

Between Sanctity and Pantheism: A Philosophical View of the Psychology of Religion

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Abstract: This article explains the dichotomous phenomenon of rationality with religious belief in man. Both phenomena are represented here by Moses (faith and holiness) and Spinoza (rationalism and pantheism). This very early psychological phenomenon was discussed in anthropological research by Durkheim and Claude Levi Strauss, whose conclusions are consistent with the fact that these two approaches are combined allowing the rational person to contain both opposites. After presenting the background to this phenomenon, Spinoza's pantheistic approach will be discussed. We continue with Moshe's approach to holiness based on Scripture and its interpretation, while comparing the two approaches in a comparative study close to the original texts. The discussion will lead to the limitations of reason and the need for faith to fulfill it. An explanation of this need will be presented in Durkheim and Strauss's interpretation as a phenomenon incorporated within spirit of man as his desire to exist. The article concludes that this existential aspiration is a metaphysical phenomenon.

Keywords: Existential, Holiness, Infinite, Pantheism, Psychology-religion

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to present significant parallels between the Bible and Spinoza's "Ethics", and while so doing to compare Spinoza's definitions of God with pantheistic statements found in biblical texts, demonstrating a conceptual affinity between the two doctrines. Although the literal meaning of these texts may indicate a similarity to Spinoza's approach I will also base my discussions on rationalistic biblical interpretations as expressed in the commentaries of Maimonides, the Malbim, Ibn-Ezra and Samson Raphael Hirsch amongst others.

A part from the religious significance of the two approaches, they also encompass metaphysical, anthropological, cognitive and political aspects, with their aims being to guide man towards "happiness", "the redemption of his soul" or "salvation", so in this respect they could be said to be existential doctrines.

On an almost daily basis, we encounter academics and scientists, philosophers, psychologists, doctors, physicists, mathematicians, decision-making experts and others, including Nobel Laureates, who alongside their rational thought processes also believe in the existence of a higher power, a God and even in holiness. The congruence of this dichotomy is expressed in the title of a book by Nicholas Cusanus, who, before becoming a Catholic Bishop, was a philosopher and a lawyer with a doctorate in Law. In 1440, on the cusp of the Middle Ages he published the book "*De Docta Ignorantia*" or "on learned ignorance".

It can't be ignored that all the forefathers of science have concluded that there is a world to come. Copernicus and Galileo, who saw the laws of nature as a strict expression of God's laws. Kepler, who was a

devout believer in Christianity, saw in the world a harmonic structure of the stars movement in accordance with enlightened law. Newton was a religious person and was considered to be identified with the Aryan stream of Christianity. His work in theology and the Bible was greater than in science, and he believed that God was omniscient and ruled in all things. Max Planck saw in science and religion two manifestations of the human spirit that there is no contradiction between them and complements each other. We will mention Leibniz, Oiler, Bernoulli, Pascal and Pasteur and signed by Professor Aumann, the Nobel Prize laureate of game theory. All these are in a nutshell in the human pyramid of the phenomenon we are discussing.

The central dogma was developed from Neo-Platonism, wherein God could only be conceptualized and defined through a negative process of elimination. Our inability to conceptualize and define God in a positive sense expresses the "Docta Ignorantia". On the one hand we wish to knowledgably draw close to God being the reason behind the mysteries of the universe, while on the other hand there is a fear of heaven and the sanctity of that which is hidden and impossible to know.

The coexistence of both within one person is not always to be taken for granted. This paper seeks to cast light, be it a mere glimmer, on the confluence of this internal paradox, of what is called "Totem and Taboo" in the same person.

It would appear that the widespread agnosticism so popular today is positioned somewhere between the two aforementioned approaches. It is resigned to the limitations of human reason and despite this does not accept belief that completely ignores rational insight; in other words, it is neither blind religiosity nor absolute atheism. According to its tenets, both elements may coexist within the human mind.

Spinoza's familiarity with the Bible and his expert knowledge of the sources of Judaism is well known, and the influence of these sources on his doctrine, have been widely recognized in research. While some consider that Spinoza glorified and exalted the religion of Moses [1] others hold the view that his teachings are distant to those of Moses with their principles conflicting in the same way that transcendental religious belief contrasts with the rationalist immanence approach. This has been widely discussed [2-6]. The development of Spinoza's ideas, which emerged with his pantheistic doctrine, is characterized, among others, by its affinity to medieval Jewish philosophy. Kabbalistic thought had a significant role in consolidating his challenging pantheistic concepts, even though the nucleus of this idea was already found concealed within the works of Descartes and Giordano Bruno [2, 7].

The roots of Pantheism within Kabbalistic thought sprang from the Judaism belief of singularity and unity. Already in the "Book of Creation", the earliest in Kabbalah is the uniqueness of the Creator and the unification of all those created within Him.

In addition, the book attributes to God the concept of "infinite" which can be attributed to nature or the entire universe [8]. The Kabbalistic philosophy of singularity developed from Neo-Platonism tended to drift from monism to pantheism, a tendency which was softened to a degree by the later development of sublimity and contraction, for example by Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Hasdai Carascas, Yehuda Abarbanel, Abraham Hacoheh Hayeriya, and others.

Spinoza was a talented disciple of Ibn-Ezra in his biblical interpretation, and was also influenced by other Jewish commentators in his biblical criticism [4]. According to this concept, God contracted His infinite sublimity, which finite beings cannot comprehend, into a framework allowing the understanding of the created world, in which man is capable of understanding something of his infinite capabilities. God in His goodness designated the created world and from its wonders it is possible to understand something of the

unfathomable power of God (for example, the laws of nature) [10]. The same thought regarding the identity between singular to unity (God together with everything existing) served as the starting point for Spinoza's immanent monism. Spinoza removed every sign of dualism, or multiplicity, and filtered out all the historical and ethnic traditions that Jewish monism carried with it. La Buffa [11] analyzes the functional relationship between the metaphysical part of "Ethics" and the educational and behavioral system in this work. In this context Schneider [12] emphasizes the importance of the principle of clear and distinct knowledge implicit in the metaphysical part of "Ethics" as the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which represents an absolute eternal truth.

For an extensive discussion on the dualism of Spinoza's God and the significance of the laws of nature to man's thoughts, decisions and actions see Curley [3], Rutherford [13], Melamed [14].

Theoretical background

The underlying principle within which the affinity between the Law of Moses and Spinoza's thought is evident is found in Spinoza's definition of God.

Spinoza defines God as:

"An absolutely infinite being, that is, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence" (E.1,d6).

And so; "By that which is self-caused I mean that whose essence involves existence; or that whose nature can be conceived only by existing" (E. 1, d1).

To that definition he adds "By substance I mean that which is in itself and conceived through itself...that which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed" (E.1, d 3).

From these definitions the following propositions are derived, among others:

"Substance is by nature prior to its affections (modifications)" (E.1, p1).

"Every substance is necessarily infinite" (E.1, p8).

"God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists" (E.1, p11), and the three corollaries of, p.16.

"Hence it follows that God is the efficient cause of all things that come within the scope of infinite intellect."

"Secondly, it follows that God is the cause of himself, not per accidens."

"Thirdly, it follows that God is absolutely the first cause."

The definition of God as an entity expressing infinite perfection, having self-determination – the cause of him-self and the cause of all other causes, can serve as apriori determination and an introduction to any monotheistic religion. There is no conflict between this and the principle of one single God in Moses Tora (five books of Moses). As we will see from the analysis of the following biblical texts, Moses Tora can be seen to be in agreement with this definition, as it expresses four components which are also part of its basic principles:

- The ontological basis of God "being".
- The absolute infinity of God, "infinite in an absolute manner"
- The principle of causation, self-determination – "self-causation" being the primal cause - the cause of all causes, with no cause external to it.

The principle of perfection and eternity is the origin of any description that is possible or not possible to conceive, and as such it expresses every essence of the unity of God, in His perfection, His infinity and His eternity. Spinoza explains the problem of differentiating from the substance in his lengthy correspondence with Tschirnhaus [15]. see discussions of this topic for example in [16, 17].

I maintain that as a logical point of origin, these definitions do not appear to pose any obstacles (from a religious perspective) to believing in God. Any attempt by monotheistic believers to contradict these definitions will lead to absurdity. As we will see, this concordance is only the starting point of this paper, as it does not take into account the mystic and incomprehensible aspects of the (transcendent) God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In contrast, Spinoza speaks of an imminent and attainable God: a God about whom one cannot only speak and define but also know and understand the ways He acts in the world that is His and ours, as He acts in accordance with the laws of His nature, and these are the natural laws which are discernable to human comprehension which is derived (Modus) from God's wisdom (E.1 p17 pro, c & s)

Below we will examine Spinoza's four fundamental logical principles noted above in comparison to biblical statements attributed to Moses.

In Exodus 33 verses 13-23 the text describes a conversation between Moses and God. Moses asks to "know" God, and to understand His ways in the world, in his words: "...make Your way known to me, so that I may know You (Exodus 33:13;) using the verb 'to know' with the root: "yadoah" (to know), which, according to Martin Buber in the bible indicates a supreme closeness or intimacy, whether of a physical or

spiritual nature, In his work " *The Way of the Bible*"¹ Buber writes: "[Knowing] does not relate to the field of observation, but to touch. The "knowing" touch rises and elevates to a unique, incomparable level, in the relationship of God to those He chooses. In the context of the topic we are discussing, the significance of "da'at" or (intimate and comprehensive) "knowing" is real contact which takes out the "known" one from amongst his colleagues and places him in contact with the "knowing" one. See for example, in Exodus 23:12, Jeremiah 1:5; Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5; Nachum 1:7; Psalms 1: 6, 31:8, 37:8. Also see M. Buber 1977 p. 142. Ibn-Ezra, who, apart from being an orthodox believer, was regarded as an extreme rationalist in his biblical interpretation who was convinced that knowledge achieved by investigative research and reasoning was no less reliable than direct divination through prophecy. This "(intimate and close) knowledge unites the one who knows with the known" [18].

When Moses continues in the Exodus 33 text in verse 18 asking "Show me your glory"; God replies: "Behold, there is a place near me, and you may stand on the rock. When my glory passes by...I shall shield you with my hand until I have passed. Then I shall remove my hand, and you will see my back; but my face may not be seen" (21-23). Ibn Ezra's interpretation indicates that physical vision through the eyes is definitely not intended here, as there is no physical visible body but the verses should be understood as referring to a spiritual understanding, that is to say, 'knowing' the spirit "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous" (Psalms 1,6).

The sages instruct that "The Pentateuch speaks in the language of man" and this is one of their most famous statements serving as the foundation for understanding biblical narrative. The language limitations and the aspiration that the bible's different elements be understood at every possible level of comprehension, explains the anthropomorphic expressions in the Holy Scriptures. One of aims of the 'Guide to the Perplexed' is to explain the anthropomorphic descriptions of God. Maimonides gives detailed explanations of the reasons why descriptions used for describing human beings were used to describe God [19]. According to this, the Pentateuch (five books of Moses) can be interpreted in many ways: the plain-sense literal interpretation or comparative interpretation from the midrash – *p'shat and drash*; the mystical, hidden secret explanation – *sod*; the stories and fables - *agada*; folk tale explanations and intellectual explanations – *amami* and *s'chaltani*, metaphorical illustrations - *marshal* and

¹ "The How and Why of Bible Translation" (From the beginnings of our Bible Translation) translated into English by Lawrence Rosenwald In *Scripture and Translation* Eds. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994.

nimshal; and abstract interpretation - '*mufshat*'. The metaphysical question about knowing God and His actions is embedded here within the biblical narrative, wrapped within the narrative of the dialogue between Moses and God. The philosophical aspect of this metaphysical question is revealed by the rational interpretation of the Pentateuch, which I wish to present here. This interpretation removed the narrative layer and penetrated to the very heart of the metaphysical issue, with its ethical and existential implications. In the following we will examine the conceptual equivalence between the two schools of thought that emerge as a result of this interpretation.

The Limits of Knowledge

In 'The Guide to the Perplexed' [19] explains the anthropomorphic images in the verses discussed above as follows: "Here is an ethical *makom* [the Omnipresent]" and Maimonides (1995) states: "Every time the word '*makom*' (literally place, signifying God) is mentioned, what is being referred to is the quality of finding God [i.e. an absolute ontological assertion of the spirit] of God whose place is the world (ibid, chapter 8). This assertion is consistent with Spinoza's statement that: "God is the efficient cause of all things that come within the scope of the infinite intellect" and also ensconces within it a hint of God's immanence within the world. The words "and you will see my back" are interpreted by Maimonides [20] to mean: you will be able to comprehend that which comes after me - the world, meaning, you will only be able to understand the consequences (the aftermath) of my will from which the world came into being. Elsewhere Maimonides indicates "And all those found from the Heavens and the Earth and that which is in between them, are only found because of the truth of His presence" [20]. This assertion is also compatible with Spinoza's statement: "God is the efficient cause of all things that come within the scope of the infinite intellect". He interprets the words "My face may not be seen" as meaning "you will not be able to comprehend the truth about my existence" (direct rational attainment). In this context we will note the sages' commentary that God showed Moses the knot of his *tefillin* (the back of the phylacteries) which Ibn- Ezra interprets as "a very deep secret". All of this is consistent with Spinoza's definition of God through a negative process of elimination: An absolutely infinite being – which here is indirect rationalization. He states that the assertion "Here is an ethical *makom* (the Omnipresent)" is "elevating existence to a theoretical level not reflecting intellect or a point of view" a profound rationalist-theoretical comprehension and not a perception based directly on intellect or the visual sense (chapters 37-38). The verse "make Your way known to me, so that I may know You" he interpreted: It is not the person who fasts and prays that will know God, but knowing God is determined by the level of knowledge, and the person who has lost his knowledge, has a minimal level of knowing" (chapter 54). According to Maimonides this

is a request from Moses to be enlightened on an intellectual level, that is, comprehension that is revelation on a rational level, the understanding that God is the cause of all causation [19]. In a similar fashion Ibn-Ezra also states that God does not need any reason for His existence. Being the First of all reasons Himself, there is no reason that precedes Him. This interpretation is consistent with Spinoza's words: God is the cause through Himself, not per accidens (E.1, p16, c 2). Simon [21] says that the secrets of philosophy were drawn to the intellectual aspect of Ibn Ezra and the biblical sages to his interpretive aspect. The first super-commentary push came from the philosophers of philosophy (pp. 398-402).

Malbim, who followed Maimonides and Ibn-Ezra wrote in his commentary: "...Teach me your ways and your virtues...and help me that I may know you to know the truth about Godly ways, so I may achieve Godly wisdom and the secrets of His wisdom and His ways and His Godliness, His divine providence, His goodness and abilities" [22].

According to Malbim, "Moses asked to 'know' the Lord by means of an intellectual understanding, and so to rise towards his presence: Eternally find His grace" (Ibid, 561). Spinoza also attempts to find shelter in the eternal spirit through knowing God "attaining the nature and the joyous pleasure of Him", "eternal joy" as the aim of his teaching [15]. Malbim's interpretation "To know the Lord" encompasses within it all that can be assigned to the verb "To Know". He seeks certain comprehensive knowledge that will place him "in contact with the One who knows, with the Omniscience. He continues, "He said show me your glory". Malbim identified the glory of the Lord with three elements that cannot be comprehended by man, one of which, "knowing His power". Moses asked to know God's power through positive direct knowledge, what He is in Himself, His essence as the cause of Himself, with this also matching Spinoza's idea: "God is the cause through Himself". However, as in the teachings of Moses such knowledge is not possible, the concept of "The Glory of the Lord" takes on a different instruction from the second request made by Moses: "To know the Glory of the Lord" which according to Malbim's hermeneutics;

The whole of creation which was made from the beginning and until eternity is the glory of the Lord...all of the world, which were designated and created and produced and made [including the infinite multitudes within them] are the glory of the Lord and they testify to His presence. Moses asked to attain all that it was within his [created] power to comprehend of the Glory of the Lord (Malbim, 562) [22].

This interpretation is compatible with Spinoza's verse: "The ideas of non-existing individual things or modes must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God in the same way as the formal essence of individual things or modes are contained in the attribute of God." (E 2, p.8).

Spinoza's immanent God may be expressed in the axiom: "The multitude of being [all that exists in the universe] in His unity (God's)." This definition is compatible with that of Ibn-Ezra who defines "He is one, the creator of all things and He is all things" (Ibn-Ezra, commentary of Genesis 1:26) a simple pantheistic statement. That is to say that understanding the existence of the primal cause from the history (of the world). Malbim interpreted God's statement "I will pass all of my goodness in front of you" as meaning: the goodness of all of creation, all that exists by virtue of His goodness. That is to say "God announced [to Moses], [human intellect] cannot attain the 50th level (gate) of wisdom, which is understanding the essence of the blessed God which is called His face which is His essence, on which it is said "My face may not be seen" (Malbim,561). The commentator means that it is not possible to perceive intellectually and sensually and therefore it is not possible to define the essence (the cause of Himself) from in front of Him, from His face, and therefore a positive proof is not within the bounds of our capacity. This explanation is supported by Sa'adiah Gaon: "Omniscient without prior cause, He is the blessed creator of everything, may He be blessed, and sanctified by all of creation, their knowledge would not be possible except through the cause (indirect knowledge)" [23]. The commentary of Malbim, as supported by Sa'adiah Gaon is compatible with Spinoza's writings presented above.

Spinoza, who was well acquainted with the obstacle facing Moses, constructed his system of thought based on a distinction between the all-knowing divine intellect (describing the thought) and the human intellect which is derived from it (the way of thought). This is the difference between the absolute metaphysical knowledge of God or of nature and the partial consciousness of man. It was clear to him, as it had been clear to Moses, that it was not possible to perceive the precise essence of God, with the only possibility being to gain an indirect knowledge of His existence, through the Phenomena in the world of creation which is termed in the verse "His glory". Spinoza determines ontologically that "Whatsoever is exists, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived" (E.1, p.15). Epistemologically, the idea of nature for Moses and Spinoza was a mediating layer between God and what mortal men are able to comprehend, with this layer being termed by Moses "The Glory of God" and by God "all of My goodness", and by Spinoza as "the cause of Himself" (E.1, d1) and later as "the effective cause" (E.1 p25). However,

gaining an understanding of nature, and even identifying God with it as the effective cause in the world still does not enable formulating a positive definition, as every definition by its very nature is a form of limitation, of setting a boundary. If such a definition were possible, it would separate God from all that is outside of the definition, that is to say He would be defined as being finite and limited within His area which would lead to an internal contradiction. It seems therefore that without direct perception there is no definition, and with no definition there is no comprehension. This limitation of the human intellect, or "the hidden face" in the conceptual meaning, is expressed in the language of the verse "I shall shield you with my hand until I have passed" (Exodus 33:25). Moses stood in the cleft of the rock, which was a cave, or a dark narrow tunnel, with his angle of vision out of it being extremely narrow, only allowing him to see in the direction of the opening, with God covering that too with a cloud, until He had passed by, so that Moses would not be able to even catch a glimpse of the face of God, meaning it would be too fast to perceive. This explanatory metaphor of a narrow field of vision hidden within the cleft of the rock expresses the limits of Moses revelation, and thus the limits of the human mind with this matching the definition through negation "an absolutely infinite being" (E.1.d 6) in Spinoza's definition of God. This definition reflects a logical attempt to overcome the barrier of empirical knowledge that Moses came up against, in the language of the verse: "You will see My back, but My face may not be seen" (Exodus, 33: 23) "You will attain my presence, but not my essence, because that may not be attained" (Malbim, on Exodus 33:23 p. 561).

As for Moses' rationalism it is said in the *Talmud* that "fifty gates of wisdom were created in the world and all but one were given to Moses, [as it is said] and he was made slightly less than God" (Talmud Bavli, Tractate Rosh Hashanah, 21 72).

In his interpretation of the *Midrash* the Maharal focused on the word "slightly" (*me'at* – a little) and determined that our sages were not referring to the less important quantitative issue, with one gate out of 50 indeed being a small amount, a mere two percent, but were making the point that this gate of wisdom qualitatively expresses an infinite gap (ibid). In my opinion this is similar to the difference between a necessary cause and a satisfactory cause. The Talmud likens this small quantity of the '*me'at*' to a thin but dense layer, which is impassible to the human mind, so that it prevents all possibility of creating a consolidated and logical connection between nature and God. The '*Da'at Mikrah*' understands Moses request as an attempt, on the conceptual level, to gain positive proof through (intimate and comprehensive) knowledge (Exodus, 33 Chacham [24]. Halevi [25] defines this: "Because if we were able to perceive Him as He really is, it would reduce Him" (p. 329). Along these lines

Maimonides states: "It is clear to each educated readerthat God cannot be defined [as one would define an object]" (Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed, Kapach Ch. 52).

In this context, Spinoza's definition of God as "an absolutely infinite being" and identifying Him with the infinite nature reflects an attempt to overcome this limitation of human comprehension. I maintain that, deriving the definition through negation, a definition that cannot be defined (set within a limited boundary) expresses an attempt to conquer that gap at the summit, on the threshold of the 50th gate of wisdom which Moses did not reach: God is infinite = "I am what I am" = Everything = *makom* [the Omnipresent] which includes every place, which cannot specifically be defined as a definition of an object. Spinoza's definition of God as infinite (definition by negation) leaves him within the realm of the 49 and he was unable to cross over to the 50th gate of wisdom.

In his concept of God as being infinite, and as the original primal logical unity, to the finite (to the field of phenomena called "His Glory") together with the logical dependence on the explanation which states "the multitude of being [of the phenomena in the world] within the unity of God", Spinoza depicts Him with material and positive characteristics (E.1 d 5, 8). This concept does not contradict the *Pentateuch* of Moses. On the instance of the cleft in the rock, it was explained to Moses, and through him, perhaps, to each man including to Spinoza, that since the principle of God's self-determination logically precedes human thought, and is independent of it, it is not possible to directly consider the essence of God even when it includes within it all of existence (Maimonides, 52 note 11). According to Malbim: "His existence dependent on His substance and not on anything external to Him" (Malbim, Exodus, 3:14). Along these lines Spinoza also stated that,

"That which cannot be conceived through another thing must be conceived through itself" (E. 1 ax 2). As stated, Spinoza derived his definition only through negative reasoning, and only through identifying with eternal nature.

Conceptual pantheism

Spinoza's assertion that "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be conceived without God" (E.1 p15) matches God's words to Moses: "*Yesh Makom Iti*" (the omnipresent being is with Me) with the meaning "God is omnipresent in the world" or "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah, 6:3). The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is called "*Hamakom*" (The "Place" or the "Omnipresent") in Talmudic writings, and there is no space in the universe which is outside of this omnipresence. These sayings were a starting point for the medieval Kabbalistic schools of thought of

"*Tzimzum* and *Ha'atzalah*" (contraction and inspiration) [10].

This ideological similarity between the *Pentateuch* and Spinoza's writings is supported by the interpretations of Psalm 90. The psalm opens with "A prayer of Moses, the man of God, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth and before ever you formed the earth". Moses appears in this psalm together with the only occurrence of the description associated with him in Deuteronomy "a man of God". This connection between "Moses" name to the description "a man of God", appear alongside his words: "That is the abode (Ma'on) of God immemorial and below are the world's mighty ones" (Deuteronomy 33: 27). Following on from Chazal (the sages) Chacham attributes this psalm to Moses. The psalm was in David's possession and he included it within the songs in the Book of Psalms keeping the same text as he had received. (Chacham, 'Psalms' 90, note 37). Some see evidence of Moses's universal message in this psalm, which attempts to address the whole of humanity. The use of the plural form and the humanistic wording of the psalm (e.g. you turn man back to dust, and say "Return you children of men". Psalm 90:3) reinforce this approach, as do the characteristics of the psalm which scan the development of human history from creation. Rabbi Hirsch (a leader of ultra-orthodox Judaism in 19th century Germany) found evidence here that Moses's mission as a representative of God on earth was not confined to leading the people of Israel but was intended to be a mission to all men on earth. The word "*Ma'on*" is interpreted by Hirsch as meaning the source and point of origin, as the eternal and never-changing basis for the temporal elements of the passage of time. F. Rosenzweig, influenced by Rabbi Hirsch, compared himself to Goethe who prayed only for himself "storing my own self-made happiness" to Moses's prayer in this chapter in the spirit of universal humanism of the people of Israel [26]. Similarly Chacham saw in Moses' phrase, "The Lord has been our eternal dwelling place throughout our generations", a statement intended for every living person, and to all creatures of all times, from before the mountains were brought forth and from before the earth and the universe were created". Chacham found a parallel between this verse in the psalm and other biblical verses with identical meaning, such as, for example, "for all eternity you are God" and "Remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation" (Deuteronomy 32, 7). Our concern here is with the pantheistic meaning ensconced within these expressions and with their affinity to the statement made to Moses "*Yesh Makom iti*" "The Omnipresent being is with me". Rabbi Hirsch took the word "*ma'on*" (dwelling place) out of its context in the psalm, and identifies it with the word "*makom*" (omnipresence). As he says: " The *ma'on* hints at the permanent place from whence all creatures came, which they are dependent on, and to whom they are connected

for all of the days of their existence, which is similar to what the sages say about God being the eternal omnipresent of the world". Later on he emphasizes that as "You have been a dwelling place for us" is reminiscent of the creation of the world, in his opinion, "God is a dwelling place (*ma'on*) [the potential and concrete] the omnipresent place (*makom*) for all of creation [...] the primal cause and source of all beings" (Chacham, Psalms, 90) [27]. I would suggest that with all of the knowledge available to us today, the concept of a dwelling place '*ma'on*' also expresses causation and especially the genetic code, not only of humanity but of all universe as they are embodied in Spinoza's theories of extension.

In the light of this interpretation it is easy to discern that the meaning of Psalm 90 is also found in Spinoza's statement:

"Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be, or be conceived without God (E. P1 p15). In his letter to Oldenburg Spinoza writes: " All things, I say, are in God and move in God, and this I affirm together with Paul [...] and perhaps together with all ancient Hebrews" (Spinoza Letter 73) [28].

In other words, it is not the world that is the place of God, but God is its place – His *ma'on* - the ontological, logical and environmental dwelling place of the world whether by force or by action. In everything appertaining to God's abilities, Spinoza does not consider there is a difference between potential and concrete. For as far as we are concerned in this paper, our thesis is supported by the interpretation of the concept "*ma'on*" – dwelling place – in Moses' prayer as it appears in Psalm 90.

The limits of wisdom = definition by way of negation

The conceptual parallel between Moses's *Pentateuch* and Spinoza's *Ethics* comes to an end at the point where Moses accepts upon himself the decree of having limited understanding. The methodological consequence of an educated acceptance of the limit to understanding leads necessarily to the transcendental method. By contrast, Spinoza does not come to an acceptance of this limitation. In his opinion, reason is everything "The order and connection of ideas are the same as the order and connection of things" (E. 2. p.7). According to him, everything can be put to the test of logic, and through adequate ideas any void existing through lack of knowledge may be filled. Spinoza tried to circumvent the impossibility of making a positive definition of God by identifying Him with nature. Through this identification Spinoza created a connection between something that reason cannot grasp and something the attributes of which can be discussed. By philosophical reasoning, the abstract concept of God gains a tangible quality through its identification with nature. Despite the accessibility of nature to human reason, Spinoza cannot give it a limiting definition, and

it is defined as an infinite portrayal (negative) of the infinite God in the spirit of Moses's words "and you will see my back [negation] but my face [affirmation] may not be seen."

At the same point at which Moses abandoned the attempt to understand the incomprehensible, Spinoza began building his philosophy. Spinoza, who does not accept that anything is incomprehensible, saw the laws of nature in the principles of logic, mathematics and geometry as being determined by the wisdom of nature – meaning God's power. It is the role of the philosopher and of the scientist to read these laws, to understand them and to implement them in their daily lives. Ben-Shlomo [7] considered that "the concept of 'God' was available to Spinoza alongside all the other ideas included therein: the most perfect entity of all, the primal causation, the source of all being, and while Spinoza changed the meaning of the concept of 'God' he could still use it as a starting point. This however was not so for the concepts of 'nature' and 'essence'. These were developed along with his philosophy" [7].

The definition of God by way of negation is a logical cornerstone of Spinoza's *Metaphysics* and his *Ethics*. The concept of infinity which represents the inability to make a positive definition changes from a constraint unwillingly forced onto man's reason in Moses' *Pentateuch* to a methodological starting point for Spinoza's system of defining God. The infinity of God overlaps the infinity of nature and should reside in man's basic cognitive template. Spinoza attempts to introduce content into that which is incomprehensible to the human mind, which Moses came to terms with in the cleft of the rock, by identifying the abstract concept of God with the material concept of nature and its contents and laws, including its infinity. By identifying the two concepts with each other, he reinforces the infinite multiplicities within the universe as content within the cold abstract pole of the unity of the infinite-substance - God, and softens it to enable comprehension by the human mind.

"By substance I mean that which is in itself and conceived through itself...that which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed" (E.1 d3).

This definition is imbued with two characteristics:

- The epistemological one, according to which the substance is a concept in itself, i.e. is not derived from other concepts, and can therefore be found at the basis of all cognition.
- The ontological one, that the substance is found within itself and is not found within anything else, and therefore cannot be outside of the world and the world cannot be outside of the substance, and in effect cannot be finite [29].

The connection between multiplicity and unity is validated by the logic of the causal chain, which starts at the self-determination of the substance as the primal cause, and from there goes out into the world as reason for explanation to the differentiation of the substance to the eternal multiplicity of attributes and mods. The God – nature + differentiation is the reason that explains infinite matters.

In the terms of the contraction and emanation of the medieval scholars presented above, Moses *Pentateuch* could agree with a transcendental causal connection between the unity of the creator and the multiplicity of that which is created, but in Spinoza's approach which identifies God with creation immanent causation becomes essential (E.1 p18) God is the immanent and not the transitive cause of all things. By contrast, the God of Moses is the external cause of all things he rules the world from the outside. God, whose essence is abstract and incomprehensible to Moses, is cloaked with real content, as far as Spinoza is concerned, through His identification with the world.

Spinoza transformed the obstacle standing in the way of comprehension into an advantage. When he couldn't attain the "face" of God, he chose to define Him from the rear and in one of his propositions he states: "From the necessity of the divine nature must follow an "infinite number of things in infinite ways" (E.1, P16).

In Definition 1, Part 1 Spinoza states: "By that which is self-caused I mean that of which the essence involves existence, or that of which the nature is only conceivable as existing." This meeting point between the ontological (that which exists) in the world, together with the personal epistemological "I mean" of the intelligent person, is embodied within the concept "self-caused" (*causa sui*). In this definition Spinoza expresses his preference for reason over the attempt of empirical discovery. The definition ignores the sequence of time in which a prior cause precedes and leads to an event, and adopts a timeless dimension [29]. In my opinion, Spinoza, who saw in the element of time a human metaphor that is not of the kind associated with higher forms of consciousness, is adopting in this definition the concept of eternity and therefore was not in conflict with the *Pentateuch* of Moses. This infinite being is both, eternal in duration and also infinite in His attributes is reflected to us in two aspects of infinity: Thought and Extension (E. 1 P.14c and 2, d.1 & p1).

The limitations to reason which Moses accepted with humility and awe are transformed by Spinoza into words of logical reasoning – into the aspiration towards knowledge, in concordance with the meaning of the verb 'to know' discussed above, hence meaning the wish to draw closer to and connect with the infinite and omnipotent God, in the way that is depicted

in the Extension attribute, which represents the universe – the infinite space with all that is within it – which is nature (E.2, p 2). In accordance with this, the omniscient God, knowing all of infinite space, its contents and the laws which rule it, appears as the description of thought, the spiritual aspect of nature, as an expression of the infinity of the divine intellect (E. 2, P1, 4, 5). It was in this spirit that Maimonides stated, 450 years earlier, that God is "the knowledge, the knowing and the known" (Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, p.68). The two attributes are the two aspects of the world known to us which represent for us everything found in nature (in God) including all of mankind, matter and spirit. These two attributes are the two that we are familiar with from an infinite range within God, and through them we strive to make sense of and manage our existence within this infinity.

In order to easier understand the social phenomenon in which rational scientists conduct a religious way of life, we will attempt to examine the phenomenon discussed above, as a comparative study, through the lens of anthropology, to examine the genealogy of human culture.

vis-à-vis reason and holiness: Explanatory background.

Contemporary research associates the origin of holiness within the concept of Totemism. Anthropology, as a science that investigates primitive cultures, attempted to determine the ancient origins of religion and its rituals. All the scholars observed man's sense of wonder and adulation of the mysterious, the supernatural, the extraordinary, the sacred and the divine.

In this paper I would like to borrow these two concepts, taking them out of the field of anthropological research, and into the realm of philosophical-religious discourse, as the object of this study.

These concepts, which were translocated into the sphere of philosophical discourse by Levi-Strauss, C. [30], after originally being taken on loan by Freud into Psychology [31], later underwent reduction for use in different areas of authority and prohibition, proximity and distance, permissiveness and restriction, amongst others.

I would like to point out that I do not intend to discuss anthropology, but rather to introduce these concepts into the contemporary philosophical-religious discourse and its implications for human behavior, with this question being based on methodology similar to that of Claude Levi-Strauss.

Strauss formed his philosophical approach on an intellectual basis which took into account the entire corpus of phenomena related to these concepts. His critique of the accepted ethnography which reached

conclusions derived from localized singular unique observations of the tribe being studied was the starting point for the development of his method. In his book *Tristes Tropiques* [32] he reflects on how ethnography had enchanted him due to the affinity between the organization of different civilizations which he studied and his own integrative train of thought. Subsequent to Strauss' approach I find the correlation between the way these ideas fit with comparative research and the way naturalistic pantheism which seeks closeness, knowledge, internalization and identification fits with sanctity which demands awe, caution and distance.

Strauss, whose school of thought followed on from Durkheim's groundbreaking work in sociology [33], undertook a rational analysis of totemism, and rejected mystical and emotional explanations. It is here that I find the first anchor to which these concepts can be adopted into the discourse of the present study.

In his book, *Le totemisme Aujourd'hui* [34] Strauss expands the field of anthropology to beyond religious and cultural discourse, leading it in practice into the realm of logic. In this book he proposes a methodological framework for discussing explanations of totemism within which he exposes the mistakes made by earlier scholars, who made assumptions based on the preconceived idea that there is a fundamental difference between primitive behavior and that of western civilization. There was a representativeness and reckless haste based on self-interest and a utilitarian psychological worldview which seeks to favor the modern social-cultural order that is supposedly different and abnormal. Strauss rejected the preconceived ideas of scholars such as the Scottish ethnologist, McLennan and the British anthropologist, Sir James Frazer (ibid) who considered that the gap between primitive indigenous peoples and western civilization was unbridgeable and that there is a fundamental difference between primitive religions and monotheism. In his praise of empirical studies from the tribal perspective Strauss notes only the heterogeneous significance arising from totemism.

Following on from the first steps taken by Durkheim Strauss [33] determined that primitive totemism belongs to logical thought and cannot be explained by interests, needs, fears or other feelings. The use of animals chosen to serve as symbols reflects the group's metaphorical connection to animals. In other words, there is no difference in the way that we today see reality in the metaphorical image, which is a completely logical process using the accepted language device of metaphor, and the way in which indigenous peoples use their comparative and theoretical metaphors. I consider that the second anchor, to which the concepts of totemism can be expanded into a comparative discourse about philosophy and religion, may be found in Strauss' critique following on from Durkheim.

Human reason determines that a certain animal or plant may only be a representative (a shape) of social institutions or of cultural groups (the content). This is not an emotional or mystical assertion, but purely an intellectual one. In the fourth chapter of *Le Totemisme Aujourd'hui* [34], Strauss emphasizes that in adopting a name from the animal or plant kingdom, the particular social unit is not claiming, even implicitly, that there is a substantial connection between itself and that name. The species is not part of the group and the group does not originate from the species and is not nurtured by it. Strauss praises Durkheim for his assertion that there is no divide between religious logical thought and scientific logical thought. "They are both made from the same elements, but develop in different directions" [33].

The emotions expressed in totemism are of secondary importance. It is the obsession with the religious world that has determined that totemism has a religious framework, and has distanced it from the cultural religions while distorting its image according to the scholar's perspective and individual needs. Strauss presents the concept devoid of its "primitive" characteristics. He establishes a scientific idea belonging to the intellect and to intellectual needs of the indigenous natives. The totem is an image imposed on the existential reality, but it essentially has its own internal meaning and only the metaphorical symbol (an animal, a tree, etc.) is loaned from the external world, and this is a way of coping with daily problems [34].

The relationship between internal and external and between metaphor and reality can be considered better by looking at the example found in Strauss' 1963 essay "The Effectiveness of Symbols" (185-205). Man is a creature who deals with symbolism and who gives explanations to symbols. Even today, some healing techniques are based on clarifying the emotional state of the patient and an intelligent assimilation of the explanation of the illness or the pain within his or her consciousness. The "primitive" patient belongs to a society which believes in myth, even when it does not match reality. The good and bad spirits, the monsters and wild animals are all part of a consistent system on which indigenous peoples' concept of the universe is based. The sick woman never doubted their existence, but simply accepts them. By using the myth, the witch-doctor combines the pains within the overall circumstances (the world, nature, fate and god) which include everything, and the moment the patient understands this, she not only adapts to the painful situation but also heals herself. This phenomenon also occurs within our modern societies, when the cause of an illness is explained to the patient (viruses, bacteria, etc.) with the primitive healing appearing paradoxical only because the bacteria exist and the monsters do not. However, the rational explanation of the causal relationship between the bacteria and the illness plays the same role in the mind of the modern patient as that

played by the relationship of the monster to the disease in the primitive mind. This is the connection between a symbol and that which is symbolized, and it is this connection which creates the significance. The witch-doctor provides the patient with a language with which mental states can be expressed, that cannot be provided in any other way. This enables the transition from a confusing experience to one which is organized and readily understood, and this helps the physiological healing process. It could be said that as in psychological healing (psychoanalysis or cognitive therapy), the "primitive" healing (Shamanistic in this case) uses psychotherapy to encourage physiological healing; symbols and metaphors are used in a similar way to create a meaningful space for man as an individual and for the society around him. The fundamental assertion that the totem is a metaphor used as an expressive tool to create a meaningful space is the third anchor whereby the argument may be made for extending the discussion into the realms of philosophy and religion, which are essentially existential meaningful spaces.

In his paper "Primitive Thinking and the Civilized Mind" [34] Strauss emphasizes that beyond practical material needs of the "primitives", they are passionate about understanding the world around them and in order to succeed at this they make use of their intelligence, in exactly the same way as a philosopher or a scientist (to a certain degree) would do so. Nowadays, as in the past, despite the cultural differences between different groups within humanity, we find everywhere the same human mind, with this being accepted universally (ibid).

In contrast to anthropology which examines each different culture in a specific locally manner, Strauss finds similarities between various myths that span many different cultures, particularly in those relating to man's attempts to create a meaningful space for himself.

Myth provides both a sense of identity and an attempt at organizing nature and the world's other phenomena in a systematic manner, and in this is found the common denominator between myth and modern thought. It is a process wherein the external environment is interpreted, and the aspiration to adapt the internal environment into it. The phenomenon of totemism expresses adaptation to the point of identification with the symbol-myth-totem.

In conclusion we can say that the three arguments for anchoring the adoption of these concepts are based on the rationale that the totem, like the taboo, creates a significant space and enables man to control his environment while maintaining some degree of flexibility. Like the totem, pantheism is totally and utterly a product of the human mind which seeks through these insights, identification and closeness with the natural environment, to the point of blending into it,

together with all that is considered in monotheism as God. By contrast the taboo as an expression of sanctity, reverence, trepidation and maintaining distance, is, amongst other things, recognition of the limits of the human mind. The two concepts provide 'an orientation tool' which ultimately have a positive effect on human emotions, as we shall see below.

The Metaphysical and the Existential

In both approaches the metaphysical aspect has implications for the existential dimension; for Spinoza, metaphysical knowledge and its application in everyday life guides towards self-fulfillment and joy, to happiness and redemption. On the other hand, in the Mosaic approach it is the very renunciation of the attempt to gain complete metaphysical knowledge that is the key to redemption. This act of submission and the transition to faith through revelation brings the concepts of holiness and reverence into the relevant discussion. Faith for us, as organisms belonging to the rational species of humans, is a collection of circumstances joined together through partial or complete reference to something that is external to us. The connection between faith and fact, (a thing or event) which is external to us creates a sense of accord, a kind of feeling that "this is quite so", the sense we feel when we say "yes". Static faith exists as an idea or mixed metaphor in the feeling of "consent". While faith is subjective, it may become associated with fact, truth and knowledge and then will be considered to be objective. The association between faith and truth and /or fact is possible, faith does not necessarily have to be linked with knowledge and the facts, meaning it is possible to believe in the truth without having knowledge or having only partial knowledge, to the extent that it is subjective [36]. This definition clears the way to understanding the phenomena of rational human beings who believe in the sanctity and reverence of God. The conflict between the totem and taboo for contemporary man is found in the mental fusion of metaphysics and existence.

In identifying God with nature – "Deus sive natura" (E.2 P 4, pro) Spinoza finds a substantial content which serves his philosophy as an alternative for the sanctity identified with God in religion. In the *Pentateuch* it is sanctity that gives God positive content, in the totemistic sense, that man could aspire to draw close to, but because of his limited understanding he could not become familiar with Him, and could not 'know Him' with the sense of closeness to which Buber refers, as discussed above. It becomes appropriate for him to impose a limit (taboo) with regard to sanctity. The topic of sanctity arose in Moses's first meeting with God at the burning bush - "remove your shoes from your feet" (Exodus 3:5) with this being a clear sign of taboo. If something cannot be grasped by reason, it becomes significant through faith, and this is what defines sanctity at the burning bush, differentiating it from worldly. There are different levels of sanctity,

with the Holy One blessed be He being their source, as they come from God. Everything revered by man attains levels of sanctity in accordance with its closeness to God, for example: the Holy Land, a Holy Place, the Temple, the Holy Ark, the sanctity of the Sabbath, etc.

Spinoza's philosophy is opposed to holiness wherever it relates to prohibitions, trepidation or keeping a distance (taboo), and also denounces all emotions which bring with them sadness, such as awe and fear; depreciating one's own value, and self-pity, amongst others (E. 3, 18 Definition of emotion). However, precisely because it is a system of thought that is interested in teaching the individual to exist happily, Spinoza's works did not succeed in avoiding naturalist totemism. The law of metaphysics according to which every object aspires to sustain itself and to persist in its own being (the *conatus*) is implemented, if and only if, it remains within the ethical sphere of self-preservation (E. 3, p. 6). The practical culmination of this law is aspiring to the intellectual love of God. Those who are happy in their reason, who love God in an emotional sense, similar to that of worshipping the sublime, experience His closeness and merge harmoniously with His eternity and His infinity as nature [37, 29, 7]. Furthermore, the origin of this aspiration is purely rational, with the end point reminding us of the totem with all of its intellectual, emotional and even religious significance. The question under consideration is: is it possible to see within the totemistic atmosphere which envelops the happy believer in Spinozism, an endowment of sanctity? Some claim that the secular-logical process along which Spinoza leads man to supreme joy, turns the Ethics by means of '*amor Dei Intellectualis*' from logic, through filings, to religion. Sigad [38] explains in an enlightening and instructive way, that Spinoza's secular-logical process is revealed to us as religious. The love of reality as a logical system which loves itself presents logical thought as ritual, whose purpose is to redeem mankind. The eroticism within the sense of joy becomes ritual, when in fact it is sanctity, but not in the accepted religious sense. In a similar way, Ben-Shlomo [28] argues that the redemption of logical man is a stage that eventually comes about in the philosophy of the mystics.

The origin of Holiness

As we have seen above, contemporary research construes the concept of primitive holiness through man's observation in wonderment and adoration of the sublime and the mysterious, the extraordinary inexplicable super-natural, the divine and the sacred [39]. Durkheim considered that the totem is the simplest form of religion known to us, being found in the most primitive cultural materialistic societies. Every real object belongs to one of two groups: worldly or holy.

Totemism, as a rationalist-existentialist philosophy, is part of our lives, even today. Modern society is characterized by the adoption of symbols, to the extent of their ritual sanctification in order to fulfil the human and societal need for existential meaning in their significant space. Flags, and similarly the Statue of Liberty, were adopted by a division during WWI as a symbol to differentiate themselves from other groups, who likewise adopted symbols in order to create a significant space for themselves, their families or their nation, in the same way as animals, the sun, the moon or a rainbow are adopted by "primitive" cultures. As we have seen, Strauss accredits the phenomena of adopting totem symbols to the assumption that the natural world offers mankind a system of thought. This is not something random or arbitrary, but rather the characterization of social groups based on man's actual relationship with nature, a relationship that persists throughout human thought in order to fulfil an existential need. Durkheim, who is discussed above, also claims that social order engages with nature (the totem) due to its accessibility and the ease of adopting animals or natural phenomena as symbols of the group and nature supplies objects for sacred rituals and ceremonies. Durkheim, in the footsteps of Radcliffe-Brown, states that nature is embedded within the social order and not subordinated to it [40]. For the purposes of this paper, whether nature is embedded within the social order as a totem, or whether it is subordinate to it, totemism as a manifestation of man's desire for belonging and affinity, expresses the concept "*Known*" (*yadua*) which is being discussed here in terms of the group and the individual's existential needs.

Levi-Strauss, however, finds the origins for determining the totem to be within the intellect, not within subjective emotions but rather within the human capacity for objective analogy. He replicates totemism from being a social symbol of the patriarchal home or primitive tribal group, to fit a broader context of the lives of people who practice it. In other words, it is part of us, and not something dormant that is distant from us in both time and culture, belonging to the past. Rather, it is part of our daily lives. Following Durkheim and Bergson, Strauss adopts the rational approach which divests totemism of the utilitarian cloak and the prejudices with which the traditional anthropologists tainted it. Although emotions are expressed in the context of totemism, the phenomenon itself belongs on the emotional level and there is nothing archaic or distant about it.

Levi-Strauss summarizes his approach in the following way: its image as a symbol is through association and not inherent to the core of the phenomenon, its content is not externally imposed, because if the illusion appertaining to it includes a single grain of truth, then it is not outside of us, but is within us. Even if we agree with Strauss' approach regarding the rational origins of the totem, we will

eventually find, as with Spinoza's redemption of the individual, that its influence on both the individual and the group is emotional. Even if the origins of man's aspirations towards for intimacy, harmony and unity with nature are intellectual, the results are purely emotional.

In an analysis through the totemistic context, I seek to present here man's yearning for holiness or sanctity as having a dualistic nature of both reason and emotion. These two aspects which form part of the essence of humanity correspond to the approaches of Moses and Spinoza: Moses, as we have said, imposes limits on man's reason and intellect, while Spinoza does not, but ultimately puts it into the service of emotion in the concept of "*amor Dei Intellectualis*", which may be identified with the concept of the "known" (*yadua*).

While Spinoza's ascription of nature to God is entirely intellectual, it is clear to Moses that assigning sanctity to God is not the product of reason, but rather the result of relinquishing the absolute freedom of the intellect – the same concession made by the cleft in the rock. For him, this self-abnegation is the key to man's redemption. From the perspective of this paper: Spinoza's concept of nature serves as an intellectual alternative for Moses's concept of holiness. For Moses, God inspired from himself in the elements contained within his being (the worldly phenomena) for man's mind, not through his identification with nature, but through his identification with holiness. Holiness first appears in the scriptures in the story of the creation in Genesis when God sanctified the seventh day. From the point of view of faith, the holiness of God is a priori and unconditional; in the same way as the logic used in Spinoza's description of God is also a priori and unconditional. It should be emphasized again that the discussion here is one of methodology; both systems are being examined from an external perspective. Therefore, from our point of view it is meaningless to state that it is the man of faith who gives holiness to God or that he identifies it with Him. In any case he identifies it as being a priori, as existing unconditionally in the existence of man or in the existence of his mind as a creature created as moods of God.

The existential perspective

Spinoza expresses himself in monologue that opens the "Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect":

After experience had taught me the hollowness and futility of everything that is ordinarily encountered in daily life, and I realized that all the things which were the source and object of my anxiety held nothing of good or evil in themselves save insofar as the mind was influenced by them, I resolved at length to enquire whether there existed a true good, one which

was capable of communicating itself and could alone affect the mind to the exclusion of all else, whether, in fact, there was something whose discovery and acquisition would afford me a continuous and supreme joy to all eternity [41].

Ultimately, the concept of holiness to Moses and the concept of nature to Spinoza, both in their own way constitute objectives towards which every man strives, in order to unite with them or to blend in with them. This is clearly an existential aspiration which transfers the discussion from the realm of the metaphysical to that of the existential. In the same way that the *Pentateuch* is a code of life and ethics, so to the object of Spinoza's writings is ethical-existential. Moses's experience at the cleft in the rock comes to an end with an existential statement "I shall show favor when I choose to show favor; and I shall show mercy when I choose to show mercy". All the commentators agree that this is an optimistic message, resulting from coming to terms with the inability to "know" [God] (see for example Rashi, *ibid*). The 13 attributes of God deal with the strictly existential level, and it is on this level that they were intended to serve as a model for mankind.

These two different approaches under discussion lead the individual towards redemption, and it is this redemption that is the result of Moses's faith's closeness to "holiness", or of Spinoza's intellectual unity with nature. In my opinion, it is the existential aspect that enables the explanation of the dichotomous fusion of intellect and holiness, of totem and taboo for the reasonable insightful person.

Good, Evil and Redemption

The existential level offers a different meaning to these concepts: whereas for Spinoza the intellect, in the service it gives to emotion, is the only way to reach God's love, leaving holiness no significance, as pure logical reason is indifferent to emotion and likewise the logical God (nature) is indifferent to its components, amongst them, man. Spinoza is opposed to the ethical concept of God and this leaves the concept of loving God as loving an indifferent God (nature). Good and evil are relative concepts which man determines according to his subjective point of view. From the perspective of God as nature these concepts are meaningless (E.4, d. 1, 2). By contrast, holiness resulting from an acceptance of the limits to man's understanding leads in the *Torah* to awe and fear of the sublime (as far as we are concerned). Taboo is a synonym for fear, respect and keeping a distance from the sublime transcendence of holiness. In order to lead the individual towards joy, Spinoza begins the journey by internalizing the metaphysical principles dealing with recognizing the essence of God and His laws. The functional connection between the metaphysical

chapters and those dealing with behavioral ethics in Spinoza's "Ethics" arises from the assertion that reality is subject to deterministic law. This context-dependent legitimacy of God as the prime reason, serves him as a tool for explaining the organized, non-random phenomena of the world. The laws of nature also apply to the way of life and the behavior of human beings who are part of the nature and not a separate kingdom within this natural world (E. 3, pre). The rationale behind these laws is that good and evil do not exist in nature. Nature is an infinite mechanism and human beings take part in this mechanism irrespective of their wishes. Reality is perceived as an external idea causing man internal joy or sadness and only subjectively expressing good and evil according to his desires and preferences. Evil, too, reflects a subjective sense of sadness typical of man living without the appropriate knowledge, the lack of which prevents him from experiencing pleasure. By contrast, the sense of joy which accompanies an appropriate knowledge of reality propels man towards happiness, which is the purpose of the philosophy (E. 2. p.32, 35, 42). The continuation of the journey to joy depends upon the application of these principles in daily life including its distractions be they good or bad.

At the end of this logical journey towards joy, man is redeemed in "*amor Dei Intellectualis*". In other words: "From this kind of knowledge there arises the highest possible contentment of mind, that is the highest possible pleasure; and this is accompanied by the idea of oneself, and consequently also by the idea of God as a cause." (E.5, p.32 pro.). This pleasure describes a purely emotional sensation: "We see that he who loves necessarily endeavors to have present and preserve the thing that he loves" (E. 3, p. 13 s). This is the meaning of the verb "to know" (*yadua*). It becomes apparent that the emotional element within love, even when we are dealing with a rational case, can never remain intellectual. In other words: the redemption or joy that is the goal of the rational system of thought is exclusively an existential event which changes the elements of a person's spiritual existence in the transition from a lower level of perfection to a higher level of perfection. We can summarize this by saying that the secular tendency represented in the logical aspects particularly serves the emotional aspect in the higher level of consciousness. This emotional summit in "*amor Dei Intellectualis*" (the intellectual love of God) transfers the center of gravity of the metaphysical system from the rational and to the ethical-existential wherein totemism is revealed as being an existential motif. With this love man identifies himself as being a finite part within the infinite nature-God. By contrast, Moses only saw the back of God and not His face when hiding in the cleft of the rock, or understood through an intellectual revelation, what Spinoza refers to as the definition of God by negation, as the reverse side of understanding in a positive manner. From this point the two approaches diverge. It was clear to Moses that he

had no option but to move on from the pretense of the metaphysical level into the realm of holiness as being the essential nature or substance of God, with sanctity preceding nature which is its secular or worldly aspect, as had previously become apparent to him at the burning bush.

As mentioned above, while there is a considerable distance between the metaphysical discussions within the two approaches, their existential discussions have considerable affinity with one another. The gap stems from the way in which within the transcendental system of the *Torah* of Moses it is possible to relate to God as both subject and object at one and the same time, whereas in Spinoza's immanent system of thought which equates God with the world, He is perceived as an object that is indefinable (infinite) and indifferent to His activities (to His observers). It would appear that holiness is superfluous to any such system of thought, but in my opinion it is not beyond the bounds of possibility. Indeed, in Spinoza's system of thought it is an enclave within the system's existential goal. The totemism, which was always present but obscured, deeply hidden below the surface all along the intellectual journey towards redemption in "Ethics" is revealed towards the journey's end. Its presence in Spinoza's philosophy stems from the connection between two parallel principles: 1. The metaphysical (theoretical) knowledge is intended to (practically) advance the existential trend. 2. The logical trend, which is concerned with the implementation of metaphysical knowledge, can only lead to an emotional climax of love-joy in the spirit of Buber's concept of "knowing". Many consider that *Torah* has to be free of contradictions. According to Raby Kook belief in the coherence of the *Torah* is not a belief in the *Torah* but in human criteria of rationality. The rationale of God may be heard or perceived and understood through various different and even contradictory voices or possibilities [41]. In the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, tractate *Nedarim* chapter 3 *Halacha* 2, it is written that: "God spoke one way, yet we heard two" the voice of God is one, but we hear many different voices (interpretations).

Methodologically, the difference between the two systems of thought is found in the presence of holiness as the focus of emotional interest in Moses's transcendental system, whereas emotion is a product of human intelligence in Spinoza's rational thought. Moses found a metaphysical answer to the absence of knowledge whereas Spinoza attempts to escape from it through his transition from intellect to the emotions of love, joy and happiness found in "*amor Dei Intellectualis*". This phrase expresses the connection between metaphysical comprehension and the emotion of love and the aspiration towards intimacy or closeness in the biblical sense of the verb "to know". The highly intellectual man whom Spinoza is addressing in his work "Ethics" cannot ignore the two paradoxes: the emotional *amor* and the intelligently *Intellectualis*.

Smolenskin might have exaggerated his praise of Spinoza as having glorified the *Torah* of Moses [1] however insofar as the existential aspect of man is concerned his arguments seem to have been well founded. I believe that in placing both logic and metaphysics within the bounds of man's existential tendency in his system of thought, Spinoza, at least to some extent, narrowed the gap between reason and belief, since both are supposed to advance man towards his soul's redemption.

Abbreviations: Part in the "Ethics" = E. 1-5; Appendix = app.; Axiom = ax; Corollary = c; Definition = d; Definition of the affects - da; Preface = Pref.; Proof = pro; Proposition = P; Scholium = s.

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