

As wrongdoing harms people and tears apart relationships, restorative justice seeks to repair that harm (2nd step).³ In the case of Israel, as a way of repairing the harm that had been done, other tribes moved to find among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young virgins whom they offered to the Benjaminites as a reconciliatory handshake (Jdg 21:12ff). On realising that the virgins had not proved to be enough for these men, they took a step further by allowing the Benjaminites to carry off a wife for each of them, girls of Shiloh (Jdg 21:15–23).

The final step is that of transformation. Restorative justice seeks to create spaces that lead to transformed victims and offenders as well as identify systemic and structural issues that can be changed to foster more just systems and healthier and safer communities. In the Gibeon incident, the element of transformation can be deduced from the fact that the Benjaminites returned to their territory and rebuilt their cities and at the same time other tribes dispersed to their own heritage (Jdg 21:23–24). This signalled the end to the spirit of animosity as each party, now transformed, returned home to start a normal existence.

In application to the Zimbabwean situation, there is a need to sit down with the perpetrators who have caused untold suffering to the Zimbabwean womenfolk. The spirit of open dialogue is critical for it allows victims to narrate their pain and perpetrators in turn acknowledging it and making amends for the wrongs. This also finds support in the words of Gutto (2013) who states:

Acknowledging the wrongs of the past and making symbolic reparative actions for those wrongs are essential for ensuring that the pursuit for a better world of justice is not built on top of underlying sinkholes and on the waste dumps of past injustices. (p. 35)

However, as we contemplate such a step, there is need to mind falling into the same dilemma that befell the Reconciliation Commission formed under the auspices of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2008. Though the Commission had a noble task to accomplish, the political grandstanding of some Zimbabwean politicians made it difficult for the Commission to effectively heal the psychological wounds of those victimised and their families. Politicians who led the process could not separate their political party agendas from the national project (Mhandara

³While the custom of ambushing a woman and dragging her home for marriage is now a criminal offense, when the text is read against its ancient background one is able to appreciate the practice in as much as musenga bere was a recognised and legitimate system of marriage among traditional Shona societies.

2020). Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front, in particular, through its monopoly of the media and political campaigns coercively continued to present itself as the liberator and legitimate patron of the Zimbabwean people to whom the people remained indebted. As a result, issues of peace, reconciliation, healing, and stability were heavily compromised and politicised. For restorative justice to work, there is a need to move away from party politics and handle the matter with sincerity of the heart.

This study thus makes an appeal to the relevant authorities in government to make perpetrators atone for their wrongdoing and make amends for their wrongdoing. If such offenders are made to atone for their misdeeds, it will help send a positive signal to the youths in particular that they have to shun violence and respect the people's human rights and dignity. Sexual harassment not only undermines the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but it also undermines the principle of the Common Good that requires that political, economic, and the social order should 'allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to make independent choices to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily' (Williams 2010). People should not be punished for their democratic rights of participating in political associations of their choice.

If the ongoing human rights violations in Zimbabwe are left to continue unabated, then it will not only be a communal sin against humanity but also a communal sin against God and our dearest Mother Earth. This also finds resonance with the counsel offered in Amos 5:21–24, which reads:

21I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies ... 24But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (ESV)

Amos' message elicits a theology of restorative justice within the context of politically motivated gendered and sexual violence in Zimbabwe. This biblical text makes it apparent that God the creator of Mother Earth who bequeathed the universe to us requires us to practice social justice, mercy, and righteousness. Clearly, the perpetration of gender-based sexual violations runs contrary to God's original intention on how we should behave as part of an integrated Mother Earth. Just as the people of Israel being addressed by Amos were claiming to be religious, while perpetrating social injustice, the same charge sheet can be presented to the majority of the Zimbabwean populace where approximately 80% of the populace purports to be Christians, but there is rampant human rights abuse, corruption, and all manner of evils. The theology of restorative justice would also inculcate the spirit of shalom where justice will roll down like waters and righteousness will flow like an ever-flowing stream (see also Chirongoma 2021). It is apparent that justice and righteousness cannot flow like an ever-flowing stream in Zimbabwe if molesters are not helped to transform for the better but let to go about freely and commit the same crimes as before under the cover of party politics. There is therefore an urgent need for correcting the wrongs not only in Zimbabwe, but in the rest of our Mother Earth. At this point, we proceed to draw a conclusion on this subject matter.

Conclusion

As a way of concluding, one can see that the concubine's fate ceases to be just an age-old narration divorced from real life. The story confirms the commonly accepted reality that women stand at the receiving end of most forms of violence. The story, though, has great emancipatory power. As shown in the foregoing discussion, the narrative invites readers to witness and denounce evil against fellow human beings, especially women. Above all, the narrative exudes an exemplar of restorative justice. After ensuring that justice in the name of the woman had been imparted, the men of Israel sought to repair the damage through finding wives for the surviving Benjaminites and helped them transform for the better. The same is what one would expect to see in Zimbabwe. There is need for some echelons of our Zimbabwean society to shun political grandstanding and help perpetrators of sexual violence against women atone for their wrongdoing and make amends. It is only by acknowledging the pain and anguish that some women report to have undergone that their healing can begin and, in the process, the whole of Mother Earth also gets healed.

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The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

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