

Baruch Spinoza,
Ethics, Part 5

Baruch (or Benedict de) Spinoza (1632-1677) was born and raised a Jew, though his parents were *Conversos* from Portugal, Jews who had “converted” to Christianity under threat of the Portuguese Inquisition (1536). Religious toleration in the Netherlands drew many of these Sephardic Jews to Amsterdam, who reconverted to Judaism on arrival. Spinoza’s father was a merchant.

After a long struggle, the Dutch Republic had recently secured its independence from the Spanish Crown, becoming the first real republic in Europe. In this burgeoning commercial nation, Enlightenment ideals germinated. But Spinoza’s ideas pushed too far even for this tolerant regime: he questioned the authenticity of Scripture and the nature of divinity. He was excommunicated from Jewish society at 23. Living the seemingly innocuous life of an optical lens grinder, Spinoza was the great figure behind what has been called the “Radical Enlightenment.” The *Ethics* (written in Latin) resulted from nearly fifteen years of reflection, the epitome of early modern philosophical ambition: a comprehensive system covering the range of philosophical topics, and all according to the strictest kind of geometric method, inspired by Descartes’s philosophical approach—though Spinoza disagreed with Descartes on multiple points. (Cartesianism was itself suspect to the Dutch Calvinist religious authorities, as they were committed to a kind of Aristotelian scholasticism.) Spinoza argues that God is identical to nature (*Deus sive Natura*), a revolutionary proposition. The question of his pantheism would be a live issue even at the end of the eighteenth century, in the *Pantheismusstreit*, which would influence Hegel, Goethe, Schleiermacher and other luminaries of the Romantic period.

Preface

I pass finally to the remaining part of the Ethics, which is about the way or the path that leads to freedom. In this part therefore I shall discuss the power of reason showing what reason itself can do in the face of the emotions. I shall then show what freedom of mind or blessedness is, and we shall see from this how much more effective a wise person is than an ignorant person. Not relevant here are the questions how and in what manner the intellect should be perfected and also the art by which the body is to be healed in order to perform its function properly. The latter belongs to medicine and the former to logic. Here then, as I said, I shall discuss only the power of the mind or of reason, and above all I shall show how much sovereignty it has over the emotions to restrain and govern them and what sort of sovereignty that is. We have already demonstrated above that we do not have absolute sovereignty over them. The Stoics however thought that they depended absolutely on our will and that we could have absolute sovereignty over them. But they were compelled by refractory experience rather than by their principles to admit that a good deal of practice and effort are also required to restrain and govern them. Someone tried to show this by instancing two dogs (if I remember correctly). One of the dogs was a house dog and the other was a hunting dog. In the end by habituation he was able to get the house dog used to go hunting, and the hunting dog conversely to stop chasing hares.

Descartes very much favors this view. For he took the position that the soul or mind is specifically united with a certain part of the brain, i.e. the so-called pineal gland, by means of which the mind senses all the motions aroused in the body as well as external objects and which the mind can move in various ways simply because it wills to. He declared that this gland is poised in the middle of the brain in such a way that it can be moved by the tiniest motion of the animal spirits. He then declared that this gland is poised in the middle of the brain in as many various ways as the various ways in which the animal spirits impact it. Moreover, there are as many various traces imprinted upon it as there are various external objects that drive the animal spirits themselves toward it. The result is that if subsequently the gland, by the will of the soul which moves it in different ways, is poised in one way or another as it was once poised by the motions of the spirits in one way or another, then the gland itself will drive and determine the animal spirits in the same way as they had previously been driven by the similar poise of the gland.

Moreover he declared that every single willing of the mind is united

by nature with a certain specific motion of the gland. For example if anyone has a will to look at a distant object, this will is going to cause the pupil to be dilated. However if he is thinking merely about dilating the pupil, it will not help to have a will to do that, because nature has not connected the motion of the gland which serves to drive spirits toward the optic nerve in a way that is suitable for dilating or contracting the pupil with the will to dilate or contract it but only with the will to view distant or close objects.

Finally he declared that although each and every motion of this gland seems to be connected by nature with particular thoughts of ours from the beginning of our lives, they can nevertheless be connected with others by habituation; this he endeavors to prove in *The Passions of the Soul*, part 1, article 50. He concludes from this that there is no soul so weak that it cannot, when properly directed, acquire absolute control over its passions. For as he defines them, they are perceptions or senses or disturbances of the soul, which are specially related to it, and which N. B. are produced, preserved and strengthened by some motion of the spirits (see *The Passions of the Soul*, part 1, article 27). But since we can connect any motion of the gland and consequently of the spirits with any willing, and since the determination of the will depends upon our abilities alone, it follows that if we determine our will by definite, firm judgments in accordance with which we wish to direct the actions of our life, and if we join to these judgments the motions of the passions which we wish to have, we shall acquire an absolute sovereignty over our passions.

This is the opinion of this illustrious man (as far as I gather it from his own words), but I would scarcely have believed that it had been put forward by so great a man, if it had been less clever. Surely I cannot properly express my bewilderment that a philosopher who had stated firmly that he deduced nothing except from self-evident principles, and affirmed nothing except what he perceived clearly and distinctly, and who had so often rebuked the scholastics because they attempted to explain obscure matters by means of occult qualities, should take up a hypothesis that is more occult than any occult quality. What, I ask, does he mean by the union of mind and body? What clear and distinct concept does he have, I ask, of the very close union of a thought with a certain tiny portion of quantity? I certainly wish he had explained this union through its proximate cause. But he had conceived the mind as so distinct from the body that he could not assign any special cause either to this union or to the mind itself but had to have recourse to the cause of the whole universe, i.e. to God.

Then I would very much like to know how many degrees of motion

the mind can attribute to that pineal gland and how much force it can deploy to keep it poised. For I don't know whether this gland is moved around more slowly or more swiftly by the mind than by the animal spirits, and whether the movements of the passions, which we have closely connected to firm judgments, may not in turn be disconnected from them by corporeal causes. It would follow from the latter that however firmly the mind may have set itself to face danger and may have joined motions of courage to this decision, yet despite this, when the danger is seen, the gland may be so suspended that the mind cannot think about anything except flight. And certainly, since there is no common measure between the will and the motion, there is also no comparison made between the power or strength of the mind and that of the body; and consequently the strength of the latter can in no ways be determined by the strength of the former. Moreover not only is this gland not found to be situated in the middle of the brain in such a way that it can be moved around so easily and in so many ways, but also not all the nerves extend all the way to the cavities of the brain. Finally I omit everything he says about the will and its freedom, since I have more than sufficiently shown that these things are false.

Therefore because the power of the mind, as I showed above, is defined by understanding alone, we will determine purely by cognition of the mind the remedies for the emotions, remedies which I believe everyone knows by experience but does not accurately observe or distinctly see, and from that we will deduce everything that concerns its blessedness.

Axioms

1. If two contrary actions are aroused in one subject, a change will necessarily have to take place either in both of them or in one alone, until they cease to be contrary.
2. The power of an effect is defined by the power of its cause insofar as its essence is explained or defined through the essence of the cause itself.

This axiom is evident from 3p7.

Proposition 1

Just as thoughts and ideas of things are ordered and connected in the mind, so too affections of the body or images of things are precisely ordered and connected in the body.

Proof

The order and connection of ideas is the same (by 2p7) as the order and connection of things, and vice versa the order and connection of things is the same (by 2p6c and 2p7) as the order and connection of ideas. Therefore just as the order and connection of ideas in the mind happen in accordance with the order and connection of the affections of the body (by 2p18), so vice versa (by 3p2) the order and connection of affections of the body happen as these thoughts and the ideas of things are ordered and connected in the mind.

Proposition 2

If we disconnect a disturbance of the spirit, or emotion, from the thought of an external cause and connect it with other thoughts, then the love or hatred for the external cause, as well as the waverings of spirit arising from these emotions, will be destroyed.

Proof

What constitutes the form of love or hatred is joy or sadness accompanied by the idea of an external cause (by DOE6 and DOE7). Therefore when the cause is taken away, the form of love or hatred is taken away at the same time; and therefore these emotions and those arising from them are destroyed.

Proposition 3

An emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it.

Proof

An emotion which is a passion is a confused idea (by the general definition of the emotions). Therefore if we form a clear and distinct idea of an emotion itself, this idea will not be distinguished from the emotion itself insofar as it is related to the mind alone (by 2p21 with its scholium) by anything but reason; and thus (by 3p3) the emotion will cease to be a passion.

Corollary

Therefore the better we know an emotion, the more it is placed within our abilities and the less passive the mind is in relation to it.

Proposition 4

There is no affection of the body that we cannot form some clear and distinct concept of.

Proof

Things which are common to all can only be conceived adequately (by 2p38), and thus (by 2p12 and L2 following 2p13) there is no affection of the body that we cannot form some clear and distinct concept of.

Corollary

It follows from this that there is no emotion that we cannot form some clear and distinct concept of. For an emotion is the idea of an affection of the body (by the general definition of the emotions), and therefore (by 5p4) it must involve some clear and distinct concept.

Scholium

There is nothing from which some effect does not follow (by 1p36), and we understand clearly and distinctly whatever follows from an idea which is adequate in us (by 2p40). It follows that each person has the ability to understand clearly and distinctly himself and his emotions, if not absolutely, at least partly; and consequently to ensure that he is less acted on by them. One must therefore devote oneself above all to the task of getting to know each emotion, as far as possible, clearly and distinctly, so that from an emotion the mind may be determined to think those things that it clearly and distinctly perceives and in which it is fully content, and thus the emotion itself may be separated from the thought of an external cause and be connected with true thoughts. The upshot of this will be that not only love, hatred, etc. will be destroyed (by 5p2), but also that the appetites or desires which usually arise from such an emotion will be unable to be excessive (by 4p61). For one must note, above all, that it is one and the same appetite by which a human being is said both to act and to be acted on. For example, we have shown that human nature is so constituted, that everyone wants other people to live in conformance with his own character (see 3p31s). And this appetite in a person who is not led by reason is a passion; it is called ambition and it does not differ very much from pride. By contrast in a person who lives by the dictate of reason, it is an action or a virtue, and it is called piety (see 4p37s1 and 4p37, alternative proof). In this manner all appetites or desires are merely passions insofar as they arise from inadequate ideas; and they are accounted virtue when they are aroused or generated from adequate ideas. For all the desires by which we are determined to do some action can arise as much from adequate ideas as from inadequate ideas (see 4p59). And (to return to the point from which I digressed) no better remedy for the emotions that lies within our abilities can be devised than that which consists in a true cognition of them, since there is no other power of the mind available than that of thinking

and forming adequate ideas, as we have shown above (by 3p3).

Proposition 5

The emotion toward a thing which we imagine simply and not as necessary nor as possible nor as contingent, is, all other things being equal, the greatest of all.

Proof

An emotion toward a thing that we imagine to be free is greater than toward a necessary thing (by 3p49), and consequently still greater than the emotion toward a thing that we imagine as possible or contingent (by 4p11). But to imagine something as free is no other than to imagine the thing simply, in ignorance of the causes by which it has been determined to act (by our proofs in 2p35s). Therefore the emotion toward a thing that we simply imagine is, other things being equal, greater than toward a necessary, possible or contingent thing, and consequently it will be the greatest.

Proposition 6

Insofar as the mind understands all things as necessary, to that extent it has greater power over the emotions, or is less acted on by them.

Proof

The mind understands that all things are necessary (by 1p29) and are determined to exist and operate by an infinite nexus of causes (by 1p28); and therefore (by the previous proposition) it ensures to that extent that it is less acted on by the emotions arising from them and (by 3p48) it is less affected toward them.

Scholium

The more this cognition that things are necessary is concerned with particular things that we imagine quite distinctly and vividly, the greater the power of the mind over the emotions. Experience itself also testifies to this. For we see that sadness for the loss of some good thing that has perished is mitigated as soon as the person who lost it considers that that good thing could not have been saved in any case. Thus we also see that no one pities an infant because it does not know how to speak or walk or reason and because it lives for so many years as it were unconscious of itself. But if most people were born as adults and only one or two as infants, then everyone would pity every one of the infants, because then they would consider infancy itself not as a natural and necessary thing but as a fault or something sinful in nature; and we could give several other instances of this sort.

Proposition 7

Emotions arising from or aroused by reason, if we take time into account, are more powerful than those related to particular things which we regard as absent.

Proof

We do not regard a thing as absent because of the emotion by which we imagine it but because the body is affected by a different emotion which excludes the existence of the thing (by 2p17). Therefore an emotion related to a thing which we regard as absent is not of such a nature as to overcome all a person's other actions and power (on this see 4p6). To the contrary, it is of such a nature that it can only be restrained in some fashion by the emotions that exclude the existence of the external cause (by 4p9). But an emotion that arises from reason is necessarily related to the common properties of things; and we always regard these as present (for there can be nothing which excludes their present existence) and imagine them always in the same way (by 2p38). Therefore such an emotion always remains the same, and consequently (by 5a1) emotions which are contrary to it and which are not fostered by their own external causes will have to adapt themselves continually to it until they are no longer contrary, and to that extent an emotion arising from reason is the more powerful.

Proposition 8

The more concurrent and simultaneous causes by which an emotion is aroused, the greater it is.

Proof

Several causes simultaneously can do more than if they were fewer (by 3p7); and therefore (by 4p5) the more causes simultaneously by which an emotion is aroused, the stronger it is.

Scholium

This proposition is also evident from 5a2.

Proposition 9

An emotion related to several different causes which the mind regards at the same time as the emotion itself is less harmful, and we are less acted on by it, and therefore we are less affected toward each cause, than another equally great emotion which is related to only one or a small number of causes.

Proof

An emotion is only bad or harmful insofar as it hinders the mind from being able to think (by 4p26 and 4p27). Therefore an emotion which determines the mind to regard several objects at the same time is less harmful than another equally great emotion which keeps the mind so focused on one or a few objects that it cannot think of other things. That is the first point. Then, because the essence of the mind, i.e. (by 3p7) its power, consists in thought alone (by 2p11), the mind is less acted on by an emotion which determines it to regard several things at the same time than by an equally great emotion that keeps the mind occupied in regarding only one or a few objects. That is the second point. Finally (by 3p48) insofar as this emotion is related to several causes, it is also lesser in relation to each one.

Proposition 10

So long as we are not assailed by emotions that are contrary to our nature, we have the ability to order and connect the affections of the body in accordance with the order of the intellect.

Proof

Emotions that are contrary to our nature, i.e. (by 4p30) emotions that are bad, are bad insofar as they impede the mind from understanding (by 4p27). Therefore so long as we are not assailed by emotions that are contrary to our nature, for so long the power of the mind by which it endeavors to understand things (by 4p26) is not impeded, and therefore for so long it has the ability to form clear and distinct ideas and to deduce one idea from another (see 2p40s2 and 2p47s). Consequently (by 5p1) for so long we have the ability to order and connect the affections of the body in accordance with the order of the intellect.

Scholium

With this ability of rightly ordering and connecting the affections of the body we can ensure that we are not easily affected by bad emotions. For (by 5p7) greater force is required to restrain emotions which are ordered and connected in accordance with the order of the intellect than those that are uncertain and random. The best thing we can achieve therefore, so long as we do not have perfect cognition of our emotions, is to conceive a right manner of living or sure tenets of life and to commit them to memory and apply them constantly to particular situations that often meet us in life, so that they may have a broad effect on our imagination and always be at hand for us.

For example, we have included among the tenets of life (see 4p46 and 4p46s) the tenet that hatred is to be overcome by love or generosity

and not repaid with reciprocal hatred. In order that we may always have this precept of reason on hand when we need it, we must often think of and reflect on the common offenses people commit and by what means and in what way they are best forestalled by generosity. In this way we shall join an image of an offense to an image of this tenet and it will be always on hand for us (by 2p18) when an offense is committed against us. We should also have on hand an account of what is truly useful to us and also of the good that arises from mutual friendship and common society, as well as an understanding that the highest contentment of spirit arises from a right manner of living (by 4p52) and that human beings, like all other things, act from the necessity of nature. If we have all these things at hand, the offense or the hatred that an offense normally gives rise to, will occupy a very small part of our imagination and will easily be overcome. Or if the anger that normally arises from very serious offenses is not so easily overcome, it will still be overcome despite everything, although not without waverings of spirit, in a far shorter space of time than if we did not have these things premeditated in this way, as is evident from 5p6, 5p7 and 5p8. We must think in the same way about spiritedness in order to divest ourselves of fear; we must often review and imagine the common dangers of life and reflect how by presence of mind and fortitude they may best be averted and overcome.

Note however that in ordering our thoughts and imaginings we must always focus (by 4p63c and 3p59) on what is good in each thing, so that we may be determined always to act from an emotion of joy. For example, if anyone becomes conscious that he follows too much after glory, he should think about the right use of it and what is the purpose of pursuing it and by what means it can be acquired, and not about its abuse and the vanity and inconstancy of human beings, or other things of this sort which no one dwells on except from sickness of spirit. It is the most ambitious people who most afflict themselves with such thoughts, when they despair of achieving the kudos they are ambitious for; and while spewing out their anger, they try to give an appearance of wisdom. It is certain therefore that it is those who make the most clamor about the abuse of glory and the vanity of the world who are the most desirous of glory. This is not confined to ambitious people, but is common to all whom fortune turns against and who are powerless in spirit. A poor person who is also avaricious never stops talking about the misuse of money and the faults of the wealthy. He achieves nothing by this except to torment himself and show others that he has no equanimity in bearing either his own poverty or other people's wealth. So too men who have been badly treated by a girlfriend think of nothing but women's caprice and their deceitful spirits and all their

other stereotypical faults – all of which they immediately consign to oblivion as soon as the girlfriend takes them back. Anyone therefore who is eager to govern his emotions and appetites solely by the love of freedom, so far as he can, will strive to get to know the virtues and their causes and to fill his spirit with the gladness that arises from a true cognition of them. But he will not be at all eager to dwell on people's faults and disparage them and find gladness in a false appearance of freedom. Anyone who will diligently observe these things (for they are not difficult) and practice them, will in a short space of time surely be able for the most part to direct his actions by the sovereignty of reason.

Proposition 11

The more things an image is related to, the more frequent it is or the more often it is invigorated and the more it occupies the mind.

Proof

The more things an image or emotion is related to, the more causes there are which can arouse and foster it, and the mind (by hypothesis) regards all of them at the same time as a result of that emotion; and therefore because of that the emotion is more frequent or more often invigorated and (by 5p8) occupies the mind more.

Proposition 12

Images of things are more easily joined with images related to things we understand clearly and distinctly than with other things.

Proof

Things that we understand clearly and distinctly are either common properties of things or deduced from them (see the definition of reason in 2p40s2), and consequently they are aroused in us more often (by the previous proposition). Therefore it can more easily happen that we regard other things simultaneously with these rather than with other things, and consequently (by 2p18) that they are more easily joined with these than with other things.

Proposition 13

The more other things an image is joined with, the more often it is invigorated.

Proof

The more other things an image is joined with, the more causes there are (by 2p18) that can arouse it.

Proposition 14

The mind can ensure that all affections of the body or images of things are related to the idea of God.

Proof

There is no affection of the body which the mind cannot form a clear and distinct concept of (by 5p4); and therefore it can ensure (by 1p15) that they are all related to the idea of God.

Proposition 15

Anyone who understands himself and his emotions clearly and distinctly loves God, and all the more, the more he understands himself and his emotions.

Proof

Anyone who understands himself and his emotions clearly and distinctly is joyful (by 3p53), and this is accompanied by the idea of God (by the previous proposition); and therefore (by DOE6) he loves God, and (by the same reasoning) all the more, the more he understands himself and his emotions.

Proposition 16

This love for God must occupy his mind more than anything.

Proof

This love is joined with all the affections of the body (by 5p14) and is fostered by all of them (by 5p15); and therefore (by 5p11) it must occupy the mind more than anything.

Proposition 17

God is without passions, and is not affected by any emotion of joy or sadness.

Proof

All ideas, insofar as they are related to God, are true (by 2p32), i.e. (by 2def4) they are adequate; and therefore (by the general definition of the emotions) God is without passions. Then, God cannot pass either to a greater or to a lesser perfection (by 1p20c2); and therefore (by DOE2 and DOE3) he is not affected by any emotion of joy or sadness.

Corollary

Properly speaking, God does not love anyone or hate anyone. For (by 5p17) God is not affected by any emotion of joy or sadness, and consequently (by DOE6 and DOE7) he does not love or hate anyone either.

Proposition 18

No one can hate God.

Proof

The idea of God which is in us is adequate and perfect (by 2p46 and 2p47); and therefore insofar as we think of God, to that extent we are acting (by 3p3), and consequently (by 3p59) there can be no sadness accompanied by the idea of God, i.e. (by DOE7) no one can hate God.

Corollary

Love for God cannot be turned into hatred.

Scholium

But it may be objected that as we understand God to be the cause of all things, we are by that very fact considering God to be the cause of sadness. I reply that insofar as we understand the causes of sadness, to that extent (by 5p3) it does itself cease to be a passion, i.e. (by 3p59) to that extent it ceases to be sadness; and therefore insofar as we understand God to be the cause of sadness, to that extent we are joyful.

Proposition 19

He who loves God cannot endeavor that God love him in return.

Proof

If a person endeavored this, he would be desiring (by 5p17c) that God whom he loves not be God, and consequently (by 3p19) he would be desiring to be saddened, and this (by 3p28) is absurd. Therefore he who loves God, etc.

Proposition 20

This love for God cannot be tainted by emotions either of envy or jealousy, but the more people we imagine to be joined with God in the same bond of love, the more it is fostered.

Proof

This love for God is the highest good that we can seek by the dictate of reason (by 4p28). It is common to all human beings (by 4p36), and we desire everyone to enjoy it (by 4p37). Therefore (by DOE23) it cannot be tainted by the emotion of envy nor (by 5p18 and by the definition of jealousy, for which see 3p35s) by the emotion of jealousy either. To the contrary (by 3p31) the more people we imagine to enjoy it, the more it must be fostered.

Scholium

We can in this same way show that there is no emotion that is directly contrary to this love by which this love can be destroyed; and therefore we can conclude that this love for God is the most constant of all emotions, and cannot be destroyed, insofar as it is related to the body, except with the body itself. We shall see later what nature it has, insofar as it is related to the mind alone.

With this I have covered all the remedies for the emotions, or everything that the mind, considered in itself, can do in the face of the emotions. It is clear from all this that the power of the mind over the emotions consists:

First, in cognition of the emotions itself (see 5p4s).

Secondly, in the fact that it separates the emotions from the thought of an external cause which we imagine in a confused way (see 5p2 with the same 5p4s).

Thirdly, in the time, by which the affections related to things that we understand surpass those which are related to things that we conceive in a confused or mutilated fashion (see 5p7).

Fourthly, in the very many causes which foster the affections related to the common properties of things or to God (see 5p9 and 5p11).

Fifthly and finally, in the order by which the mind is able to order and connect its emotions with each other (see 5p10s as well as 5p12, 5p13 and 5p14).

But in order that this power of the mind over the emotions may be better understood, the first thing to note is that we call emotions

great when we compare one person's emotion with another's and see that one person is assailed by a particular emotion more than someone else, or when we compare one and the same person's emotions with each other and find that the same person is affected or moved by one emotion more than by another. For (by 4p5) the force of each emotion is defined by the power of the external cause compared with our own. The power of the mind however is defined by cognition alone, whereas its powerlessness, or passion, is estimated solely by privation of cognition, i.e. by that through which ideas are said to be inadequate. It follows from this that a mind is most acted on when inadequate ideas constitute its greatest part, so that it is distinguished more by being acted on than by acting. Conversely a mind acts the most when adequate ideas constitute its greatest part, so that, although there are as many inadequate ideas in the latter as in the former, it is still distinguished more by ideas that are related to human virtue than those that betray human powerlessness.

Then, we should note that sicknesses of the spirit and misfortune mostly have their origin in an excessive love for something that is subject to many changes and that we can never control. For no one is anxious or worried about anything but what he loves; and offense, suspicion, enmity, etc. arise only from a love for things which no one can in truth possess. We easily conceive from this therefore what clear and distinct cognition can do in the face of the emotions, especially the third kind of cognition (on which see 2p47s) whose foundation is the very cognition of God. That is, insofar as they are passions, if it does not absolutely take them away (see 5p3 with 5p4s), it at least ensures that they make up a very small part of the mind (see 5p14). Then, it generates love for an unchangeable and eternal thing (see 5p15) which we in truth possess (see 2p45) and which for that reason is tainted by none of the faults that there are in ordinary love, but can always be greater and greater (by 5p15) and occupy the greatest part of the mind (by 5p16) and have broad effects upon it.

And with this I have dealt with everything that concerns this present life. As I said at the beginning of this scholium, anyone will easily be able to see that in these few words I have covered all the remedies for the emotions, if he has paid attention to what we have said in this scholium and at the same time to the definitions of the mind and its emotions and finally to 3p1 and 3p3. It is now time therefore to move on to things that pertain to the duration of the mind without relation to the body.

Proposition 21

The mind can only imagine anything or recall past things so long as the body lasts.

Proof

The mind does not express the actual existence of its body nor does it conceive the affections of the body as actual except so long as the body lasts (by 2p8c). Consequently (by 2p26) it does not conceive any body as actually existing except so long as its own body lasts, and accordingly it cannot imagine anything (see the definition of imagination in 2p17s) or recall past things except so long as the body lasts (see the definition of memory in 2p18s).

Proposition 22

In God however there is necessarily an idea that expresses the essence of this or that human body from the vantage of eternity.

Proof

God is not only the cause of the existence of this or that human body but also of its essence (by 1p25), which must necessarily be conceived through the very essence of God (by 1a4) and by a certain eternal necessity (by 1p16), and this concept must necessarily be in God (by 2p3).

Proposition 23

The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body; but something of it remains, and that is eternal.

Proof

There is necessarily in God a concept or idea that expresses the essence of the human body (by the previous proposition), which for that reason is necessarily something that pertains to the essence of the human mind (by 2p13). But we attribute no duration that can be defined by time to the human mind, except insofar as it expresses the actual existence of the body, which is explained through duration and can be defined by time. That is to say (by 2p8c), we attribute duration to it only while the body lasts. However since, despite this, there is something that is conceived by a certain eternal necessity through the very essence of God (by the previous proposition), this something which pertains to the essence of the mind will necessarily be eternal.

Scholium

As we have said, this idea which expresses the essence of the body from the vantage of eternity is a certain mode of thinking that pertains to the essence of the mind and is necessarily eternal. Nevertheless it cannot be that we recall that we existed before the body, since there can be no traces of this in the body, and eternity cannot be defined by time and cannot have any relation to time. But nevertheless we sense [sentimus] and experience that we are eternal. For the mind no less senses the things that it conceives by understanding than the things which it has in memory. For the eyes of the mind with which it sees and observes things are the proofs themselves. Therefore although we do not recall that we existed before the body, we nevertheless sense that our mind, insofar as it involves the essence of the body from the vantage of eternity, is eternal, and as such its existence cannot be defined by time or explained through duration. Our mind therefore can only be said to endure and its existence can only be defined by a definite time, insofar as it involves the actual existence of the body, and to that extent only does it have the power of determining the existence of things in time and of conceiving them under duration.

Proposition 24

The more we understand particular things, the more we understand God.

Proof

This is evident from 1p25c.

Proposition 25

The mind's highest endeavor and its highest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of cognition.

Proof

The third kind of cognition proceeds from an adequate idea of certain attributes of God to an adequate cognition of the essence of things (see the definition of this in 2p40s2). The more we understand things in this way, the more (by the previous proposition) we understand God; and accordingly (by 4p28) the mind's highest virtue, i.e. (by 4def8) the mind's power or nature, or (by 3p7) its highest endeavor, is to understand things by the third kind of cognition.

Proposition 26

The more capable the mind is of understanding with the third kind of cognition, the more it desires to understand things by this same kind

of cognition.

Proof

This is obvious. For insofar as we conceive that the mind is capable of understanding things with this kind of cognition, to that extent we conceive that it is determined to understand things with the same kind of cognition, and consequently (by DOE1), the more capable the mind is for this, the more it desires it.

Proposition 27

From this third kind of cognition arises the highest contentment of spirit that there can be.

Proof

The highest virtue of the mind is to know God (by 4p28) or to understand things by the third kind of cognition (by 5p25); and this virtue is all the greater, the more the mind knows things by this kind of cognition (by 5p24). Therefore anyone who knows things by this kind of cognition passes to the highest human perfection, and consequently (by DOE2) is affected by the highest joy accompanied (by 2p43) by an idea of himself and his own virtue. Accordingly (by DOE25) from this kind of cognition arises the highest contentment there can be.

Proposition 28

The endeavor or desire to know things by the third kind of cognition cannot arise from the first kind of cognition, but it can arise from the second.

Proof

This proposition is self-evident. For whatever we understand clearly and distinctly, we understand either through itself or through another thing which is conceived through itself. That is, ideas that are clear and distinct in us or that are related to the third kind of cognition (see 2p40s2) cannot follow from mutilated and confused ideas, which (by the same scholium) are related to the first kind of cognition, but from adequate ideas, or (by the same scholium) from the second and third kinds of cognition. Accordingly (by DOE1) the desire to know things by the third kind of cognition cannot arise from the first kind but it can arise from the second.

Proposition 29

Whatever the mind understands from the vantage of eternity, it does not understand from its conceiving the actual present existence of the body but from conceiving the essence of the body from the vantage of eternity.

Proof

Insofar as the mind conceives the present existence of its body, to that extent it conceives a duration which can be determined by time, and to that extent only does it have the power to conceive things in relation to time (by 5p21 and 2p26). But eternity cannot be explained through duration (by 1def8 and its explanation). Therefore to that extent the mind does not have the ability to conceive things from the vantage of eternity. But it is of the nature of reason to conceive things from the vantage of eternity (by 2p44c2), and it also belongs to the nature of the mind to conceive the essence of the body from the vantage of eternity (by 5p23), and nothing but these two things belongs to the essence of the mind (by 2p13). Therefore this power of conceiving things from the vantage of eternity does not belong to the mind, except insofar as it conceives the essence of the body from the vantage of eternity.

Scholium

We conceive things as actual in two ways: either insofar as we conceive them to exist in relation to a certain time and place, or insofar as we conceive them to be contained in God and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature. But those that are conceived in the second way as true or real, we conceive from the vantage of eternity, and the ideas of them involve the eternal and infinite essence of God, as we showed by 2p45 (see also its scholium).

Proposition 30

Insofar as our mind knows itself and the body from the vantage of eternity, to that extent it necessarily has cognition of God and knows that it is in God and is conceived through God.

Proof

Eternity is the very essence of God insofar as this involves necessary existence (by 1def8). Therefore to conceive things from the vantage of eternity is to conceive things insofar as they are conceived through God's essence as real beings or insofar as through God's essence they involve existence. And therefore insofar as our mind conceives itself and the body from the vantage of eternity, to that extent it necessarily has cognition of God and knows, etc.

Proposition 31

The third kind of cognition depends on the mind as on a formal cause insofar as the mind itself is eternal.

Proof

The mind conceives nothing from the vantage of eternity except insofar as it conceives the essence of its body from the vantage of eternity (by 5p29), i.e. (by 5p21 and 5p23) except insofar as it is eternal. Therefore (by the previous proposition) insofar as it is eternal, it has cognition of God, and this cognition is necessarily adequate (by 2p46). Accordingly, insofar as the mind is eternal, it is capable of knowing all the things that can follow from this given cognition of God (by 2p40), i.e. it is capable of knowing things by the third kind of cognition (see the definition of this in 2p40s2). For this reason (by 3def1), insofar as the mind is eternal, it is the adequate or formal cause.

Scholium

Therefore the more proficient anyone is in this kind of cognition, the better he is conscious of himself and of God, i.e. the more perfect he is and the more blessed; this will become yet clearer in what follows. But though we are already certain that the mind is eternal insofar as it conceives things from the vantage of eternity, nevertheless we must here note the following. In order to explain more easily the things we want to show and to make them better understood, we will consider the mind as if it were only now beginning to be and were only now beginning to understand things from the vantage of eternity, as we have done so far. We may do this without any risk of error, provided we are careful not to draw any conclusions except from clear premises.

Proposition 32

Whatever we understand by the third kind of cognition, we find a pleasure in it which is accompanied by the idea of God as its cause.

Proof

From this kind of cognition arises the highest contentment of spirit there can be, i.e. (by DOE25) joy accompanied by the idea of oneself as its cause (by 5p27) and consequently (by 5p30) also by the idea of God as its cause.

Corollary

From the third kind of cognition the intellectual love of God necessarily arises. For there arises from this kind of cognition (by 5p32) a joy accompanied by the idea of God as cause, i.e. (by DOE6) love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as present (by 5p29) but insofar as we understand God to be eternal; this is what I call the intellectual love of God.

Proposition 33

The intellectual love of God, which arises from the third kind of cognition, is eternal.

Proof

The third kind of cognition (by 5p31 and 1a3) is eternal, and therefore (by the same 1a3) the love which arises from it is also necessarily eternal.

Scholium

Although this love for God has not had a beginning (by the previous proposition), it nevertheless has all the perfections of love, exactly as if it had arisen as we surmised in the corollary to the previous proposition. There is no difference here except that the mind has eternally had the same perfections that we just surmised, accompanied by the idea of God as eternal cause. But if joy consists in passing to a greater perfection, blessedness surely must consist in the mind's being endowed with perfection itself.

Proposition 34

The mind is subject to emotions that are related to passions only so long as the body lasts.

Proof

An imagination is an idea by which the mind regards a thing as present (see the definition of it in 2p17s), but it reveals the present constitution of a person's body more than the nature of the external thing (by 2p16c2). An emotion therefore (by the general definition of the emotions) is an imagination, insofar as it reveals the present constitution of the body, and therefore (by 5p21) the mind is subject to emotions that are related to passions only so long as the body lasts.

Corollary

It follows from this that no love but intellectual love is eternal.

Scholium

If we attend to the common opinion that people have, we shall see that they are conscious of the eternity of their own minds but confuse it with duration and attribute it to imagination or memory, which they believe remain after death.

Proposition 35

God loves himself with infinite intellectual love.

Proof

God is absolutely infinite (by 1def6), i.e. (by 2def6) God's nature enjoys infinite perfection accompanied (by 2p3) by the idea of itself, i.e. (by 1p11 and 1def1) by the idea of its own cause, and that is what in 5p32c we said intellectual love is.

Proposition 36

The intellectual love of the mind for God is the very love of God with which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite but insofar as he can be explained through the essence of the human mind considered from the vantage of eternity, i.e. the intellectual love of the mind for God is a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself.

Proof

This love which the mind has must be related to the mind's actions (by 5p32c and by 3p3); it is accordingly the action by which the mind thinks about itself, accompanied by the idea of God as cause (by 5p32 and its corollary), i.e. (by 1p25c and 2p11c) the action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human mind, thinks about himself with the accompanying idea of himself. And therefore (by the previous proposition) this love of the mind is a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself.

Corollary

It follows from this that insofar as God loves himself, he loves human beings, and consequently that the love of God for human beings and the mind's intellectual love for God are one and the same thing.

Scholium

We clearly understand from all this what our salvation or blessedness or freedom consists in, namely in a constant and eternal love for God or in the love of God for human beings. This love, or blessedness is called glory in the holy Scriptures, and appropriately so. For whether this love is related to God or to the mind, it can rightly be called

contentment of spirit, which in truth is not distinguished from glory (by DOE25 and DOE30). For insofar as it is related to God, it is (by 5p35) joy (if we may still use that word) accompanied by the idea of himself, as it is also insofar as it is related to the mind (by 5p27).

Then, the essence of our mind consists solely in cognition, whose beginning and foundation is God (by 1p15 and 2p47s), and from this it becomes quite clear to us how and in what manner our mind, with respect to both essence and existence, follows from the divine nature and constantly depends upon God. I thought it worthwhile to mention this here in order to show by this example how much more potent is the cognition of particular things which I have called intuitive cognition, or cognition of the third kind (see 2p40s2), and how much more effective it is than universal cognition which I called cognition of the second kind. For although I showed generally in the first part that all things (and consequently also the human mind) depend upon God in respect to both essence and existence, nevertheless although that proof is correctly deduced and beyond the possibility of doubt, it does not affect our minds so much as when the conclusion is drawn from the very essence of any particular thing which we say depends upon God.

Proposition 37

There is nothing in nature which is contrary to this intellectual love or which can take it away.

Proof

This intellectual love necessarily follows from the nature of the mind insofar as it is considered as eternal truth through the nature of God (by 5p33 and 5p29). If therefore there were any thing which was contrary to this love, it would be contrary to the truth, and consequently anything that could take away this love would make that which is true to be false, and this (as is self-evident) is absurd. Therefore there is nothing in nature, etc.

Scholium

The axiom of part four concerns particular things insofar as they are considered in relation to a certain time and place, and I think no one has any doubts about it.

Proposition 38

The more things the mind understands with the second and third kind of cognition, the less it is acted on by emotions that are bad and the less it fears death.

Proof

The essence of the mind consists in cognition (by 2p11). Therefore the more the mind knows with the second and third kind of cognition, the greater the part of it that remains (by 5p23 and 5p29), and consequently (by 5p37) the greater the part of it that is not touched by emotions that are contrary to our nature, i.e. (by 4p30) that are bad. Therefore the more things the mind understands with the second and third kind of cognition, the greater the part of it that continues unharmed, and consequently the less it is acted on by emotions, etc.

Scholium

From this we understand what I touched on in 4p39 and which I promised to explain in this part, namely that the greater the mind's clear and distinct cognition is, and the more the mind in consequence loves God, the less harmful death is. Then, because (by 5p27) the highest contentment there can be arises from the third kind of cognition, it follows that the human mind can be of such a nature that what of it we have shown to perish with the body (see 5p21) is of no importance in comparison with what of it remains. But I will discuss this more extensively shortly.

Proposition 39

Anyone who has a body that is capable of very many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal.

Proof

Anyone who has a body capable of doing very many actions is least assailed by emotions that are bad (by 4p38), i.e. (by 4p30) by emotions that are contrary to our nature. Therefore (by 5p10) he has the ability to order and connect the affections of his body in accordance with the order of the intellect and consequently of ensuring (by 5p14) that all the affections of his body are related to the idea of God. The result of this will be (by 5p15) that he is affected by love for God, which (by 5p16) must occupy or constitute the greatest part of the mind; and accordingly (by 5p33) he has a mind whose greatest part is eternal.

Scholium

Because human bodies are capable of very many things, there is no doubt that they can be of such a nature as to be related to minds which have great cognition of themselves and of God, and whose greatest or most important part is eternal and therefore that they scarcely fear death. But to understand things more clearly, we must notice here that we live in continual change, and we are said to be more or less

happy as we change for better or for worse. An infant or a child who has passed into being a corpse is said to be unhappy, and conversely it is called happiness if we have been able to spend the whole course of our lives with a healthy mind in a healthy body. And in truth anyone who, like an infant or a child, has a body that is capable of very few things and is very much dependent on external causes, has a mind which, considered in itself alone, is barely conscious at all of itself or of God or of things. Conversely, anyone who has a body that is capable of very many things, has a mind which, considered solely in itself, is very conscious of itself and of God and of things. In this life therefore we primarily endeavor that the infant body develops into a different body, as far as its nature allows and is conducive to it, a body which is capable of very many things and is related to a mind that is very much conscious of itself and of God and of things, and this in such a way that all that is related to its memory or imagination will be of scarcely any importance in relation to its intellect, as I have already said in 5p38s.

Proposition 40

The more perfection each thing has, the more it acts, and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts, the more perfect it is.

Proof

The more perfect a thing is, the more reality it has (by 2def6), and consequently (by 3p3 with its scholium) the more it acts and the less it is acted on. This proof works in the same way in reverse order, from which it follows that conversely, a thing is the more perfect, the more it acts.

Corollary

It follows from this that the part of the mind that remains, however great it may be, is more perfect than the rest. For the eternal part of the mind (by 5p23 and 5p29) is the intellect, through which alone we are said to act (by 3p3). That part which we have shown to perish is the imagination itself (by 5p21) through which alone we are said to be acted on (by 3p3 and the general definition of the emotions). Therefore (by 5p40) the former part, however great it may be, is more perfect than the latter.

Scholium

These are the points that I set out to prove about the mind, insofar as it is considered without relation to the existence of the body. It is clear from this and at the same time clear from 1p21 and other

passages, that insofar as our mind understands, it is an eternal mode of thinking which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on ad infinitum; so that all of them together constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God.

Proposition 41

Even if we did not know that our mind is eternal, we would still hold that piety and religion, which, as we showed in part four are related to spiritedness and generosity, are of the first importance.

Proof

The first and only foundation of virtue or of the manner of living rightly (by 4p22c and by 4p24) is to pursue what is useful to oneself. But in determining what things reason tells us are useful, we took no account of the eternity of the mind, which we have only now come to know in this fifth part. For even if at that time we did not know that the mind is eternal, we still held that those things that we showed to be related to spiritedness and generosity were of the first importance. Therefore even if we did not know this now, we would still hold that the same precepts of reason are of the first importance.

Scholium

The usual conviction of ordinary people seems to be different. For most people seem to believe that they are free insofar as they are allowed to obey their lust, and that they are giving up their right insofar as they are obliged to live by the precepts of divine law. Therefore they believe that piety and religion and absolutely everything related to fortitude of spirit are burdens that they hope to throw off after death and to receive a reward for their servitude, i.e. for their piety and religion. And it is not by this hope alone that they are induced to live by the precepts of the divine law insofar as their weakness and their powerless spirit allow, but also, and especially, by fear – the fear of being punished with cruel tortures after death. If human beings did not have this hope and this fear, but believed to the contrary that their minds perished with their bodies, and there was no possibility for the poor wretches, worn out with the burden of piety, to live longer, they would return to character and let lust run it all, and obey fortune rather than themselves. These things seem to me no less absurd than if someone, because he does not believe that he can feed his body with good foods into eternity, should prefer to stuff himself with poisons and deadly substances, or if because he sees that the mind is not eternal or immortal, he should choose to go mad and live without reason. These things are so absurd that they scarcely deserve to be mentioned.

Proposition 42

Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; and we do not enjoy it because we restrain lusts; on the contrary we are able to restrain lusts precisely because we enjoy it.

Proof

Blessedness consists in love for God (by 5p36 and its scholium), a love which arises from the third kind of cognition (by 5p32c). Therefore this love (by 3p59 and 3p3) must be related to the mind insofar as it acts; and accordingly (by 4def8) it is virtue itself. That is the first point.

Then, the more the mind enjoys this divine love or blessedness, the more it understands (by 5p32), i.e. (by 5p3c) the greater the power it has over its emotions and (by 5p38) the less it is acted on by emotions that are bad. Therefore because the mind enjoys this divine love or blessedness, it has the ability to restrain lusts. And because a person's power to restrain emotions lies in the intellect alone, no one enjoys blessedness because he has restrained his emotions; on the contrary the ability to restrain lusts arises from blessedness itself.

Scholium

With this I have completed everything I wanted to prove about the power of the mind over the emotions and about the freedom of the mind. It is clear from this how potent a wise person is and how much more effective he is than an ignorant person who is driven by lust alone. For apart from the fact that an ignorant person is agitated in many ways by external causes and never has true contentment of spirit, he also lives, we might say, ignorant of himself and of God and of things, and as soon as he ceases to be acted on, at the same time he also ceases to be. Conversely, a wise person, insofar as he is considered as such, is scarcely moved in spirit, but being conscious of himself and of God and of things by some eternal necessity, he never ceases to be, but always has possession of true contentment of spirit. Now if the way that I have shown to lead to this looks extremely arduous, it can nevertheless be found. It must certainly be arduous because it is so rarely found. For if salvation were easily available and could be found without great labor, how could it happen that nearly everybody ignores it? But all noble things are as difficult as they are rare.

THE END

