CHAPTER 11

A. E. TAYLOR: MORAL IMPERATIVE

This chapter discusses the interpretation of A.E. Taylor, which rejects the traditional view of Hobbes that there is continuity amongst materialism, psychology and his political theory. Unlike Strauss, who advocates a break between Hobbes's materialism and civil philosophy, Taylor points out the independence of political philosophy from egoistic psychology. The importance of Taylor's interpretation lies in disengaging political philosophy from the materialistic psychology. The political philosophy of Hobbes, according to Taylor, should be read independent of the materialistic psychology. This implies that he is not only disengaging psychology but also natural science from political philosophy, since natural science forms the first part of Hobbes's system of philosophy, the second and third being psychology and civil philosophy respectively. Commenting on the profundity of Taylor's thesis Stuart M. Brown Jr. (1959) says that:

...the arguments and evidence adduced by Taylor in support of his thesis are so compelling that most of the recent work on Hobbes has been done on the presumption that Taylor's theses is true... controversies about the interpretation of Hobbes's theory have been for the most part between scholars who
agree with each other in accepting Taylor's thesis and who disagree only as to what in detail Hobbes’s non Prudential theory of obligation is (1959: 303-304).

Taylor's thesis as it is clear from the above quote changed the outlook of recent interpreters of Hobbes so much that they even centered their interpretations on this thesis.¹

To demonstrate the independent existence of Hobbesian theory of obligation from the egoistic psychology. Taylor pieces out self-consistent ethical theory and highlights the imperative character of the moral laws. His plan in maintaining the imperative nature of moral law is two fold. One is to show the logically independent nature of the political philosophy from the theory of egoistic psychology, and another is to argue for the deontological character of the moral philosophy. However, the attempt to disengage the political philosophy from the theory of psychology consequently undermines the importance of natural sciences. Taylor, while disengaging the political philosophy from psychology, also rejects any continuity between the natural philosophy (that is, physics) and political philosophy.

Taylor attempts to expose the commonly seen ‘false perspective’ of the moral doctrine of Hobbes, which has seriously obscured: (i) the real affinities between Hobbes and Kant which are of deontological character; (ii) that sovereign has no

¹ Warrender, Oakeshott, and many others followed Taylor in this enterprise.
corresponding duties to his extensive rights; (iii) ethical theory has its moral
imperativeness in laws of nature. The ‘false perspective’ attributed continuity
between theory of psychology and moral obligation. Nevertheless, the reason for this
false perspective is largely due to the fact that most of the ethical readings of Hobbes
‘begin and end’ with the rhetorical masterpiece _Leviathan_. Taylor, in order to
correct the misunderstandings of the ethical philosophy refers almost entirely to _De
Cive_. and substantiates his preference by pointing out that unlike _Leviathan_ which
was produced ‘in the very culmination of what looked at the time to be a permanent
revolution.’ _De Cive_ was produced ‘before the issue of conflict could have been
thought to be already decided by the sword.’ Since _De Cive_ is produced before the
outbreak of civil war and before culmination of permanent revolution it should be
taken more seriously to understand the moral philosophy of Hobbes. Taking only
_Leviathan_ into consideration has given rise to the false perspective. This has
obscured the real affinities listed above of moral philosophy because _Leviathan_
was produced after the conflict between the state and the individual has been decided
by the sword and at the time of the culmination of the permanent revolution. Since
this deciding factor has its impact on Hobbes’s ethical thinking, it shifted his
attention away from the deontological character. In moving away from _Leviathan_
and towards _De Cive_, Taylor wants to correct the false perspective of Hobbes’s
ethical philosophy.

Taylor attempted to explicate the origin of the political philosophy of Hobbes
in moral imperative nature of the law-of-nature (natural law) rather than self-interest
based on egoistic psychology.
Arguing that the deontological character of the moral imperativeness is the basis of Hobbes's political obligation, which has its affinities with Kant.

2. Pointing out the prevalence of moral imperative even before the existence of civil society, i.e., in the state of nature, in the form of laws of nature and subjecting the sovereign also to the natural law.

3. Finally, arguing that the laws of nature are obligatory and they draw their authority as the commands of God.

The important aspects of Taylor's thesis shall be discussed by pointing out how he bases the political philosophy of Hobbes on moral imperative by disengaging it from the egoistic psychology.

**Deontological character of Hobbes's Ethical philosophy**

Taylor attempts to prove the deontological character of the ethical theory of Hobbes by disengaging it from the egoistic psychology. The theory of egoistic psychology provides self-interest as the basis of political obligation. It argues that every man 'ought to obey the political sovereign without asking any questions or making any difficulties'. The reason being, 'he stands personally to lose by doing anything else', in this way it advocates absolute submission of the individual to the sovereign, and bases this submission on self-interest. Every individual always desires some good for himself. The disobedience to the civil law causes anarchy, which does
not contribute any good to the individual. The miseries of the anarchv are to be prevented for his personal interest. And, therefore, in one's own interest every one should confirm to the law. Moreover, if the individual thinks that the violation of law brings gain to him, then he is justified in doing so. However, according to Taylor, Hobbes adds that he would never stand to gain anything by violating a law, since it breaks the peace of the society, and causes recurrence of the state of 'war of everyman against everyman' (1938:137). Since it is in his own interest that the individual should not violate the law. Taylor rejects this self-interest as the basis of Hobbes's ethical theory and argues that it is because it is his duty that an individual acts according to law.

Further, Taylor deduces sense of duty from self-interest. He maintains that self-interest, 'if we try to understand it calmly', is the interest in doing one's duty. It is the duty of the person not to disobey the covenant once made, and this has its root in the self-interest. He argues:

... to say that this is to my interest is equivalent to saying that it is my duty: my duty, in fact, means my personal interest, calmly understood. (1938: 136)

Taylor, in this way, equates self-interest with duty. Further, according to him, the question why a person ought to be a good citizen and perform his duties, can be answered, from the Hobbesian point of view, as iniquity is explained as violating his pledge and refusal to perform the covenant that has been made. To quote Taylor, 'it
is, quite explicitly, that I have, expressly or tacitly, pledged my word to be one. and
to violate my word, to refuse to perform my covenant as made, is iniquity. malum
in se’ (1938:137).

Since the violation of the given word, and refusal to perform the covenant
made. is iniquity, a person is obliged to be a good citizen. In other words,
disobedience of the given word is equal to the disobedience of the duty to which a
person is pledged. Performing an act because it is duty and deontology
as an ethical theory basically argues for the independence of moral act from its
consequences. Etymologically, deontology means the science of duty. According to
this theory, the seat of moral worth lies in the sense of duty. An action done from
duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination and with it every object of the
will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the law
and subjectively pure respect for the practical law. Duty implies that we are under
some kind of obligation, or a moral law. This deontology differs from Hobbesian
egoistic psychology in the sense that it is based on duty whereas egoistic psychology
bases itself on self-interest and fear of violent death. Taylor, in this way, brings the
deontological character of the moral obligation by differentiating it from the egoistic
psychology. This argument, which bases the moral philosophy of Hobbes on
deontological character of moral imperative, makes him argue for a logical
independence of ethical doctrine from egoistic psychology. To quote Taylor:
Hobbes's ethical doctrine, proper, disengaged from an egoistic psychology with which it has no logically necessary connection, is a very strict deontology. (1938: 137)

Hobbes's ethical theory is independent and has no necessary connection with egoistic psychology. Instead, it is based on duty and hence it is a deontological theory. Having established the deontological character of the moral obligation of Hobbes, Taylor, further, points out both similarities and differences between Hobbes and Kant.

Affinities between Taylor and Kant:

Deontology, as stated above, is an ethical theory which basically argues for the independence of moral act from its consequences. And duty implies that we are under some kind of obligation or a moral law. According to Kant, as rational beings we are aware of this obligation as it comes to us in the form of an imperative. This awareness regards moral law as rational and also as imperative. Taylor also views the Hobbesian moral obligation as imperative and rational in nature. He finds the exposition of the deontological character of the moral law in the distinction between just act and just person, which was explicated in De Cive. According to Taylor, Hobbes, while making a distinction between a just act and a just person, argues that the just and unjust when attributed to persons signify one thing and when applied to actions signify another. A just act is one that is done in accord with right, and an unjust act is what is done with 'injury'. However, when applied to persons 'just and
unjust are not similar to that of actions. Justice of an act lies in doing it "in accord with right." That is, an act should be backed by right in order to be just. But a man who acts in accord with right may not eo ipso a just man. A man can said to be just if he derives pleasure in doing justice and in studying how to act in accordance with righteousness. This implies that, one who neglects righteous dealing or thinks that actions are based on some present benefit are unjust. Hence a just man acts justly because law commands the act and if a man acts because of the fear of punishment he is said to be unjust. Taylor, to substantiate the deontological position of Hobbes quotes from De Cive:

When the words are applied to persons, to be just signifies to be delighted in just dealing, to study how to do righteousness, or to endeavour in all things to do that which is just: and to be unjust is to neglect righteous dealing, or to think it is to be measured not according to my contract, but some present benefit.... That man is to be accounted just, who doth just things because the laws command it. unjust things only by reason of his infinity: and he is properly said to be unjust. who doth righteousness for fear of the punishment annexed unto the law, and unrighteousness by reason of the iniquity of his mind. (1938: 137)

The above quotation signifies two important aspects that are the characteristic marks of the deontological theory. In the first part of the quotation, Hobbes seems to
reject the significance of any benefit in a just man's act. In this way, he is criticizing the teleological view, which argues that the significance of an act depends upon its consequences. A just person acts justly, for he gets delighted in doing so, and he is not motivated by any future consequence. The second part of the quotation signifies another important aspect of deontology which says, a just man acts not by the threat of punishment, but because the law commands him. Therefore, no external force or threat motivates or compels a just person to act justly, but it is purely the imperative nature of the law, which comes from within the nature of the person. Further, a man is said to be unjust, even if the act by itself is just and is done because of the fear of punishment. This shows that just or unjust behavior of man does not solely depend on his acts but also on his motives in doing so. The reason or motive, which compels man to act justly or unjustly, decides whether he is just or unjust. These two aspects of Hobbesian exposition of just act and just man, which are deontological in nature, made Taylor show the similarity between Hobbes and Kant. Kant makes a distinction between an action done merely in accordance with law and an action done from law. This distinction is similar to the distinction made by Hobbes between just act and just person. Kant reduced all kinds of moral law to the 'good will'. In the same way, Hobbes reduces the law from which a virtuous man acts to a single law that a promise once duly fulfilled must be kept. Another interesting similarity is Hobbes anticipation of the attempt made by Kant to reduce all wrong willing to the irrational attempt to will both sides of contradiction at once. (1938: 138) Hobbes argues that every breach of covenant is a contradiction. It is a contradiction in the sense that a person who covenanted to do something is agreed to do so in all the
future cases and when he violates it, he is willing to do and not to do at the same
time, which is a plain contradiction. According Taylor, **Hobbes** agrees with **Kant**
about the imperative nature of the moral **law** and regarding the moral law as the **law**
of right reason.

Notwithstanding these **similarities**, there are few differences between the
moral imperative of **Hobbes** and the categorical imperative of **Kant**. Firstly, Taylor
says, ‘**Hobbes**, for his own **reasons**, reduces all **injury** to the violation of an expressed
or implied promise’ (1938: 138), whereas it is not the case with **Kant**. Second, one is
the principle of universalisability. **Kant** universalized the moral **law** in order to tree it
from contradiction. However, **Hobbes** never tried to universalize moral law on these
lines.

To add to the argument of Taylor that the moral philosophy of **Hobbes** is
independent of **psychology**, it is interesting to discuss the importance given to
*reason* in his discussions on psychology and political philosophy. **Hobbes** gives
**secondary** importance to reason in his psychological explanation of man and regards
reason as a slave to passions. However, when it comes to the discussion on **laws** of
**nature**, he upholds their prominence by regarding them as the ‘dictates of reason’. In
other words, the significance of the **law-of-nature** is based on the assumption that
they are dictated by reason. In this manner, **Hobbes** seems to elevate the significance
of reason in political philosophy from psychology. This may also be helpful to us in
understanding the moral philosophy of **Hobbes**, independent of his psychology. After
understanding Taylor's explication of the imperative nature of moral laws on the
grounds of deontology, let us proceed to discuss the ground of moral imperative in the ethical theory of Hobbes.

**Moral Imperativeness ID Natural Law:**

Taylor rejects the traditional view, largely drawn from *Leviathan*, which states that Hobbes’s moral obligation comes from the transference of the rights of the people. This transference of rights is a continuation of the theory of psychology, which tries to show how the sovereign and the civil society come into existence. This transference cannot explain the imperative character of the moral laws, because it only calls for the submission of the rights of the people to the sovereign by establishing the civil society. Moral imperativeness is there even in the state-of-nature in the form of laws of nature, i.e., even before the existence of civil sovereign and society. Since transference of rights is continuation of psychology and moral obligation prevails prior to the existence of civil society, the psychological theory of Hobbes is independent of his moral obligation.

Taylor argues that moral imperative has its basis, not in the transference of rights or in the civil society in the form of the commands of the sovereign backed by penalties, but in the laws of nature. According to him, the natural law, which is also a moral law, is imperative in nature. The moral philosophy of Hobbes has its origin in the exposition of the doctrine of laws of nature. In other words, it is in the exposition of laws of nature that Hobbes intends his moral obligation, but not in the explication of his psychology. Taylor, by highlighting the imperative character of the laws of nature,
nature, which tends to be obscured by a hasty reader, tries to prove the origin of moral obligation in them. He warns us that a hasty reader of Hobbes may get obscured by the above tact and may be disposed to wrongly understand the laws-of-nature as mere propositions indicative about the means which are commonly found to be most conducive to a peaceful existence, and that their imperative character as laws, in the proper sense of the word, is entirely secondary (1938: 139-40). The imperative character of a moral law arises only in the civil society, when the sovereign bestows them with the 'penal sanctions'.

Taylor observes that the very kind of explanation of laws of nature that Hobbes has given expresses that they are imperative in character. Hobbesian use of these laws of nature is always as dictates, but never as pieces of advise. To quote Taylor. * Hobbes always describes the items of the natural law as *dictamina, or dictates, *consilia, or pieces of advice.... which forbids certain actions' (1938: 140).

Even in their formulation, he uses imperative and quasi-imperative language. The very definitions that he gives in De Cive and Leviathan, to describe laws of nature show their imperative character. Taylor substantiates this by quoting the works of Hobbes:

... the law-of-nature is defined as 'the dictate of right reason, conversant about those things which are either to be done or omitted ... for the constant preservation of life and members.
as much as in us lies' (De Cive. II. 1 [EW. II. 161]). "A Law-of-
nature (Leviathan. XIV. 84 [EW. III. 116-117]) is a Precept.
or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is
forbidden to do, that which is destructive of his life, or taketh
away the means of preserving the same: and to omit that, by
which he thinketh it may be best preserved'. And (ibid.
[Leviathan. 85: EW III. 117]) the 'Fundamentall Law-of-
nature' is that 'by which men are commanded to endeavour
Peace.' (1938: 140)

The above definitions of laws of nature quoted from different works of
Hobbes show that the imperative character is inseparably associated with laws of
nature. For Taylor this is true even in the case of 'fundamental law' in the state-of-
nature. According to him, even the creation of the civil society, is based on the moral
imperative. The way civil society comes into existence is by unqualified submission
of individual's personal rights to the sovereign. To quote Taylor:

It must be remembered, however, that this unqualified
submission to the sovereign is regarded by Hobbes not as a
mere counsel of safety, but as a strict moral obligation, and
that the obligation is imported into it from the 'eternal' natural
law that faith once given is to be kept. (1938: 143-4)
The unqualified submission of the individual to sovereign, for Hobbes, is not just for the sake of safety or to avoid death as egoistic psychology states, but it is for the sake of moral obligation of the natural law. It states that if we pledge we have to keep it under all circumstances. It is upon a covenant that the civil society depends, which is nothing but natural law that the covenants once made can never be violated.

Civil Law vs Natural Law:

In order to show the origin of moral obligation in natural law Taylor explicates a distinction that is found in Hobbes's description of civil law and natural law. According to him, Hobbesian use of these laws of nature is not simply as advises to persuade one's personal interest, but as moral laws. These moral laws dictate duties. They are morally obligatory and imperative in character and so everybody should obey them. Hobbes's ethical theory, as Taylor infers from this, is a strict deontology. This deontological character is already implicitly there in the state-of-nature. It becomes explicit in the civil society. Whether it is a civil society or a state-of-nature every individual has to play his part, and should be under the governance of some law or authority.

Hence, according to Taylor, laws of nature are moral laws and moral law will always be in the imperative form and it always dictates some duty. In this way, he insists that Hobbesian presentation of laws of nature must be viewed not as mere pieces of advice about the prudent pursuit of self-interest, but as moral laws, which
dictate duties. The imperative nature is inseparable from these laws of nature. This inseparable imperative nature proves the origin of obligation, not in the sovereign's orders backed by threats of penalties. Instead, it proves the continuance of moral obligation before the existence of the legislator and the civil society. Therefore, moral obligation to obey the natural law is independent of the civil sovereign. Taylor argues that the obligation to obey the sovereign is not created by the orders of the sovereign backed by the threat of penalties. Instead, the moral obligation derives its birth from the laws of nature, which has its existence even before the existence of the civil society, i.e., in the state-of-nature. He uses the distinction made by Hobbes between internal obligation or \textit{in fore interno} and external obligation \textit{in fore externo}.

and argues that in the state-of-nature the moral law is obliged \textit{in fore interno}. but not always \textit{in fore externo}. (1938: 141)

Taylor held that Hobbes would have conveyed his meaning of the moral imperative in the state-of-nature more clearly, had he stressed that the fundamental law-of-nature, i.e., the natural law is a law of reciprocal obligation. What Taylor meant by this reciprocal obligation was that, every man tries to be peaceful with him who is willing also to be at peace with him. In other words, that every man ought to endeavor peace at tore as he has hope of obtaining it. The moral obligation in the state-of-nature is \textit{in fore interno} and, therefore, is reciprocal because there is no external common power to act as a protector or a governor. Every man has to judge for himself whether other man's desire for peace with me is reciprocated on my part.
Taylor, further, argues that this reciprocity of the natural law has its fuller implication on another important distinction between civil law and natural law. Civil laws can only be violated by external actions and words, but the moral law is violated by an improper thought and purpose. Moral law, which is in foro interno, is said to be broken not only when one acts contrary to it but also when one thinks contrary to it. In other words, even if the action done is according to the laws, but the purpose or intention is against the law, then the natural law is said to be broken.

Taylor maintains that natural law, unlike civil law, is immutable and eternal. What the laws of nature command can never be unlawful and what they forbid can never be lawful. Pride, ingratitude, breach of contracts (i.e. injury), inhumanity will never be lawful and the contrary can never be unlawful. In this way, Taylor advocates the precedence and significance of the natural law over the civil law.

Another important point that makes Taylor to argue for the imperativeness of the natural law in Hobbes is the existence of a lot many other obligations along with those ordained by the sovereign in the civil society. All the other obligations that a man in the civil society obliges, which are not commanded by the sovereign, derive their obligatoriness from the natural law. The range of natural law, therefore, is broad and it even includes the obligatoriness of the civil sovereign's commands. The kind of importance that has been given to the practical importance of obedience to the sovereign is so great that it overshadows another equally predominant theme in Hobbes, namely, that "we are under an 'eternal obligation' to practice an equity
which demands mercy, benevolence, gratitude, and to practice it because the law commands it." (1938: 142)

Taylor saves Hobbes from CudworthV charge that Hobbes based moral obligation on the 'mere will' of the sovereign, by maintaining that 'all obligations, including the obligation to honor ray covenant by strict obedience to the sovereign, is thus derived by Hobbes from a natural law'. The sovereign uses his 'mere will' only to make a distinction between just and unjust'. The meaning of just, by definition, is that which civil law permits, and unjust is that which the civil law forbids. However, the sovereign does not make a more important and antecedent distinction between equity and inequity. To quote Taylor:

... the sovereign does nothing to create the obligation to keep a 'covenant': all that he really does is to decree that the performance of certain 'covenants' is illegal, and to prescribe the precise forms of declaration of our intentions, which his courts will regard as constituting a contract. So, we are told, he does not make adultery wrong: it was wrong antecedently by the 'natural law': he merely decides 'what copulations' are to be regarded as adulterous. (1938: 143)

2 Cudworth is one of the early critics of Hobbes. He was referred by Taylor. (1938: 142)
This shows that the sovereign is only an interpreter of the law and is not the law giver as such. Taylor argues that for Hobbes a good citizen has to simply obey the command of his sovereign even if the command given is iniquitous. Since the subject is covenanted to be loyal to the sovereign, he must obey and should not break the command of the natural law that ‘covenants once made are to be kept’. By obeying the sovereign, the subject has done his duty. If the command is iniquitous, the iniquity applies to the sovereign who gave it and he is, according to Hobbes, answerable to the God. Taylor argues that if the subject disobeys the command believing that the command is iniquitous, then the iniquity of the disobedience would not fall on him. In this way, while attributing iniquity to the sovereign, he justifies the unqualified submission of the subjects to the sovereign. He argues that Hobbes regards this unqualified submission not as a mere counsel of safety but as a strict deontology. The obligation is imported into it by the natural law that ‘faith once given is to be kept’. And this is antecedent to the creation of political obligation.

Sovereign as a part of Moral Imperative:

Taylor argues for the consistency of the deontology of Hobbes by pointing out the dependence of civil society on the covenant and making the obedience to the civil law as the duty on the part of the subjects. He, in order to substantiate his argument for the deontological character of Hobbes, introduces civil sovereign also into the jurisdiction of the natural law. Taylor, in this way, makes the moral obligation obligatory not only to the subjects but also to the sovereign. Civil sovereign, who is not subject to his own laws and who is authorized to command and
forbid at his discretion, is 'just as much under a rigid law of moral obligation as his subjects'. What the sovereign obliged is 'equity'. To quote Taylor: 'He is obliged to equity, the strict observance of the natural (or moral) law. which means, in effect, that he is bound to command and forbid always with a view to the good of the community' (1938: 144).

The sovereign is obliged to work for the good of the community that is to command his subjects in order to preserve the peace and commodious living. Taylor argues that Hobbesian sovereign has not only extensive rights, but also corresponding duties. They are: 1) not to restrain the 'harmless liberty' of the subjects by 'superfluous laws'; 2) not to 'allow law to be stultified by the imposition of inadequate penalties' and, 3) 'not to poison its administration by conniving at the corruption of judges by bribes and presents'. (1938: 148) Violation of all these duties has been regarded as 'misconduct' on the part of the sovereign and Hobbes described it as 'iniquity' and 'sin'.

Now the problem for Taylor is, since Hobbes reduces all iniquity in the end to the breech of contract, and regards sovereign as no part to the contract, how could the misconduct of sovereign be termed as iniquity. According to Hobbes, the 'original contract' imposes no conditions on the sovereign's arbitrary exercise of the power to command or forbid, and hence the sovereign cannot said to be guilty of iniquity.
If iniquity and the breech of contract are the same then sovereign can never be said to have violated the contract since contract imposes no restrictions on him. In such a case Hobbes's description of the duties of the sovereign can never be substantiated. However, Taylor thinks that Hobbes's description of the duties of the sovereign does mean that sovereign is in fact, ‘discharging a debitum.’ From the Hobbesian point of view, Taylor rules out the possibility of owing debt to oneself. Hobbes is careful to insist that, to quote Taylor:

... in ruling with a single eye to the public good, the sovereign is doing what he is obliged to do by the 'natural law'. (1938: 145)

In order to argue for the consistency of Hobbesian doctrine, Taylor makes the sovereign also a party to the contract. According to Hobbes, the sovereign is created by the transference of the rights in the state-of-nature by his future subjects. What the people transfer to sovereign is the right to prescribe at his discretion what they should do. And the purpose of this transference is to promote ‘safety and commodious living’. It is true that the renunciation of rights by the people is done not between sovereign and the people but between people themselves. However, Taylor argues that completeness of the transaction depends on the acceptance of the transaction by the beneficiary. To quote Taylor:

1 Hobbes discussed the duties of the sovereign in De Cive, XIII concerning the duties of those who bear Rule, sections 15-17.
Hobbes is quite clear on the point that to make the transaction complete there must be an acceptance of the proposed transfer of rights by the beneficiary. In the conveyance of right, the will is requisite not only of him that conveys, but of him also that accepts it. If either be wanting, the right remains.' (1938: 147)

A transaction or a contract can never be said to be complete unless the beneficiary also accepts the contract. And once the beneficiary accepts the transaction then he can be said to be a party to the transaction. The sovereign is a party in the formation of civil society. Taylor argues that this does not make the sovereign a party to the contract in the same way as the people are. It does not make the sovereign answerable to the subjects. But it brings a kind of obligation on the part of the sovereign to provide commodious living to all, which is the purpose of the contract. In this way, the sovereign is not a party to the contract in the sense as his subjects are. What Taylor tries to show by this discussion is that there really is a bargain, to which the sovereign is a party by his acceptance of the sovereignty, that the transferred rights shall be exclusively used in the ways which the sovereign honestly believes to further the end aimed at in the transference, and this is enough to explain why, even on the assumption that all iniquity can be reduced to breach of contract ...the sovereign can be said to be capable of iniquity, to be bound by the natural law" (1938: 147).
It is by acceptance of sovereignty the sovereign has virtually contracted, not in the sense of submission of his rights, but to use rights transferred to him for the common safety and welfare of the people. Taylor, however, substantiates his position that moral imperative is the basis of moral obligation and it has its origin in the laws of nature to which even the sovereign is a subject with some prescribed duties. Since the sovereign also has duties to perform is substantiated by natural law, the author of the natural law must be other than the sovereign. This led Taylor to revoke the concept of God in Hobbes to understand the obligatoriness of natural law.

Cod as the source of Moral Obligation:

A duty, according to Hobbes, is ‘following what is prescribed by the law’ and a law is "the command of the person... whose precept contains in it the reason of obedience". If the sovereign is said to have duties by following the prescribed law then whose command is this law? What person is this, whose commands are binding on princes because they are fas commands?” Taylor rules out the possibility of a ‘natural person’ being the source of the obligatoriness of the natural law since Hobbes never accepts the existence of any universal monarch on the earth. Even the possibility of a court of natural persons has also been denied since the existence of no such court is possible. In order to make the theory of Hobbes consistent. Taylor argues that, ‘natural law is the command of God, and to be obeyed because it is God’s command”. (1938: 148) These natural laws, commanded by God, are theorems in the sense that they are discoverable by rational thinking. They are commands in the sense that they are commands laid by one will upon another will.
According to I aylor, since “no man can be obliged except it be to another” (1938: 148). the natural law cannot be termed “natural iniquity” unless it is regarded as command and by following it as a duty. It can be recognized as law only as the command of God. Since Hobbes regards natural law to be in forma interno, it cannot be regarded as command unless there is a formal intention on the part of the subject to obey the law. No one really fulfils the demands of equity unless they are regarded as the commands of God. Taylor tries to import the moral imperative into the natural law by regarding them as the commands of God.

Now the problem for Taylor is to show how the “theorems” of laws of nature are commands of God. There are different expositions in the works of Hobbes. In the Elements of law, Hobbes explained the “theorems” as being obtaining their fuller character of being divine laws from their being laid down as commands in scriptures. However, this implies that only those people who accept the authority of that particular scripture can feel theorems as laws, whereas they remain as mere precepts for others. This exposition seems to be insufficient to maintain the consistency in the deontological theory of Hobbes because it does not include all and excludes few people such as atheists. Taylor, therefore, cites another exposition, from De Cive, where Hobbes maintained that God has a two-fold kingdom – natural, which is reigned by reason, and is universal, therefore common to all: and prophetic, which is positive and is not given to all men but to some peculiar people elected by Him. Taylor, further, adds that the right to rule, in the natural kingdom is founded on God’s irresistible power, whereas in the prophetical world God’s sovereignty over the “elected” rests on a covenant. (1938: 149)
Taylor finds consistency in this exposition and maintains that, according to this version, natural law is a law for all men except atheists. He states that in order to maintain the deontological character of moral obligation it is necessary to bring consistency to the statements of Hobbes, which carry an atheistic tone. Hobbes’s atheistic utterances were normally misunderstood to be ‘insincere verbiage’. In fact, they insist only on the ‘incomprehensibility of the divine nature and on the impossibility of our having a ‘conception of God’. (149-150). When Hobbes stated that we can have no conception of God, according to Taylor, he is only ascribing to the ‘universal scholastic doctrine that the essentials of God cannot be known’.

Taylor tries to bring consistency to the view of Hobbes regarding the existence of God by constructing a causal argument. He brings the arguments of the universe as an aggregate of bodies and arguments of causation as nothing can be the cause of its own. These together prove that God exists as a cause of the universe.

However, Taylor himself pointed out a certain kind of inconsistency between Hobbesian definition of cause and effect, which goes against this explanation. To quote Taylor, “There is. perhaps. a certain inconsistency between Hobbes’s definition of cause and effect, for which it should follow that a cause is always temporally prior to its effect, and the doubt expressed in the De Corpore about the validity of the reasons given for a beginning of the world in time. But the utmost that this proves, I think. is only that Hobbes had not thought out the implications of the problem to the end. He has been laughed at for leaving the question undecided until it shall be authoritatively determined by the sovereign” (1938: 151).
since the universe cannot be the cause of its own. However, he overcomes the limitation that whatever exists must be conceivable as body and God is not conceivable by arguing that He is incomprehensible. According to Taylor, Hobbes seems:

... to accept at its face value the argument that the universe (= the aggregate of bodies) must have a cause, and since, on his own definition of causation, nothing can be causa sui, it follows at once (1) that the ‘cause of the universe’ is neither itself (the ‘aggregate of bodies’) nor any part of itself, and (2) that, if as Hobbes held, nothing can be conceived but body, this cause, though certainly known by the causal argument to exist, must be incomprehensible to us. The internal consistency of this doctrine seems to me to be the best proof that it was sincerely held. (1938: 150)

Taylor believes that Hobbesian conviction that "natural law, as a command of God is produced not on the basis of the Scriptural testimonies, but by the unusual depth of his own sense of moral obligation". Attributing few personal remarks to Hobbes like 'honest man, and ‘a man of the sense of duty'. Taylor argues that 'to such a man the thought that duty is a divine command is so natural that it is almost impossible not to form it'. (1938: 151) Taylor conceives the religion of Hobbes to be similar to that of Kant—as ‘the discharge of the duties of everyday morality with an accomplishing sense of their transcendent obligatoriness'. (1938: 152)
To conclude, Taylor argues that the moral and political philosophy of Hobbes rests on the moral imperative. The moral imperative has its basis in the natural law and thus it is antecedent to the civil society. This view rejects two important possible interpretations of Hobbes: that is, that the moral philosophy of Hobbes is based on self-interest and the origin of civil society is in the transference of rights of the people. According to Taylor, ethical and political philosophy of Hobbes is based on moral imperative, whereas the origin of civil society has its basis in the convenent. The prevalence of moral imperative in the state-of-nature in the form of laws of nature exposes the deontological character of the ethical doctrine of Hobbes. Since there is no superior power or authority to control the people, the law-of-nature has been followed, at least in foro interno, as duty. Taylor attributes the source of authority to God. Thus, the thesis of Taylor attempts to show that the ethical doctrine of Hobbes is basically deontological. This implies that the ethical philosophy of Hobbes is logically independent of his egoistic psychology. Even if the psychology is rejected in toto Hobbesian theory of obligation does not lose its relevance. Instead, will gain consistency.