

## SPINOZA'S CONCEPTION OF BLISS

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Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677), presents his metaphysics under the guise of a guide for moral behavior in the search for perfect bliss, in his premier philosophical work entitled *ETHICS DEMONSTRATED ACCORDING TO THE GEOMETRICAL METHOD*.\*\* The use of mathematical structures in delineating his ethical doctrines has led many to regard him as an atheistic or a pantheistic thinker. Others, however, regard him as a "God-intoxicated Man," noting among other things that the gist of his entire philosophical system can be encapsulated in the words: ". . . it is in God that we live and move and exist." (ACTS 17, 28)

In this paper, I propose to elucidate the INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD, proposed by him as the constituent of perfect happiness for time and for eternity.

This topic will be dealt with under the following headings: PREFACE, GOD, MAN, RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD, INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD, AND POSTSCRIPT.

### A. PREFACE

Whenever we think of something or do something, we are all aware that we are probing for something good and advantageous for ourselves. We want to possess goods, which permits us truly to a vouch to ourselves: "I am doing well," "I am living well," "I am happy!" Happiness thus exhibits itself as the objective of man's desire in this life and the goal of his subsistence in the next. Most men are too pre-occupied with the care of supplying themselves and their dear ones with the necessities of life: food, shelter and clothing. Because of these pressing concerns, people seldom stop to ascertain whether they are really happy or not, much less do they bother to reflect on what happiness really is.

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\*\* R. H. M. Elwes, TR. and ED. *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1951) Vol. II.

Just a little reflection, however, makes it clear that each person must pinpoint for himself which goods endow him with the feeling of well-being and self-contentment. Since most men do not believe that they will be totally annihilated in death, pondering whether or not perfect joy is available to man beyond the grave exhibits itself as a worthwhile occupation. This consideration also manifests the responsibility, on the part of everyone, to determine which is the Highest Good embodying man's perfect happiness in this life and in the next. Such a fundamental judgment does not ordinarily cross men's consciousness, but when pressed to name which for them is the greatest and highest good, most people will single out either Wealth, Pleasure or Power, or a combination of them.

A few intellectuals appear on earth expending much time and energy in probing which is that Sovereign Good, which imparts bliss on man for time and eternity. This preponderant Good, they contend, must be something self-sufficient and completely independent, because from it flows the goodness of all other things. The commonality of their contemporaries appraise these researchers as eccentric, mockingly reproving them: "You are bizarre; what you are doing and blabbing about are for the birds, strictly for the birds!" But these seemingly unconventional persons calling themselves "lovers of wisdom" go on unperturbedly questioning in dead earnest what is the Supreme Good constituting bliss. They are not satisfied in just naming this premier good; they stipulate that the manner of its possession in dispensing perfect bliss must also be explicitly specified.

This challenge of establishing in what does man's perfect happiness here and hereafter consist has been a rich mine for acrimonious philosophical debate and earnest theological speculation for centuries. Since the Mind and the Will are the two immaterial faculties found in man, two Western systems of thought, animated by the Christian Faith, have selected the activity of either one of them as the supreme good constituting bliss.

Intellectualism is that pattern of thought which holds that **contemplation**, the most perfect mode of thinking, is bliss in any context: philosophical, theological and religious. This activity consists in letting the mind gaze on an object immediately present to itself and grasping it at one blow. When its objects are the noblest and highest realities of this world, this intellectual operation is equivalent to contemplating God. The contemplation of God in the world beyond the grave is called BEATIFIC VISION, for it is essentially an intellectual, and not a volitional, activity that confers

perfect happiness on its possessor. The proponents of this doctrine rate the intellect superior to the will; hence, Beatific Vision constitutes bliss and the perfect love of God resulting from it is just its natural overflow. This speculative tendency is most forcefully championed by the proponents of the Aristotelic-Thomistic system.

Voluntarism claims that bliss consists in the love of God, imperfect in time but perfected in eternity. Man's supreme joy on earth is loving God but it is limited, because knowledge of the divine essence here below is defective, and understanding is a prerequisite for all love to exist. After death, the ecstasy of love resulting from man's definitively perfected understanding of God's essence constitutes perfect joy. These principles are held by the Augustinian school of thought, which judges the will superior to the intellect. It is championed by the savants of the Franciscan Orders.

In this paper, however, these two tendencies will not be examined at all. Only the Spinozist conception of the INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD as the constituent of bliss shall be investigated. Spinoza's position is grounded on unfamiliar conceptions of God and man as well as on original propositions concerning intellect and will, all of which require an innovative scrutiny.

## **B. GOD**

### **1) "CAUSE OF ITSELF," THE ALL-PERFECT BEING**

God conceived as the absolutely and infinitely perfect being (E I - DEF 6; E I - XI) may be called "Cause of Itself" or "Self-Caused Being." This title designates that being, whose essence is only conceivable as existent. (E I - DEF 1; E I - XI) Literally, "Cause of Itself" is a contradiction in its very terms, because a being should already be existing in order to be a cause, and at the same time it should not yet be existing for it to be caused. However, when used as a technical term, "Cause of Itself" compellingly displays God's infinite perfection and total independence, articulating all positive reality and involving no negativity.

### **2) SUBSTANCE, ATTRIBUTES AND MODES**

God as the infinite and eternal Being is more readily understood by conceiving him as Substance, defined as that being which can be

conceived independently of any other conception. (E I - DEF 3; E I - XIV). A clearer grasp of this Spinozistic definition of Substance is obtained by conceptualizing the absolute and everlasting perfection of God as constituted by numberless Attributes, each of which displays God's absolute infinity in its own unique way. (E I - DEF 4)

Beyond the above articulation, a more distinct insight into Substance is gained by taking into account its Modifications. Abbreviated into "MODES," these are appearances of Substance, conceived as limited expressions of its reality, which are totally dependent on God both for their existence and for their conception. (E I - DEF 5 & XV). They display changing manifestations of Substance through the mediation of the Attributes. Infinite Modes are grounded directly on the Attributes; Finite Modes are subsumed under the Infinite Modes. Both are viewed as issuing from the Attribute but ultimately exhibit Substance itself.

Spinoza asserts that there is only One Substance. Everything exist either in itself or in something else. Since the Understanding knows only Substance and its modifications, any distinction must be based either on the Attributes or on the Modes. (E I - IV) If there were two Substances, they would not have anything in common; thus the conception of one would not involve the conception of the other. (E I - II) Two or more beings having the same Attribute would not be many but one and the same being. The plurality of things ultimately is the plurality of different Modes, issuing from Substance, and which can be disregarded because Substance is prior to them. (E I - V)

### 3) THOUGHT AND EXTENSION

From our internal experience, we are aware of Ideas lodged in our mind. These Ideas whether of our own Self or of other things are either of our own making or of those known to us from other sources. These Ideas are all Finite Modes belonging to the INFINITE INTELLECT, the Infinite Mode immediately unveiling the ATTRIBUTE OF THOUGHT. All the Ideas found in the human mind remain essentially identical in whichever context that they may be studied; either in themselves as Finite Modes, or as Finite Modes grounded on the INFINITE INTELLECT, or as Finite Modes ultimately grounded on THOUGHT. The Attribute of Thought contains Ideas, both those properly its own and all the other Ideas of all other entities besides God. The latter may be the Ideas representing the innumerable Attributes themselves or, the Infinite and Finite Modes contained in each Attribute besides Thought. We can imaginatively classify Thought

DEF 3; is the thickest of the Attributes.

From our external experience, we have Ideas of individual tri-dimensional material bodies. All of them are Finite MODES subsumed under the Infinite Mode of MOTION AND REST, which, in turn, is grounded on the ATTRIBUTE OF EXTENSION displaying the One SUBSTANCE, GOD. All quantitative beings are Extension's Finite Modes and are known by God through Ideas incorporated into the Attribute of Thought. Man's knowledge of the material world, either in general or of bodies in particular, are exactly the Ideas by which God knows them. However, the Ideas representing bodies are also to be regarded under the aspect of their being components included in the essence of Man, which we must now explain. (E I - XIV - COR 2)

## C. MAN

### 1) A THINKING THING

"MAN THINKS" is the axiom used by Spinoza ( E II - XV, AX. 2) to define Man's essence as a Thinking Thing. This simply means that Man's essence is a Mind consisting solely of knowledge. Man is a Finite Mind containing all Ideas of its own ideation and of all other things that it knows and incorporated into itself. Man as a Finite Mind is classified as a Finite Mode in the Infinite Intellect belonging to the Attribute of Thought. But ultimately, the being of Man as this Thinking Thing originates in, and is founded on, the One Substance, God. This follows from the fact that all things depend on God for their being and conception. The Spinozist dictum: "MAN THINKS," unequivocally rejects the conception of Man as a strictly indissoluble compound of body and mind.

Digging deeper into Spinozist thought, we discover the provocative idea that Man as a Thinking Thing is just a Bundle of Divine Ideas, no less, no more. The human mind is essentially constituted in God's mind, by the Idea whose object is an actually existing individual thing. (E II - XI) More precisely, the Human Mind emerges as an Idea in God, whose object is an actually existing human body. Man should be conceived primarily as a Finite Mind, a Finite Mode of Thought, but is paired in parallel to an individual actually existing body, a Finite Mode of Extension.

Every individual Mode of any Attribute whatsoever depends entirely on God, for its being and its conception. Hence, each Idea

and each body in the universe are found in God. Both Modes connected with Man emanate immediately from God, and they are related to each other by their total dependence as transient and Finite modes belonging to different Attributes of the eternal and infinite essence of Substance. (E II - XX; E II - XIII) These two Modes exist parallel to each other in God's mind, so that whatever happens in the body is perceived by the human mind and whatever occurs in the mind is registered in the body. (E II - XII)

The body is not an idea nor has it any knowledge of any kind. It finds itself immersed in the general environment of Motion and Rest, the Infinite Mode of Extension, affecting and being affected by other bodies pressing it on all sides. Every AFFECTION occurring in this body is itself a finite mode in the "region" of Extension but it is known by God by an Idea, a Finite Mode in the "realm" of Thought.

The human mind has no direct knowledge, either of the human body itself, of its existence or of changes occurring in it. It knows them only through the mediation of God's Ideas of the affections of the body. (E II - XIX)

All God's Ideas of thoughts emanating from the activity of this particular mind, a Thinking Thing, are bundled together with all the Ideas whose object is its parallel body and its affections. The entire bundle of Divine ideas comprising the essence of this Individual Man can be conceived as One Idea of God. Similarly, the entire array of Divine Ideas comprehending all individual men together can be grouped as One Idea of God. Both are to be referred to as God insofar as he is Finite, in opposition to God insofar as he is Infinite, when he is considered as displayed by the divine Attributes.

## 2) KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

To understand the operation of the Human Mind, the kinds of knowledge it is capable of acquiring is of utmost importance. Spinoza organizes them in his own distinctive classification.

### a) IMAGINATION

The first kind of knowledge is OPINION OR IMAGINATION. To this belong our

- i) perceptions of particular things received fragmentarily, confusedly and without order through the senses;
- ii) our perceptions gained from symbols or words read or heard, by which we remember things known from Ideas concerning them or Images that we make of them. (E II - XL & SCH 2) Imagination

alone is the Source of Falsity, because of its inadequate and confused ideas. (E II - XXXVII)

b) REASON

The second kind of knowledge is REASON, which grasps things in themselves regarded not as contingent but as necessary. (E II - XLIV) This manner of conceiving its objects is designed for Reason's forming Adequate Ideas, which are True Ideas due to their internal characteristics, without any need of referring them to the things that they represent. This psychological process is based on Spinozistic ontology.

Without God, nothing can exist or even be conceived. In the realm of being, the eternal and infinite essence of God is common to all things, whether a thing is conceived as a whole or as a part of something else. In the realm of thought, the knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God is included as a common content in the Ideas of all things, whether they are conceived as a whole or a part of another thing. God's essence, then, is what is common to all things, whether they are grasped as a whole or as a part. When an Idea contains God as a common element, it is conceived adequately, because as such it can be clearly and distinctly perceived by all.

Every Mode of the One Substance is a "segment" of the divine essence, viewed now from the angle of Time and then from the perspective of Eternity. The essence of an individual thing understood insofar as it is contingent is not formed by something which is common to all things, which is equally in them either as a whole or a part. (E II - XLI) This means that every particular thing, when endowed with a finite and transient existence, is not separated thereby from its total dependence on God's eternal and infinite being, neither is it simply identified with God as the common content of everything. All Ideas of actually existing individual things containing the Idea of God's essence as their common component are adequate and perfect.

The knowledge of Reason is necessarily true. (E II - XLI) Reason's knowledge is equivalent to an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God. An Idea exists in the Divine Intellect itself of which God is the cause, not insofar as he is infinite nor insofar as he is affected by ideas of a multitude of things, but insofar as he constitutes the essence of the human mind. (E II - XL) In other words, the actual being of the Human Mind is formed by the Divine Mind as an Idea of an actually existing

individual thing. (E II - XLVII) Insofar as an Idea goes into the bundle of Ideas that constitutes the human mind in the Divine Mind, such an Idea is also adequate in the Finite Mind and it can be perceived clearly and distinctly by all. (E II - XXXVIII) Every idea of Reason, be it of itself, of its own body and of all actually existing external bodies, and of the properties of things includes the eternal and infinite essence of God. The involvement of the eternal and infinite essence of God makes them adequate ideas. The Finite Mind is active insofar as it has an adequate idea and passive insofar as it has an inadequate idea. An adequate Idea existing in God's Mind, insofar as God constitutes in himself the essence and existence of this particular Finite Mind alone, is expressible in our language as the formation of an Adequate Idea by a particular Finite Mind. Any adequate idea of ours is true, because it is related to God insofar as it is included in the Divine Mind's bundle of ideas constituting the essence of our mind. (E II - XXXII) In other words, the Finite Mind comes to possess an adequate idea, when this Idea is in God insofar as God constitutes in himself the essence and existence only of this particular Finite Mind. However, an Idea which is adequate in God becomes an inadequate Idea in the Finite Mind, when this same Idea is found in Him insofar as God constitutes not only this particular Finite Mind in question but also all other Minds.

#### c) INTUITION

INTUITION, the third kind of knowledge, endows the Finite Mind with an adequate knowledge of the essences of things originating from an adequate Idea of the absolute essence of some Attribute of God. (E V - XXV) Intuition cannot spring from Imagination, because the latter gathers only inadequate and confused Ideas. Intuition can only arise from Reason, which is vested with power to acquire adequate and perfect Ideas, which involve the Idea of God's Attributes and fosters his self-consciousness as being an Idea of God (E V - XXVIII)

### D. RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD

Spinoza proposes INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD, ARISING FROM THE RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD, AS THE CONSTITUENT OF BLISS FOR TIME AND ETERNITY. Since Intuition directly



emanates from Reason; so, too, the Intellectual Love of God ensues from the Rational Love of God. But two distinctive doctrines of Spinoza supply the indispensable context for the vital discussion of the Spinozist conception of bliss.

### 1) WILL AND INTELLECT ARE ONE AND THE SAME

Spinoza insists that Will and Intellect in man are one and the same. He challenges the prevailing opinion that intellect and will are two separate immaterial faculties of man. Spinoza defines Man as a Thinking Thing, and this definition stipulates that the Human Mind of its very nature consists solely of knowledge. Its total output are affirmation and negation and what is considered a volition exists only insofar as this is just one of these acts. In other words, for him, only individual volitions exist and they are nothing else but this or that affirmation or negation. There is no absolute faculty of willing and not-willing. Since volition and idea are one and the same; hence, also Will and Intellect are one and the same. (E II - XLIX & COR)

Those thinkers who assume intellect and will to be two different and immaterial faculties in man are misled by the Aristotelians, who confuse Will with Appetite. They define Will as Appetite seeking its objects under the aspect of good. The error vitiating such a point of view is the conception that the scope of the Will is wider than that of the mind. Volition is the will's act, which is, in fact, merely the affirmation or the denial that something is good. Furthermore, the opinion that Intellect and Will are separate faculties rests on the postulate that the Will determines and incites the Mind of man to do the choosing. But this supposition is effectively removed by the fact that the Will is indeterminate by nature. When the Will is supposed to make a choice, the resulting volition does not emanate from itself but from something else outside of itself as will be proven below.

### 2) IN MAN THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE OR FREE WILL

Freedom is usually taken to mean the liberty to will or not to will, to choose this or that thing. When the Will acts necessarily according to a pattern of behavior not of its own choice, it can still be considered free, because it is immune to all obstacles to the realization of the option that it follows. Thus, "Free Will" is a

paradoxical expression.

But the Will of man conceived as a faculty different from the Mind is not a free but a necessary cause. In the first place, Spinoza objects to the conception of the act of Willing envisioned as coming after the last judgment of the Practical Intellect. If the Will can choose and desire something contrary to the good prescribed by the final decision of the Intellect, then it could also desire Evil under the aspect of Evil, which is certainly absurd. More importantly, if the Will is not determined of itself; then the ensuing choice must be the Will's free determination. But this is unacceptable, because the Will does not determine itself, for it is supposedly, of its very essence, an indeterminate power; indifferent to both willing and not willing. It could not determine itself to do any willing, because anything determining anything must itself first be determined. But such a determining power would be both determined and undetermined at the same time and under the same aspect; a contradiction in terms. (E II - XLVIII)

Secondly, since the Will and the Mind are, in point of fact, one and the same, no volition is conditioned to act, except when it is conditioned by another cause other than itself, which is itself conditioned by a third cause, and which is conditioned by a fourth, and so on unto infinity. This is because causality in this world is a concatenation of conditioned moved-movers; hence, there is no Absolute or Free Will in the Human Mind. A man performing something does act indeed, but he is not a free agent and the Will has no freedom. The reason for this is the fact that, when so conceived, the Will would become unlike the Mind and would no longer be a particular mode of THOUGHT. Any Mode, be it infinite or finite, requires a cause that conditions it to exist or to act; hence, it is not a free, but a necessary or a conditioned, cause. The Mind is determined to this or that volition by a cause, which is also determined by another cause, in its turn determined by another and so on unto infinity. This merely stresses the fact that the mind, as a definite Mode of THOUGHT, must be considered indeterminate of its very nature. (E II - XLVIII) For, indeed, the Mind as a Mode expressing the infinite and eternal essence of Thought, is ultimately conditioned to exist and to act not of its own nature but by the power of God as Substance.

Motion and Rest are Infinite Modes of Extension ranked above all physical nature, and they are eternally determined and conditioned by God to exist and to act in a particular way. Infinite

Intellect, the infinite mode of Thought, just like Motion and Rest under Extension, is conditioned to be and to act in a particular manner, according to the Necessity of the Divine Nature. In its turn, the Mind as a finite Mode under Thought is granted an infinite number of consequences ensuing from its nature. But it cannot produce its output on its own account and thus it can not be said that man is acting with Freedom of the Will.

God's being and action are necessary in accordance with his active nature. Nevertheless, God is the free cause of all things, in the sense that He is unhindered by anything outside of himself. All things depend on God, without whom nothing can exist or even be conceived. Hence, all things are predetermined by God, not by the FIAT of any Free Will but by the necessity of his divine nature insofar as he is Absolute Power. Were he to make a free choice, then he would be deemed acting under the influence of an insurmountable power, existing outside of himself and overpowering Him, which is absurd.

### 3) THE ESSENCE OF LOVE

Imagination provides images with which the Mind contemplates things insofar as they are present and temporal. Its ideas indicate the present disposition of the human body rather than the nature of external things. EMOTION is a change in the human body, which increases or decreases its active power. The Ideas of such bodily changes are themselves also Emotions. (E III - AFF. GEN - DEF III) Thus, all Emotions are Images indicating bodily dispositions and thus the Mind is subject to Emotions only while the body lasts.

Pleasure, Desire and Pain are the three primary Emotions of man. (E III - AFF. DEF. VI; E III, LVIII, SCH) PLEASURE is the transition from a less to a greater perfection and when this change is accompanied by the Idea of its cause, this cause becomes the object of Love into which Pleasure is thereby converted. LOVE is thus formally defined through its essence as Pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause. Love expresses itself by the feeling of Pleasure or emotional rapture. (E III - AFF. GEN - DEF. VI) Some would define Love as the lover's Wish or Desire for contentment by uniting himself with the beloved object. Such a definition is obscure, because wish or desire does not constitute the essence of Love. It only indicates that property, by which the Pleasure of the lover is

strengthened or sustained. It is possible to conceive Love without connecting it with this desire.

Our Human Nature is always the same and its efficacy and power are the same everywhere. Its actions can only be understood by grasping its universal laws and rules. ACTIONS are experiences inside or outside of us, of which we ourselves are the adequate cause. An adequate cause is one whose effects are clearly perceived. PASSIONS are experiences inside or outside of us, of which we ourselves are the inadequate or partial cause. An inadequate or partial cause is one, whose effects cannot be understood when taken by themselves alone. Passions possess the same necessity and efficaciousness of nature's Actions.

#### 4) AMOR ERGA DEUM

The RATIONAL LOVE OF GOD is basically self-contentment resulting from a clear and distinct knowledge of one's own self and of one's emotions (E III - LIII). When the Mind clearly and distinctly understands himself and his Emotions, he feels Pleasure and because this is accompanied by the knowledge of God as its cause, this self-contentment thereby becomes the AMOR ERGA DEUM (Love towards God.) (E V - XV DEM) This AMOR ERGA DEUM is referred to as the Rational Love of God, because it originates from Reason whose power can not only form a clear and distinct idea of every Emotion (E V - IV - COR) but also actually connects the Emotion of Love with the Idea of God as its cause.

The object of this AMOR ERGA DEUM is God (E V - PREF), who has no passions. God cannot pass either to a greater or lesser perfection; therefore, He is not affected by any Emotions either of Pleasure or Pain. This derives from the fact that God's Ideas are adequate, and all Ideas insofar as they are referred to God are adequate and perfect and therefore true. Strictly speaking, therefore, God does not love or hate anyone, (E V - XVII & COR) and because of this, one who loves God cannot strive that God love him in return. This would be desiring God not to be God, for then God would be feeling pain from it. (E V - III) No one can hate God, because we contemplate God as active. (E - XVIII) Our Idea of God is adequate and we do not experience any Pain in relation to God; hence, we can not hate him nor can our Love towards God be turned into hate. It may be objected

that Pain must be found in God, because we understand God to be the cause of all things including Pain. In reply to this, one must note, that insofar as we clearly understand God to be the cause of Pain, then this Emotion not only ceases to be a Passion but is furthermore turned into Pleasure, which we feel because of our adequate knowledge of it.

Neither can Man's AMOR ERGA DEUM be stained by any Emotion of envy or jealousy on the part of Man. On the contrary, a Man fosters it the more, when he conceives a greater number of men joined to God by the same bond of Love. This AMOR ERGA DEUM is the highest good we can seek for under the guidance of Reason, because it is common to all men, and we desire that all should rejoice in it. (E V - XVI) Therefore, there cannot be any envy or jealousy involved with it, because the more it is fostered, the more one rejoices in God. (E V - XX - DEM) This AMOR ERGA DEUM must hold the chief place in the Mind, because of the ever increasing pleasure or happiness that it can bring. (E V - XVI) When Reason is at work, the finite mind grasps scientific truths which he understands to be grounded on God, insofar as he is the First Cause in the world and the necessary harmony of the universe. This grounding is done by acknowledging that such scientific knowledge is established on the necessity attached to all things and this clarified knowledge leads Man to submit himself to this Necessity. Scientific knowledge is the product of Demonstrations by Reason and the Sage is one, who is free from error because he has placed himself above inadequate ideas by developing a system of adequate ideas. This system can go on increasing but can never come to a definitive or absolute supremacy over inadequate ideas as long as a man is caught up in the constant flux of this spatio-temporal world. In this material universe, where man is in the grip of forces external to himself, the Wise man is one whose store of adequate Ideas has reduced its burden of Passions, which are inadequate Ideas, to the minimum.

This AMOR ERGA DEUM constitutes man's happiness in this life and it increases in proportion to the Mind's expanding the clear and distinct ideas of his emotions, which help to develop its self-knowledge. (E V - XV) It is associated with, and fostered by, all the changes of the body, because the Mind can refer all his bodily changes and all his perceptions of things to the Idea of God. It is from this ability to form a clear and distinct Idea of all emotions, that Man exercises control over them. A Passion is a bad Emotion because it is essentially a confused Idea (E III - AFF GEN DEF 3),

but it ceases to be a Passion as soon as Reason converts this confused Idea into a clear and distinct Idea. (E V - III) The possessor of this AMOR ERGA DEUM thus transfigures the Passion into an Action, demonstrating Man's control over all other emotions through his Reason by referring them to its adequate Idea of God (E V PREF; E V - XIV; E V - XV) But here is a question only of lessening one's inadequate Ideas so that they constitute only the least part of one's Mind, but there is never a question of a total annihilation of all his Passions. (E V - XX - SCH)

Because there is no Emotion directly contrary to this AMOR ERGA DEUM, the Rational Love of God is the most permanent of all Emotions. Insofar as it is referred to the body, the Rational Love of God cannot be destroyed unless the body be destroyed also. When referred to the mind alone without connecting it with the body, this love of God becomes the INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD. (E V - XX - SCH).

### E. THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD

The AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI (Intellectual Love of God) essentially consists in the Finite Mind's self-contentment and self-acceptance resulting from Intuition, accompanied by the mind's awareness that God insofar as He is eternal is the cause of its own self-awareness as an eternal being, of its Intuitive idea and of the rapturous self-contentment that this delivers. (E V - XXXII & COR)

Intuition is the highest power of the human mind. Whenever the Mind comes to know something through Intuition, it experiences joy over it, which is accompanied by the Mind's knowledge of itself as its formal cause but itself regarded under the aspect of its own eternity. The more control the Mind has over Intuition, the more perfect it becomes and the more joy it experiences. When this progress brings him to the summit of human perfection, the highest pleasure and rapture results. This delight is accompanied by the appreciation of himself and of his vitality as the cause, and thus this joy gives one the greatest self-acceptance and self-approval. The subject of this Intellectual Love is a Finite Mind insofar as it is intuitively aware of itself as eternal insofar as it is a mode of the infinite and eternal essence of God (E V - XXXII).

This AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI arises only from the possession of Intuitive knowledge, (E V - XXXII & COR) which grasps an essence not in its temporal existence but in its eternal perspective as an

individual Mode of an eternal Attribute of God's essence (E V - XXIX ; E I - XXV - COR) The AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI necessarily results in a Finite Mind from the possession of any intuitive idea accompanied by the knowledge that its cause is God, not insofar as God is present in a determinate place and time through Imagination, but insofar as he is eternal and known through Intuition alone (E V - XXXII - COR).

### 1) TRAPPINGS FOR THE VULGAR

The adversaries of Spinoza's philosophical system reject his Intellectual Love of God most fundamentally because this tenet of his involves talk of a God possessing cognitive and affective activity. They contend that all such chatter masks the philosopher's attempt to allay the common people's suspicion that his system is presenting only a God, who feels neither pleasure nor pain. This is the God whom he has depicted in all the preceding sections of the Ethics, and now this discourse on reciprocal love between God and man is suddenly introduced in the last section of this book. His challengers argue that this proposition is not a product of the demonstration from the principles of his rational system, which he has heretofore steadfastly followed. It comes up as an alien suggestion and an extraneous addition to his system, which can only be traced to some subjective need or a remnant of religious faith embedded in the psychological make-up of the philosopher. Spinoza's Intellectual Love of God is, bluntly speaking, merely "trappings for the vulgar" and nothing else.

Such a supposition, if true, would effectively convict Spinoza of wittingly or unwittingly permitting elements of faith to enter into what is considered by all his readers as an exceptionally and rigorously rational philosophical masterpiece. Such a criticism, if true, would render the entire philosophical system of this world-thinker totally self-defeating.

### 2) THREE OBJECTIONS TO AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI

The opponents' reaction to this world-thinker's conception of bliss as consisting in the INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD gives us the opportunity to resolve the most important challenges to this doctrine, the acme of his system. This denunciation is focused on the view that the Finite Mind endowed with the AMOR ERGA DEUM is conscious of itself on the level of REASON, as a Mode

resting on the INFINITE INTELLECT, an Infinite Mode of the Attribute THOUGHT, and thus abiding in God as the NATURA NATURATA (Created Nature). But when provided with the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI, Man is conscious of himself as eternal and specifically as a Mode enduring directly in THOUGHT, the Attribute directly expressing God as the unique Substance and as NATURA NATURANS (Creating Nature).

#### a) MAN HAS NO MEMORY OF PRE-EXISTENCE

The first criticism directly impugns the self-consciousness of Man as eternal by underscoring the fact that if he were truly conscious of himself as an eternally existing being, he would certainly have a memory of having existed before he made his appearance as a body-mind unity in space-and-time. Man does not have such memory of his pre-existence.

This complaint is probably based on the interpretation of the Spinozistic text that Man becomes conscious of his eternity, only when his Finite Mind is already existing united with a Body in time. In this case, the Finite Mind would be aware of God only as the TIMELESS WHOLE OF NATURE, who is present to itself and to all other things as parts of the NATURA NATURATA. (E V - XXIII - SCH) However, this demand that Man should remember now that he is existing in this spatio-temporal world a pre-existence he has presumably enjoyed before he appeared in this world suffers from a mistaken conception of eternity. Eternity is thus visualized as existence without a beginning and an end, all of which terms are comprehended in the concept of duration or time. (E V - XXIX - DEM) When so conceived, eternity is used permissibly and purely as a tool to help provide men with a rough understanding of eternity. Whatever results from the usage of such a linguistic device must not lead one to stress it beyond its inherent capacity. In point of fact, based as it is on a flawed understanding of eternity, such a Linguistic Tool's functioning is far from exact; its results can only pass for mere figments of the mind. Man does not have nor can he have a memory of his pre-existence as an eternal reality, simply because memory belongs to Imagination. If the Intellectual Love of God in the Finite Mind, which is eternal of its very nature, were visualized as having begun to exist, the perfections which we imagine it to possess now would certainly be the same as those which it has in itself without any beginning.

Even when using his Reason, Man can only become conscious of his timelessness insofar as he is subject to the Necessity governing



all things in the spatio-temporal universe. (E II - XLIV - COR 2) But when Intuition comes into play, Man becomes conscious of himself no longer as a Finite Mind subject to the binding laws of the spatio-temporal world, but to the Necessity of Existence linked to the Divine Essence. The Intuitive self-awareness of a Finite Mind renders it conscious of itself as an individual existing timelessly, because he is totally dependent on the concretely existing Unique Substance, to whom belongs necessary existence. Intuition and the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI render Man's Finite Mind aware of itself as a part of the uniquely existing RES COGITANS (THINKING THING); more precisely, as a Mode grounded on the Attribute of Thought and hence abiding in God, the NATURA NATURANS.

### **b) AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI WORTHLESS FOR MAN ON EARTH**

The second complaint against Man's awareness of himself as eternal points out the presumption that the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI would be of no help for mortal men as a means for obtaining happiness in their earthly life. This challenge articulates the worthlessness of his elevation to the level of Intuition and the AMOR DEI INTELLECTUALIS, when engaged in the pursuit of perfect happiness during his earthly life where the control of passions is of utmost importance. Must Man be deemed removed from the arena of his struggle against passions through the Intellectual Love of God? It is clear to all that perfect bliss in the form of AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI may not be postponed to some problematic life after death. Spinoza himself envisions this AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI as available to man in his present earthly existence. But the philosopher ascertains its attainability only for those courageous souls, who pursue bliss through the improvement of the mind, by stock-piling adequate ideas in it thereby cleansing it of inadequate ideas in which passions consist. (E V - XXXVIII - DEM)

The AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI is totally different from the AMOR ERGA DEUM, by which Man's Reason understands himself and his emotions clearly and distinctly indeed, but only insofar as he is conscious of God as the Necessary Harmony of the spatio-temporal universe. (E V - XV) As long as Man is engaged in mere scientific investigation on the level of Reason, his self-awareness only includes his existence in the changelessness of the Whole of Created Nature. In this context, one cannot speak of a self-consciousness of man as united with God "IN RECIPROCAL LOVE." (E V - XVII)

But it is a different story, when Intuition grips the finite mind of Man. Intuition and the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI do not belong to a disembodied Mind, but to the mind of Man in this world, who has so improved his Understanding to such a degree that he comes to the realization that these two eternal possessions have been his all along. These treasures have neither a beginning nor an end, because they are related to the Finite Mind which is eternal of itself. When we speak of these twin possessions as having been "acquired" by man, we are using language fit only for mental fictions. (E V - XXXII) This usage is a linguistic ploy for understanding and explaining eternity more readily. (E V - XXX - SCH) This is useful, when we describe the mind as engaged in an ascent to God, but such discourse should be replaced by speech which recognizes degrees of perfection among men. One Mind contains more perfection than the next, when by more strenuous self-improvement on the part of the individual, it uncovers its eternal possession of Intuition. It does this by digging through layers of inadequate Ideas, whence rise passions impeding man's natural and active thrust, and thus he comes to an adequate self-knowledge. (E V - XXIII) Since the finite Mind's essential power is knowledge, measured by its stock of Intuitive Ideas, the more it increases them, the more does the Finite Mind become aware of itself as eternal and as having a special existence in the knowledge of God as the eternal Res Cogitans. (E V - XXX - SCH)

From Intuition ensues the AMOR DEI INTELLECTUALIS (E V - XXXI), which brings the Finite Mind to a state of absolute perfection, wherein Man is made completely free of passion and where he lives a purely intellectual life. The Intuitively enlightened Sage is simply the single-minded thinker, who is now detached from the illusory objects of passions. He is the reflective and self-controlled Savant, who has achieved a systematic knowledge of the unity of all things through an Intuitive Grasp of the Whole of Nature at one blow. From this height, he gains the conviction that he is a part situated in his proper place within this intelligible totality of all things. This persuasion gives rise to his perfect happiness as constituted by the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI.

The Intuitive AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI belongs to the Finite Mind, which knows God Himself as infinite and eternal Substance through Intuition (E V - XV). If pleasure consists in a transition from a lesser to a greater perfection, then truly BLESSEDNESS must consist of the human Mind being endowed with perfection itself. The synonyms used by Spinoza to denote Blessedness are Salvation and Freedom, which consist of man's eternal Love

towards God or of God's Love towards man. This is what the Intellectual Love of God is, in its ultimate analysis, and Spinoza points out the fact that the Bible calls it GLORY. (E V - XXXV - SCH)

### c) INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD DEPRIVES MAN OF HIS INDIVIDUALITY

The third obstacle to the viability of Spinoza's conception of bliss as constituted by the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI is his claim that it renders Man perfectly happy by securely immersing him in the perspective of his eternal existence. Spinoza's adversaries claim that herein lurks the danger that this Love would most certainly deprive him of his individuality, which would get dissolved within the ocean of the Divinity. This objection points out the fact that God's utter simplicity demands the dissolution of the finite mind, if the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI is directed to God as the NATURA NATURANS; i.e. the First Cause of all things (E V 32). Since God as CAUSA SUI is the primary object of Intuition in every case, God is here depicted in this situation as totally transcendent and thus completely separate from the Finite Human Mind. Consequently, the Human Mind gifted with the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI no longer belongs to the body-mind that Man is supposed to be but to some disembodied spirit.

In reply, it must be noted that God himself possesses his own INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF HIMSELF. (E V - XXXV & DEM) God is absolutely infinite and he rejoices over his own nature's eternal perfection as the Unique Substance. Such rejoicing on the part of God is necessarily accompanied by the Idea of himself, not only as the "Cause of Himself," but also as the cause of this his delight over himself as well. Thus God is aware of Himself as the individual and concretely existing Whole of Reality in which all finite individual essences are hierarchically ordered within it as its necessary consequences. It is this Whole, which is contemplated in one intellectual perceptive glance by God in the Divine Intellectual Love and shared to some extent by the Finite Mind in his Human Intellectual love. (E II - XL - SCH 2) Intuition belongs to the Finite Mind insofar as it is eternal (E V - XXXI) and thus the Finite Mind is aware of itself as displaying Idea in the Mind of God.

There is only one INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD not two. However, Man's Intellectual Love of God is not simply and totally identical with the Divine Intellectual Love but must be considered

only as a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself. The divine Intellectual Love has for its object God himself insofar as he is his own infinite and eternal Self. The human Intellectual Love also has God for its object but in this case it is God, not seen as its infinite Self, but God as displayed by the finite mind's essence under the aspect of eternity. The Intellectual Love of God in Man is eternal because its only source is Intuitive knowledge, which is eternal of its very nature. (E V - XXXIII) The eternity of Intuition depends on the eternity of the Finite Mind itself, since it depends on the eternity of God (E V - XXXI). Eternity is the ontological status of a Mode of the Attribute Thought. From the viewpoint of divine causality, all Modes under THOUGHT are ideas of God; (E II - V) hence, the Finite Mind is an eternal truth insofar as it is conceived through THOUGHT (E V - XXX).

The contention that Man would be dissolved in God's infinite and eternal essence is valid only, if the transcendence of God is conceived in such a way that God, NATURA NATURANS, is the Infinite separated from the Finite by an overwhelming chasm. Such a presumption is found only in an ontology that is fundamentally dualistic. Spinoza's system is the most radical of monisms, for existence is a property belonging solely to the One Substance, where all real distinctions are removed. He structured reality in a Substance-Mode ontology to insure the immanence of God as the Unique Substance in all other beings, the necessary consequents of his ever-active Essence. In this context, God is not an external or an intermittent physical cause. (E I - XVIII) The relationship between God as the Unique Substance and his Modes, is not that of a cause and its effects, but of Reason and its Reasoned Consequents. The AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI is a metaphysical relationship between the Unique Substance and its Modes and it cannot be conceived as that between two substances or totally different entities.

Ordinary Love is indeed defined by Spinoza as Pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause (E III - DEF GEN AFF 6), but this is why he hesitates to speak of "Pleasure" in connection with the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI. (E V - XXXVI - SCH) The idea of a cause in the AMOR INTELLECTUALIS DEI can only indicate that the Unique Substance is the Intrinsic Cause of its Reasoned consequents. Love in God cannot be an Emotion, but solely an Idea, (E II - XL; E I - XXXIV) and by the same token the distinction between knowing and willing as distinct faculties is no longer valid in the realm of the sole infinite and eternal Substance. The Divine