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# Portrait of the Sage: Spinoza's Conception of the Philosophic Life

In the portrait gallery of the Golden Age of Dutch civilization, there would be found among such figures as William of Orange, the founder, Joost van den Vondel, the dramatist, Rembrandt the painter, Christian Huygens the scientist, Grotius the jurist, that of Benedict Spinoza, the philosopher. Perhaps no one since Plato assigned a more exalted place to the philosopher than Spinoza. Possessed of the highest knowledge, a model of probity, a guide in politics, the philosopher becomes the archetypal modern sage. And the figure of the philosopher drawn in his works, all would agree, coincides with the person of Spinoza himself. It is my intention to follow Spinoza's intellectual itinerary, taking certain major writings as milestones of the journey.

At the outset, the young Spinoza, not yet thirty, sounds world-weary, disabused, with an echo of the pessimism of Ecclesiastes: "After experience had taught me that all things which frequently take place in ordinary life are vain and futile...,"[1] he says in *On the Improvement of the Understanding,* no doubt reflecting as well his difficulties with the orthodox Jewish community in Amsterdam. He was excommunicated by the community in 1656 and the *Improvement* was written not long afterward (1661). The ethical intention of Spinoza is clear in this unfinished work when he speaks of the search for "continuous, supreme, and unending happiness,"[2] as is his conviction that what is required is an improvement of the understanding or that the ethical question is essentially an intellectual question. Happiness lies in a search for perfection, but what is the object of perfection? What must be done to obtain it? Of course the vanity of placing happiness in false goods (rank and riches) in contrast to the true good is noted, and the importance of wisdom is underlined. Spinoza offers the first sketch of a theory of the degrees of knowledge. There are characteristic oppositions between the perishable and the eternal, the sensible and the intellectual, but the opposition which turns out to be of particular significance is that between imagination and intellect. Spinoza adopted the method set out by René Descartes, a man who spent many years in residence in Holland, and he adopted Descartes' criterion of truth in ideas, the notion that whatever is clear and distinct is true. But it should be observed that while Descartes' aim in philosophy was scientific, to establish the new science, Spinoza's remained ethical.

Spinoza contrasts the activity of the mind or understanding with the passivity of imagination. "... in the Treatise as a whole, Spinoza tends to maintain a *cleavage* between the Intellect and the Imagination - between genuine ideas, or acts of thought and knowledge, and the pseudo-ideas, and

conjunctions of pseudo-ideas, of which our imaginational experience consists."[3] It is evident for him that only the ideas of the understanding are clear and distinct, and therefore true, while the ideas of the imagination are confused and thus not necessarily true. But are they false? Spinoza seems to leave open the possibility that even the ideas of the imagination may contain some element of truth, but they are not true *ipso facto*. The correction of the understanding will lead us to "the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole of nature."[4] It will lead to essential knowledge, the knowledge of God. "I shall endeavour only to treat of those things which seem necessary to enable us to attain to knowledge of eternal things..."[5] Thus we have the characteristic notion that we aim at knowledge from the standpoint of eternity (*sub specie aeternitatis*). It might be thought that the union of this knowledge with happiness is implied in Spinoza's account, though Spinoza does not overtly draw that conclusion. His thought remains at an exploratory stage.

In a work originally published anonymously, the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Spinoza sets out, as he stated in a letter, to deal with "the prejudices of the theologians."[6] Religious people and theologians claim that they possess the knowledge of eternal things and that the source of this knowledge is to be found in Scripture. In order for Spinoza to defend the claims of philosophy, he must enter into a kind of critique of the knowledge claims that have been made for the Prophets, particularly by the great medieval Jewish thinker, Moses Maimonides. Jewish theology comes under fire initially; Christian theology, however, is not spared. Was Spinoza's intent primarily polemical or irenical, that is, was it warlike or peaceful? I think one must maintain that Spinoza saw theological dispute as the cause of political conflicts between different groups of believers, and that the solution to these conflicts would be brought about by making a sharp division between faith and reason, between theology, reduced in its pretensions, and philosophy.[7]

In order to achieve this goal, Spinoza becomes involved in biblical exegesis, and is generally seen as the forerunner of what will later be called the Higher Criticism. Against Maimonides' contention that the Prophets possessed knowledge both theoretical and practical, Spinoza argues that their message is only practical and in no sense theoretical (or philosophical). He does this by speaking of two ways in which revelation can occur — and by revelation he means simply two natural ways in which knowledge can be acquired. There is no acceptance, for instance, of the idea that God actually spoke to Moses in some sense. There are no special communications, but only general and natural communications. He proceeds to utilize the distinction between imagination and understanding. The Prophets basically were men of imagination. They had a singular and uncommon virtue, and "we can assert then without scruple that the Prophets have only perceived the revelation of God with the aid of imagination that is, by way of words, images, sometimes real, sometimes imaginary."[8] This revelation is placed outside of the bounds of the understanding. The Prophets "are simply men of imagination believing with a singular vivacity in the efficacy of certain moral rules that their ignorance does not allow them to base on reasons and of which they can only consequently have a moral certitude..."[9]

The object of Scripture is not to make men learned but obedient; "the sphere of theology is piety and obedience."[10] Hence the teaching of Scripture and of the Prophets is about obedience, justice, charity and piety. Philosophy is denied to be the handmaid of theology, as had been maintained since the Middle Ages, but is independent. However, it is clear that Spinoza goes far beyond the assertion that philosophy is an autonomous form of inquiry, and not a handmaid or instrument, for the whole import of the *Treatise* is that reason judges Scripture, that philosophy as the highest knowledge examines its content, and takes the books of Scripture as purely human productions.[11] By rejecting the assertion that they are expressions of special divine revelation, Spinoza reduces the knowledge the Prophets provide to imagination, a confused perception hidden in symbols and fictions; today we would say myths. He refutes the claims of the Jews to be God's chosen people, denies that the Mosaic law is really law, rejects the notion of miracles, and generally denies that the Scripture contains any theoretical truths, although he somewhat modifies this conclusion. Scripture is really for the many; philosophy is for the few. And in this regard, the treatise, it is to be noted, is addressed to the philosophical reader. The practical truth of Scripture coincides with the philosophical truth about human conduct, even though it is the philosopher alone who knows the whole, which includes theoretical truth, and so has a better understanding, a more adequate understanding of practical truth itself.

Spinoza does qualify some of his statements which give the impression that the only truth to be found in Scripture is practical. "The chief speculative doctrines taught in Scripture are the existence of God, or a Being Who made all things, and Who directs and sustains the world with consummate wisdom..."[12] And again, "However, I do not wish to affirm absolutely that Scripture contains no doctrine in the sphere of philosophy, for in the last chapter I pointed out some of the kind, as fundamental principles, but I go so far as to say that such doctrines are very few and very simple."[13] His comments on the subject of the divine names are particularly interesting in this regard. Scripture tells us nothing about God's "absolute essence," but only about his "relative essence," that He is just and merciful.[14] "We may add that Scripture nowhere gives an express definition of God, and does not point out any other of His attributes which should be apprehended save these [justice and mercy]..."[15] This is a curious statement, to say the least, for Spinoza has himself commented on the famous passage in Exodus in which Moses asks God His name. Now there is no doubt continued controversy as to the precise meaning of the tetragrammaton, some arguing that the term is completely enigmatic, others arguing, based on a certain translation of the text, that it tells us that God is He Who Is, and that a whole metaphysics is implicated in that name.[16] Spinoza, for his part, translated it as referring to "a Being Who has always existed, does exist, and always will exist,"[17] yet, for all that, he does not take the text as the core of a biblical metaphysics, since it has been his concern to deny theoretical truth to Scripture.

What are the general consequences, then, of Spinoza's analysis of religion, theology and philosophy in the light of a scriptural exegesis? Firstly, religion is essentially moral, whether one speaks of the Old or the New Testament. Its practical truth is

accessible to common apprehension. Secondly, while faith is concerned with obedience and piety, philosophy is concerned with the search for truth. Thirdly, the cause of conflicts, quarrels and schisms has been the involvement of theologians in philosophical speculation. The remedy for this unhappy situation and the basis for religious peace, then, will be "a religion free from philosophical speculations."[18] Finally, faith so understood leaves the philosopher free, free to search without being condemned as a heretic or a schismatic, for only "those who teach opinions which tend to produce obstinacy, hatred, strife, and anger," are truly to be called heretics and schismatics.[19]

Now, if Spinoza's account of the relation between religion and philosophy allows the philosopher full freedom of inquiry, there is another sphere in which that freedom may be endangered, and that is the political. In the last five chapters of the treatise, he treats the problem of freedom in regard to the political state. "It is now time to determine the limits to which such freedom of thought and discussion may extend in the ideal state."[20] After giving an account of natural rights, which owes much to Thomas Hobbes, including the notion of the covenant or contract, an endorsement of democracy ("a society which wields all its power as a whole")[21] and the concept of sovereign power which "should have supreme authority for making any laws about religion which it thinks fit,"[22] Spinoza tries to show that the state which aims at peace and security must respect freedom of thought as well. In fact no one can transfer to another nor be constrained to abandon his natural right or power to make use of reason and to judge of everything. Therefore, men should be allowed "freedom of judgment and feeling" and "to employ their reason unshackled."[23] Such a guarantee would assure "freedom of philosophical speculation" in which "every man should think what he likes and say what he thinks."[24]

It would appear that there is an apparent contradiction here, for Spinoza, on the one hand, asserts that "the sovereign rulers are the proper interpreters of religion and piety,"[25] and, on the other, that one should enjoy freedom of thought in the political state. I think the apparent contradiction is dissolved when an important distinction is recognized. That distinction is between inner acts and outward observances. Spinoza argues for the governance of outward observance. "The rites of religion and the outward observances of piety should be in accordance with the public peace and well-being, and should therefore be determined by the sovereign power alone."[26] This is in line with the depreciation of the ceremonial law of the Jews. It is inner freedom which is safeguarded, freedom of opinion, conviction, the virtue of piety itself. So, after having divorced intellect from imagination, reason from faith, philosophy from theology, Spinoza now divorces belief from rite, practice, outward observance. How many martyrs might have avoided their mortal fate, had they adhered to Spinoza's dictum.

Spinoza, who started out to echo Hobbes' teaching that the aim of the state is peace and security, arrives finally at the conclusion that while indeed these are goals to be achieved, in the final analysis "the true aim of government is liberty."[27]

The *Theologico-Political Treatise* has sometimes been seen as "*the* book about politics"[28] for Spinoza. That seems an

exaggeration. It has been argued here that it must be viewed in terms of the dispute between philosophy and theology and the concern for assuring philosophic freedom (of inquiry) both against religious men who would threaten it and the political state which might try to suppress it. It is rather in the *Political Treatise* that Spinoza deals with the political as such, defines political science, and delineates its preoccupation with a comparative study of political regimes in order to determine which of them is the best. The section of the *Political Treatise* which is particularly pertinent to developing the portrait of the philosopher is Spinoza's treatment of the notion of what we would today call scientific objectivity.

There are those, he says, who praise or castigate human nature, "for they conceive of men, not as they are, but as they themselves would like them to be."[29] Such authors write satires, not ethics. Since a theory of politics is intended to be useful, not an exercise in utopia (and Spinoza here is reminiscent of Machiavelli in contrasting political realism with political utopia), questions may be raised as to the value of political theorists as opposed to practitioners. There is an assumption that "theory is supposed to be at variance with practice; and no men are esteemed less fit to direct public affairs than theorists or philosophers."[30] Statesmen, on the other hand, "as they had experience for their masters ... taught nothing that was inconsistent with practice."[31]

However, Spinoza does not resign the task of guidance to mere experience, for although experience is indispensable and it is unlikely that new discoveries will be made in political matters, the theorist still has an appropriate role, provided that he employs a suitable method. And what is that method? Political science is a deductive science, based on "the very condition of human nature."[32] It will agree with practice, if it investigates "the subject-matter of this science with the same freedom of spirit as we generally use in mathematics."[33] Spinoza goes on: "I have laboured carefully not to mock, lament, or execrate, but to understand human actions; and to this end I have looked upon passions, such as love, hatred, anger, envy, ambitions, pity, and the perturbations of the mind, not in the light of vices or human nature, but as properties ..."[34] Let us call this an analytic ethics which aims at understanding human nature and its properties, and that means understanding the basic duality involved in the relation between reason and the emotions. Both are components of nature; both are powers of nature, and it is the theorist's task to understand the degree to which reason can restrain and moderate the passions or passive emotions. Generally, Spinoza does not believe "that the multitude of men distracted by politics can ever be induced to live according to the bare dictate of reason," and those who think they can "must be dreaming of the poetic age, or of a stage play."[35]

What I have called scientific objectivity in Spinoza is not just the stance of what we would call today a political scientist, having in mind the modern notion of positive science, but the stance of the philosopher as well, for Spinoza writes before the differentiation between science and philosophy. Like Newton, he would no doubt think of physics as a kind of natural philosophy, but then the philosophic vision of his masterpiece, the *Ethics*, is itself a philosophy of nature, since nature is the ultimate category of the Spinozist universe.

We may take as a keynote to Spinoza's systematic presentation, the *Ethics*, a passage in which he connects its essential procedure

with the dispassionate mood of scientific objectivity:

> He who rightly knows that all things follow from the necessity of divine nature, and come to pass according to the eternal natural and regular laws, will find nothing at all that is worthy of hatred, laughter, or contempt, nor will he deplore any one; but as far as human virtue [that is, power] can go, he will endeavour to act well, as people say, and to rejoice.[36]

The theme of a joyful wisdom proceeding from the grasp of necessity pervades the *Ethics*. More to the point, in this rich passage, Spinoza indicates that philosophy must begin, so to speak, at the top, by an inquiry into divine nature. What is remarkable about this is that it follows a theological order, or what had been considered a theological order in the medieval tradition. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, was quite clear on this subject when he described the philosophical as opposed to the theological order as follows:

> The human intellect, to which it is connatural to derive its knowledge from sensible things, is not able through itself to reach the vision of the divine substance in itself, which is above all sensible things and, indeed, improportionately above all other things.[37]

Thus Spinoza explicitly criticized this kind of Aristotelian perspective. "For divine nature, which they ought to have considered before all things, for that it is prior in knowledge and nature, they have thought to be last in the order of knowledge, and things which are called the objects of the senses they have believed to be prior to all things."[38] The Aristotelian answer would be that the divine nature may indeed be prior in nature, but that it is not prior in our way of understanding. In fact, it is the culmination of a long entailed reasoning process.

So Spinozist philosophy utilizes a method long considered to be appropriate to theology, another indicator, if one were needed, that philosophy has replaced, nay destroyed, theology. To demonstrate the existence of God (*causa sui*), Spinoza employs one of the oldest, but most controversial, Christian proofs for the existence of God, the so-called ontological argument. God is that being whose essence implies existence. God is the only substance — "in the nature of things only one substance can be granted."[39] Thought and extension are attributes of God; human beings are modes or modifications of God. In a passage which is doubtless the basis for the frequent characterization of Spinoza as a pantheist he says "God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things."[40] This would mean that "His *existence* is affirmed and His *transcendence* is denied."[41] God or nature, Spinoza says, identifying God with nature, though he distinguishes between active nature (*natura naturans*) and passive nature (*natura naturata*).[42] Now when a philosopher speaks of God with a capital letter and indicates that this being is the cause of what exists, it would seem that it is the creator-God of which he speaks. But this is not the case. If the Spinozist God produces the world (passive nature) in some sense, it is expressly denied by Spinoza that He creates.[43]

In speaking of nature, Spinoza sounds a rather defensive note about the dangers of expressing this kind of philosophy:

> And hence it comes about that those who wish to seek out the causes of miracles, and who wish to understand the things of nature as learned men, and not stare at them in

> amazement like fools, are soon deemed heretical and impious and proclaimed such by those whom the mob adore as the interpreters of nature and the Gods.[44]

The understanding of the whole of nature, beginning with its cause, means that man's place as part of nature must be understood as well, and Spinoza devotes two parts of the five-part work to examining the origins and nature of mind, or reason, and the emotions. These are the two sources of human power. Human bondage is the subject of the fourth part and human freedom of the fifth and final part. Human bondage consists in a lack of power to moderate and check the passions. If the lack were structural and permanent, the possibilities of human freedom would be eliminated. But since the power of reason is or can be greater than the power of the passions, freedom or liberation remains possible. Yet knowledge alone "cannot restrain any emotion".[45] The question is what reason can or cannot do to moderate desire. What does the guidance of reason amount to? That is, assuming that there are limits to human control of the emotions, what control does it exert and how does it exert it?

Spinoza attributes to Descartes the idea that we have "absolute dominion over our passions" (or passive emotions).[46] In order to refute this argument, he tries to show the falsity of Descartes' views "concerning the will and its liberty", for "the mind's power is defined by intellect alone..."[47] There is a fundamental difference concerning the elements or factors of human psychology in the two cases. Descartes, in this context as in many others, continues the psychological school which can be traced back to Augustine and the notion of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). The soul or psyche has a power of choice which is of course dependent on the intellect, else it would be blind, but not determined by it, in making a judgment. Free choice is the basis of responsibility and ultimately of praise or condemnation. The main issue, ethically speaking, is the use of one's freedom, even though Descartes may be somewhat ambivalent on this subject.[48]

Now in contrast to this, Spinoza adopts the classical psychology of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, in which there is a twofold distinction, based on the distinction between body and soul. At the level of ideas, this leads to the contrast between imagination and intellection; at the level of activity, this leads to the contrast between passions (i.e. passive emotions) and actions. Ethically speaking the great opposition is between the ignorant and the enlightened or wise. The wise are those who live under the guidance of reason. The ignorant live under the sway of imagination and the bondage of the passions. Most people are ignorant, the wise are rare.

Given the initial opposition between the emotions and reason, both of which are natural, the problem is not to destroy the emotions, which are after all a part of nature, nor to conquer them in the sense in which the will could be said, by Descartes, to dominate them. Rather a distinction must be made between direct control over the passions — and this would mean one emotion over another — and what might be called an indirect control by reason. This occurs through a process I would call transformation: the mind is capable of moving from an inadequate to an adequate idea (from imagination to reason) and the change of ideas alters our emotions, since an inadequate idea gives rise to a passive emotion and an adequate idea to an active

emotion. Simply put, this means that in an indirect way emotions may be altered by a change of ideas (which we might want to call simply a change of mind.)

Stated in terms of freedom, we may then say that while for Descartes moral freedom is based on the power of free choice in regard to moral judgment, freedom in Spinoza consists in a form of liberation, specifically liberation from human bondage, which is living under control of passive emotions, particularly hope and fear. When men act under the power of reason, they are free. "To live under the guidance of reason, that is, to be free and enjoy the life of the blessed."[49]

In line with the classical psychology, then, it can be concluded that only the wise are free and happy in Spinoza's ethics. Plato and Aristotle would say that only the philosopher can attain this state, which means that freedom and happiness are available in fact, if not in principle, only to a few. Instead of the scriptural "many are called and few are chosen", we may say that in Spinoza's message of salvation many are enslaved and few are free.

Since power and virtue are the same, the virtuous man is the powerful man with the power of reason. He follows the dictates of reason. He exhibits the dominance of reason over the passive emotions, or passions. For him, pity is bad, as is indignation; humility is not a virtue, but neither is pride. He is also the free man who meditates on life, not death. He is free, moreover, if he lives in a state with common laws. In a passage reminiscent of Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, Spinoza sums up the control of the passions:

> a strong man hates no one, is enraged with no one, envies no one, is indignant with no one, and is in no wise proud.[50]

However, it is not just in liberating ourselves from human bondage that blessedness comes, for that would be to ignore the importance of God (or Nature) in Spinoza's vision. Recall that in *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, Spinoza asked "whether, in fact, there might be anything of which the discovery and attainment would enable me to enjoy continuous, supreme, and unending happiness."[51] It is not simply a matter, then, of reason governing the passions, though that is a necessary condition. It is a matter of the object whose possession in some sense constitutes happiness, and that object is God. The intuitive knowledge of God is what Spinoza calls the third kind of knowledge, beyond the ideas of imagination and even the adequate ideas of scientific knowledge. Furthermore, "from the third kind of knowledge arises necessarily the intellectual love of God".[52] Thus, "salvation, blessedness, or liberty" consists "in the constant and eternal love for God, or in the love of God for men".[53] Rather than this blessedness being the reward of virtue, it is identified with virtue. Thus we find the high point, the apotheosis of the sage in *amor intellectualis Dei*.

From a human point of view, it is a noble vision, even though one is aware that Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura* is not the creator-God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. One is aware, also, that the immortality of which he speaks is not personal immortality. But despite the deo-centric focus of Spinoza's ethics, the common charge in Spinoza's lifetime was that he was an atheist, by which critics meant

that he denied God as understood in the Judeo-Christian tradition. And, of course, Spinoza's divinity who produces the world necessarily is more reminiscent of the philosophical theology of the neo-Platonists, like Plotinus, than the God of *Exodus*. From a purely philosophical point of view, it has been customary in modern times to refer to Spinoza as a pantheist in that his God is described as an immanent, not a transcendent, cause. Of course, Spinoza speaks of himself neither as a theist, nor as an atheist, nor as a pantheist.

I have not said very much about Spinoza's account of Christianity. That he was critical of Calvinist theologians, there seems little doubt. That he was extremely negative about Roman Catholics is clear in his letter to a former student, Albert Burgh, who had become a convert to Catholicism.[54] Of more interest are the fortunes of Spinoza among Jewish intellectuals. If one accepts Moses Maimonides' enumeration of the thirteen basic metaphysical principles on which Jewish faith rests, [55] it is clear that it is inappropriate to call Spinoza a Jewish philosopher. The orthodox might be inclined to endorse Spinoza's excommunication by the Jewish community of Amsterdam. Yet Spinoza continues to enjoy a special place for many Jewish intellectuals, ranging from a writer like Isaac Bashevis Singer to the philosopher Sidney Hook.[56] I would suggest that Spinoza enjoys a status among many Jewish intellectuals comparable to that of Aristotle in the universities and schools of the Middle Ages, where he was known as the Philosopher. Spinoza is taken as the model of the philosopher, the champion of free thought and rationalism, the advocate of philosophy as a way of salvation, or as a guide to the moral and political life. The notion that philosophy is knowledge of the whole, and that philosophy has a higher intellectual standing than theology, is also part of the attraction of Spinoza's vision. Even the concept of Nature as the ultimate category is accepted provided, of course, that it be understood as the framework for a scientific view of the world and emptied of any reference to the divine.[57] So certain modern philosophers will accept the form of Spinozism, but little of its content. Thus the religious outcast continues to be an influence in the Jewish community conceived in a broad non-religious sense.

## NOTES

[1] Benedict Spinoza, *The Improvement of the Understanding* in R.H.M. Elwes, *The Chief Works of Spinoza* (New York: Dover, 1951), Vol. II, p. 3.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Harold H. Joachim, *Commentary on Spinoza's Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 166.

[4] Benedict Spinoza, *The Improvement of the Understanding,* p. 16.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[6] A. Wolfe (trans.), *The Correspondence of Spinoza* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), Letter 30 to Henry Oldenberg (Sept. 1965), p. 206.

[7] Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise* in R.H.M. Elwes, *The Chief Works of Spinoza* (New York: Dover, 1951), Vol. I, Preface and Chapter XIII.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[9] Charles Appuhn (trans.), B. Spinoza, *Traité théologico-politique, Oeuvres 2* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1965), p. 357 n. 8.

[10] Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise*, p. 194.

[11] Leo Strauss says "the Bible is a human book — in this one sentence we can sum up all the presuppositions of Spinoza's Bible science", *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 263. Strauss has also written a valuable essay entitled "How to Study Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise," in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1952), pp. 142-201. Abraham J. Heschel reiterates Strauss' point when he says: "The Rationalists who no longer read the Bible as the word of God, but as the product of human composition (Spinoza had laid down the principle that Scripture must be interpreted like any other book), called for a purely historical exegesis...", *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), Vol. 2, p. 151.

[12] Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise*, p. 77.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[14] André Malet, *Le Traité théologico-politique de Spinoza et la pensée biblique* (Paris: Société Les Belles Lettres, 1966), pp. 222-223.

[15] Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise,* p. 179.

[16] This has been particularly the concern of the noted historian of medieval philosophy, Etienne Gilson, and more recently that of Claude Tresmontant who has written *Etudes de métaphysique biblique* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1955) and *Essai sur la pensée hébraïque* (Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1956). In the translation of the latter work, see his remarks on the tetragrammaton. Michael Gibson (trans.), *A Study of Hebrew Thought* (New York: Desclee Company, 1960), p. 7. For an opposing view to the metaphysical reading, see André Malet, *op. cit.*, p. 220 n. where he states that Thomas Aquinas committed the error of interpreting the text metaphysically.

[17] Benedict Spinoza, *The Theologico-Political Treatise*, p. 36.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 189.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 205

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 258-259.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 245.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

[28] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), p. 276.

[29] A.G.A. Balz (ed.), *A Political Treatise,* in *Writings on Political Philosophy by B. Spinoza* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1937), p. 80.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 82. In the *Ethics*, Spinoza puts it this way: "... I shall regard human actions and desires exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies." A. Boyle (trans.), *Spinoza's Ethics and De Intellectus Emendatione* (London: J.M. Dent, 1930), III, p. 84.

[35] A.G.A. Balz, *op cit.*, p. 84.

[36] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, IV, Prop. 50, Corollary, note, p. 76.

[37] Charles O'Neil (trans.), *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith; Summa contra Gentiles* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960), Bk. IV, Ch. 1, Foreword, p. 35.

[38] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, Prop. 10, note, p. 45.

[39] *Ibid.*, I, Prop. 24, Corollary 1, p. 11.

[40] *Ibid.*, I, Prop. 18, p. 18.

[41] Jacques Maritain, *The Education of Man* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 165.

[42] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, I, Prop. 29, note, p. 24.

[43] *Ibid.*, I, Prop. 17, note, p. 16. See V. Delbos, *Le Spinozisme* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1950), pp. 174-5.

[44] *Ibid*, I, Appendix, pp. 33-34.

[45] *Ibid.*, IV, Prop. 14, p. 152.

[46] *Ibid.*, V, Preface, p. 201.

[47] *Ibid.*, V, Preface, p. 202. I have changed the translation, replacing "intelligence" by "intellect".

[48] Jean-Paul Sartre indicates in "Cartesian Freedom" (New York: Collier Books, 1962) that there is a side of Descartes' account of intellect and will that is close to Spinoza's, but there is also the side of the dominant will.

[49] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics* IV, Prop. 54, note, p. 178.

[50] *Ibid.*, IV, Prop. 73, note, p. 190.

[51] Benedict Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, p. 3.

[52] Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics* V, Prop. 32, Corollary, p. 218.

[53] *Ibid.*, V, Prop. 36, note, p. 219. The complexity of the issue is brought out in an early systematic work. "Still, when we say that God does not love man, this must not be taken to mean that he (so to say) leaves man to pursue his course all alone, but only that because man together with all that is, are in God in such a way, and God consists of all these in such a way, therefore, properly speaking, there can be in him no love for something else: since all form only one thing, which is God himself." A. Wolf (ed.), *Spinoza's Short Treatise on God, Man, and His Well-Being* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), Chapter 24, pp. 138-139.

[54] A. Wolf (trans.), *op. cit.*, Letter 76 to Albert Burgh (Dec. 1675), pp. 350-355.

[55] Jay Newman, "A Noteworthy Misconception of Jews and Jewish Philosophy," *Dialogue, Canadian Philosophical Review,* Vol. XVI No. 3, Sept., 1977, p. 409. The author deals extensively with Spinoza's philosophy.

[56] We may add also such significant writers as Henri Bergson, Leo Strauss, Allan Bloom and many others besides.

[57] If one were to look for a contemporary instance of this, the case of Sidney Hook would be instructive. In his autobiography, *Out of Step*, there is a high tribute to Spinoza. Of Jewish origin, but not of the Jewish faith, Hook places on a naturalism of Deweyan provenance the same kind of reliance that Spinoza placed on his naturalism. They are two different philosophies, but the role philosophy plays in the lives of the two is the same. Philosophy having criticized religion and theology — see Hook's *Education for Modern Man* — aspires to replace them as the only kind of wisdom.