

11 The Enigma of Spinoza's *Amor Dei Intellectualis*¹

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Those who confuse the divine nature with the human easily ascribe human affects to God.²

What Spinoza says about the intellectual love of God is only a sop to the masses.³

The notion of divine love was essential to medieval Christian conceptions of God.⁴ Jewish thinkers, though, had a much more ambivalent attitude about this issue. While Maimonides was reluctant to ascribe love, or any other affect, to God,⁵ Gersonides and Crescas celebrated God's love.⁶ Though Spinoza is clearly sympathetic to Maimonides's rejection of divine love as anthropomorphism, he attributes love to God nevertheless, unfolding his notion of *amor Dei intellectualis* at the conclusion of his *Ethics*. But is this a legitimate notion within his system? In the first part of this chapter, I will explain some of the problems surrounding this notion and then turn, in the second part, to consider two unsatisfactory solutions. In the third part, I will attempt to rework Spinoza's *amor Dei intellectualis* from his definitions of love and the other affects in Part 3 of the *Ethics*. In the fourth part, I will examine closely how he tweaks his definition of love in order to allow for the possibility of divine intellectual love and conclude by trying to explain what motivated this move.

1 Divine Love as Anthropomorphism

Moses plainly teaches that God is jealous and nowhere teaches that God lacks emotions or passions of the soul. Hence, we must evidently deduce that this is what Moses believed, or at least what he wanted to teach, however much we may be convinced that this statement conflicts with reason.⁷

In this announcement, taken from Spinoza's famous discussion of the proper method of interpreting scripture, Spinoza points to scripture's depiction of God as having passions as an example of an irrational, anthropomorphic conception of God in scripture. Accordingly, toward the middle of Part 5 of the *Ethics*, he argues:

5p17: God is without passions, and is not affected with any affect of Joy or Sadness [*Deus expers est passionum, nec ullo laetitiae aut tristitiae affectu afficitur*].

Then, in the corollary to the same proposition, Spinoza seems to qualify this claim somewhat:

Strictly speaking God loves no one, and hates no one [*Deus proprie loquendo neminem amat, neque odio habet*]. For God (by p17) is not affected with any affect of Joy or Sadness. Consequently (by 3DA6, 7), he also loves no one and hates no one.⁸

Why does Spinoza introduce the qualifier “strictly speaking”? Is he insinuating that in some non-strict sense, God may love or hate someone? We might be tempted to follow this hint, but then, a few lines below, Spinoza argues that if one loves God, one *should not* hope that God will love him in return.

5p19: He who loves God cannot strive that God should love him in return.

Dem.: If a man were to strive for this, he would desire (by p17c) that God, whom he loves, not be God. Consequently (by 3p19), he would desire to be saddened, which is absurd (by 3p28). Therefore, he who loves God, etc., q.e.d.

Spinoza’s argument here is straightforward. Were God to love anyone, God would cease to be what he is (since, per 5p17c, it is contrary to God’s nature to have passions). Hence, were we to wish for God to love us, we would, in fact, be wishing that God would cease to be. Thus, insofar as we love God, we would be saddened by the destruction of God (3p19). But we cannot strive to be saddened (3p28). Therefore, we cannot desire that God would love us.

At this point, we might be convinced that God indeed cannot love or hate anyone. 5p19 seems to say that for God to love someone would be just like – to use one of Spinoza’s favorite tropes – a triangle becoming a square. Just as a square triangle is nothing but a chimera, so is a loving God, for Spinoza. Love is a passion, and God has no passions.

Yet, as one might suspect, this is not the final word in our divine affair. In 5p20s, there is a crucial transition in the text: it is here that Spinoza begins the enigmatic conclusion of the *Ethics*. In the middle of this Scholium, he suggests the following diagnosis:

It should be noted that sickness of the mind and misfortunes take their origin especially from too much Love toward a thing which is liable to many variations and which we can never fully possess. For

no one is disturbed or anxious concerning anything unless he loves it, nor do wrongs, suspicions, and enmities arise except from Love for a thing which no one can really fully possess.⁹

(5p20s)

Then Spinoza notes that with this, he has “completed everything which concerns this present life [*Atque his omnia, quae praesentem hanc vitam spectant, absolvi*],” and therefore, “it is time now to pass to those things which pertain to the Mind’s duration without relation to the body [*mentis durationem sine relatione ad corpus*]” (5p20s, G II 294/24).¹⁰

The rest of Part 5 deals with the third kind of cognition (*scientia intuitiva*), the mind’s eternity and blessedness (*beatitudo*), and the mind’s intellectual love of God. In the context of the latter, Spinoza makes the following two surprising claims:

5p35: God loves himself with an infinite intellectual Love [*Deus se ipsum amore intellectuali infinito amat*].

and

5p36c: From this it follows that insofar as God loves himself, he loves men, and consequently that God’s love of men and the Mind’s intellectual Love of God are one and the same [*Hinc sequitur, quod Deus, quatenus seipsum amat, homines amat, et consequenter quod amor Dei erga homines et mentis erga Deum amor intellectualis unum et idem sit*].

Clearly, we were quite right to suspect something odd in Spinoza’s qualification that only “*strictly speaking* God loves no one” (5p17c). In order to avoid ascribing a flat and obvious contradiction to Spinoza, we need to clarify his understanding of divine love. Specifically, we need to answer the following questions:

- 1 If it is contradictory to God’s nature to have the passion of love (according to 5p17 and 5p19d), how can God love either himself (5p35) or men (5p36c)?
- 2 Since Spinoza defines love as “joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause” (3DA6), it seems that Spinoza’s God cannot love anything, insofar as he has no external causes. How, then, can God love himself?¹¹
- 3 How can God’s love of men and men’s intellectual love of God be “one and the same”? The subjects as well as the objects of these two loves are *not* the same, and (unfortunately) love does not have to be symmetric. What, then, are the grounds for this odd claim of identity?¹²

- 4 In the TTP, Spinoza pointedly criticizes the Hebrews' view of themselves as God's chosen people.¹³ Similarly, in his discussion of miracles, he criticizes those who take humanity to be the chief part of nature and the end toward which the whole of nature works.¹⁴ But, since human beings are not God's *chosen species*, we should wonder why Spinoza singles out *men* as the object of God's love. Does not God love donkeys and porcupines as well?¹⁵

My impression is that Spinoza is aware of these issues, and indeed, he intentionally draws the reader's attention to them. In the following, I will try to address these difficulties. My discussion will be primarily a simple attempt to understand Spinoza's text, and I will not dwell on the historical sources of his discussion. On the latter topic, there are already several important and fascinating studies;¹⁶ various scholars have identified particular passages in the writings of numerous authors – Aristotle, Maimonides, Aquinas, Gersonides, Hasdai Crescas, Abraham Shalom, Leo Hebraeus (Yehuda Abravanel),¹⁷ and Descartes – as possible sources for Spinoza's discussion.¹⁸ I may occasionally refer to these studies, but primarily, I will be attempting to see whether the *Ethics* can provide us with a coherent account of his notion. I will begin by exploring two solutions which I find lacking.

2 Two Preliminary Solutions

Divine Love as a Rhetorical Gesture. – One way to solve the apparent contradictions in Spinoza's statements about divine love is to take his claims that God loves himself and human beings as nothing more than rhetorical gestures aimed at appeasing traditional readers by making statements which are similar (or at least appear similar) to mainstream religious views. This suggestion might be supported by the following three considerations. First, there seems to be a tendency among some iconoclastic medieval writers – such as Maimonides and Averroes – to adopt a traditionalist tone toward the conclusion of a major work. Spinoza may well have been aware of this tendency; he occasionally notes that he too

speaks according to the power of understanding of ordinary people . . . For we can gain a considerable advantage, if we yield as much to their understanding as we can. In this way, they will give a favorable hearing to the truth.¹⁹

Second, in his late work – the TTP and the *Ethics* – Spinoza sometimes deliberately equivocates on the meaning of certain claims, making a point that may sound religiously innocuous on the first reading but turns out to be quite heterodox when we understand Spinoza's particular use

of the given vocabulary.²⁰ Finally, in the TTP, he speaks of man's participation in God's love while discussing the beliefs required for *obedience*.²¹ As he clearly suggests, these beliefs need not be true but need only be conducive to obedience and piety. Therefore, one may reasonably suspect that the belief in God's love belongs to this group of dogmas, which "contain no shadow of truth" yet are required to "move the heart to obedience."²²

While not denying the importance of the various rhetorical and political devices Spinoza employs in the *Ethics*, I am not fully satisfied with the explanation that the contradictions in the text are the result of an attempt to appease the masses. Spinoza may well be playing with the reader in 5p35–36. Still, he seems to be trying to convey some important positive content in these propositions. He insinuates that the term 'love' might be equivocal (having a strict as well as a non-strict sense) so that the contradictions at stake are only apparent. Given these hints, we should attempt to retrieve and clarify these distinct meanings, and then consider whether the apparent contradictions are defused by our clarification.

Natura naturans vs. *Natura naturata*. – Another tempting and easy way to resolve the contradictions is to suggest that, when Spinoza says that God cannot love and then later says that he does love, he is referring to the two distinct aspects of God qua *Natura naturans* and qua *Natura naturata*. *Natura naturans* refers to God's essence, i.e., the attributes; *Natura naturata* is the realm of the modes (or what follows from God's essence).²³ When Spinoza proves that God is immutable, he attributes immutability *only* to *Natura naturans*.²⁴ The realm of the modes is left mutable. Given this distinction, one might be tempted to suggest that it is only God qua (mutable) *Natura naturata* that loves himself and human beings, whereas God qua (immutable) *Natura naturans* loves and hates no one.

The issue of mutability does play an important role in Spinoza's original rejection of divine love, as we learn from the following passage from the *Short Treatise*:

[Were God to love men because they love him] this would also have to produce a great mutability in God. Where previously he had neither loved nor hated, he would now begin to love and to hate, and would be caused to do this by something that would be outside him. But this is absurdity itself.²⁵

Similarly, in his discussion of *man's* intellectual love of God in the *Ethics*, Spinoza notes that there is tension between the eternal nature of intellectual love and the very definition of love – a sub-species of joy (3p13s), which, in turn, is defined as an *increase* in the perfection of the mind (3p11s).

Although this Love toward God has had no beginning (by p33), it still has all the perfections of Love, just as if it had come to be

(as we have feigned [*finximus*] in p32c). There is no difference here, except that the Mind has had eternally the same perfections which, in our fiction, now come to it, and that it is accompanied by the idea of God as an eternal cause. If Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself.

(5p33s)

Although the simplicity of the claim which denies the possibility of love and joy from God qua (immutable) *Natura naturans* and ascribes them to God qua (mutable) *Natura naturata* is tempting, and might advance us somewhat toward the required solution,²⁶ it still leaves us with quite a few problems. First, it is not clear why we should ascribe only *love* to God qua *Natura naturata*. Why not also say that God (qua mutable *Natura naturata*) hates certain things? Second, in contrast to our suggestion that God qua *Natura naturans* has neither joy nor love, in 5p35d, Spinoza attributes gladness (*gaudium*) – which is another sub-species of joy – to God’s nature or essence, i.e., to *Natura naturans*.²⁷ There is hardly any question that for him, *Natura naturans* is eternal,²⁸ so how can he ascribe to it gladness, which he defines as “a joy, accompanied by the idea of a *past* thing that has turned out better than *hoped*” (3DA16; italics added)? Does God’s eternal nature have memory? Is God subject to *hope*, i.e., “inconstant Joy, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we to some extent doubt” (3DA12)?

If Spinoza’s theory of divine intellectual love is salvageable, there seems to be no other way but to begin with a close examination of the definitions of his basic affects, reconstruct the characteristics of the complex affects, and then examine the way he applies these affects to God in the concluding section of the *Ethics*.

3 The Deduction of Love

Spinoza defines²⁹ Love [*amor*] as

Definition of Love 1: Joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause [*Amor est laetitia concomitante idea causae externae*].

(3p13s and 3DA6)

Joy (*laetitia*) is one of three basic affects in Spinoza’s psychological theory (the others being Sadness [*tristitia*] and Desire [*cupiditas*]). In 3p11s, he explains and defines the nature of Joy:

the Mind can undergo great changes, and pass now to a greater, now to a lesser perfection. These passions, indeed, explain to us the affects of Joy and Sadness. By Joy, therefore, I shall understand in what follows that passion by which the Mind passes to a greater

perfection [*Per laetitiam itaque in sequentibus intelligam passionem, qua mens ad maiorem perfectionem transit*].

By replacing the word “Joy” in 3DA6 with its definition from 3p11s, we get a more elaborate definition of love:

Definition of Love 2: Love is a passion by which X’s mind passes to a greater perfection, accompanied by the idea of a cause external to X.

Before we proceed, let me point out that in the Definitions of the Affects section, which appears at the end of Part 3 of the *Ethics* (and summarizes the definitions of affects provided throughout this part), Spinoza suggests a small yet crucial alteration to the definition of joy. He *omits* the clause which states that joy is a passion and thus defines it as “man’s passage from a lesser to a greater perfection” (3DA2). This definition of joy clearly allows for a kind of joy that is *not* a passion. Indeed, in 3p58, Spinoza explicitly states, “Apart from Joy and Desire that are passions, there are other affects of Joy and Desire that are related to us insofar as we act” [*Praeter Laetitiam, et Cupiditatem, quae passiones sunt, alii Laetitiae, et Cupiditatis affectus dantur, qui ad nos, quatenus agimus, referuntur*].³⁰ 3DA2 seems to be a revised definition of joy, intended to include the kind of active joy that is addressed in 3p58. Still, one wonders why Spinoza did not correct the definition of joy in 3p11s as well. The question of whether joy and love can be actions rather than passions will turn out to be crucial for our investigations, and it seems that, in 3p11s and 3DA2, Spinoza provides contradictory answers to this question. We will revisit this issue toward the end of the paper. For the sake of simplicity, we will proceed for the time being with our initial (3p11s) definition of joy.

In order to complete the unpacking of the definition of love, we must clarify what Spinoza means by ‘Passion’ (*passio*) and ‘external cause’ (*causa externa*). In 3D3, he defines the key notion of ‘an affect’ and then distinguishes between affects that are *actions* and those that are *passions*.

3D3: By *affect* I understand affections of the Body by which the Body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections. Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the Affect *an action*; otherwise, *a passion*

[*Per affectum intelligo corporis affectiones, quibus ipsius corporis agendi potentia augetur vel minuitur, iuvatur vel coercetur, et simul harum affectionum ideas. Si itaque alicuius harum affectionum*

*adaequata possimus esse causa, tum per affectum actionem intel-
ligo; alias passionem].*

At this point, we might ask: what are ‘affections’? In 1D5, Spinoza defines mode as “affections of substance [*substantiae affectiones*],” and his use of the term later in the book indicates that he considers the two terms (*modus* and *affectio*) as roughly equivalent.³¹ Thus, 3D3 seems to define the affects as modes, or affections, of the body and the mind. Following 3D3, we arrive at a more detailed explication of love:

Definition of Love 3: Love is a mode of X’s mind (and body), of which the mind (/body) is *not* the adequate cause, a mode by which the mind (/body) passes to a greater perfection, and is accompanied by the idea of a cause external to X.

Two remaining notions which require elucidation are adequate cause (*causa adaequata*) and external cause (*causa externa*). The former is defined in 3D1:

I call that *cause adequate* whose effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived through it. But I call it *partial*, or *inadequate*, if its effect cannot be understood through it alone [*Causam adaequatam appello eam, cuius effectus potest clare et distincte per eandem percipi. Inadaequatam autem seu partialem illam voco, cuius effectus per ipsam solam intelligi nequit*].

I am not aware of any place where Spinoza provides an explicit definition of ‘external cause.’ Yet, in the *Short Treatise*, he refers to an “immanent or internal cause” and then glosses, “which is all one according to me.”³² He explicates the dichotomy between immanent and transitive cause in 1p18d. An immanent cause is an efficient cause whose effect inheres in the cause; a transitive or external cause is an efficient cause whose effect does not inhere in the cause. Thus, God is the immanent cause of all things insofar as all things are (efficiently) caused by God and inhere in him. God cannot be the external (or transitive) cause of anything since all things are in God.³³

Relying on this clarification of the notions of adequate and external cause, we arrive at our final explication of Spinoza’s definition of love:

Definition of Love 4: Love is a mode of X’s mind (and its corresponding mode of the body), which cannot be conceived only through the mind alone, a mode by which the mind passes to a greater perfection, and is accompanied by the idea of a cause of X, in which X does not inhere.

If we had to put this definition into words that are closer to colloquial language, we could say that love is a state of the mind (and body³⁴) of X with the following three characteristics:

- 1 It cannot be fully explained through X's mind alone. (*Explanatory dependence condition*)
- 2 By it, X's mind passes to a greater perfection. (*Improvement condition*)
- 3 It is accompanied by the idea of something that contributes to the causation of X, but X does not inhere in it. (*External causation condition*)

We will now turn to see whether these conditions are met in the case of God's ideas, i.e., when X=God.

4 Other Love

- 1 *Explanatory dependence.* – In the *Ethics*, Spinoza never ascribes mind (*mens*) to God for reasons that are closely related to our topic. He takes *mens* as a term connoting finitude and thus inapplicable to God.³⁵ Instead, he refers to God's idea (of himself, or what is the same, of everything that is) as *intellectus Dei*, i.e., God's intellect. God's idea or intellect provides the full explanation for any mental fact since (1) all ideas are included in God's idea (2p3), and (2) all mental modes that are not ideas supervene and depend on ideas.³⁶ Hence, the conceptual dependence condition is not met in the case of God's idea or intellect.
- 2 *Improvement.* – In 2D6, Spinoza identifies reality and perfection. God, being the most real and the most perfect being,³⁷ seems to be incapable of "passing to a greater perfection" since there is no greater perfection than God's current state. Hence, the improvement condition cannot be met.
- 3 *External causation.* – Since all things are in God (1p15), he cannot have an external cause. But if God has no external cause, he cannot have an idea of his external cause since all God's ideas are true (2p32). Therefore, the external causation condition is not met either.

How and why, then, can Spinoza ascribe love to God? Let us bracket for a short while the question of *why* Spinoza attempts to ascribe love to God in spite of the tremendous tensions involved in such an attempt. Let us first see *how* he attempts to defuse these tensions through the surprising notion of 'intellectual love.'

In order to satisfy the *improvement condition*, Spinoza suggests that the definition of joy can be supplemented by an equivalent notion of Blessedness (*beatitudo*). If the mind's *advancement* toward perfection is

Joy, then the mind's *achieving* and *being in this state of perfection* is to be called Blessedness.³⁸ Thus, intellectual love replaces the component of Joy with Blessedness. Recall a passage we saw a short while ago:

Although this Love toward God has had no beginning (by p33), it still has all the perfections of Love, just as if it had come to be. . . . There is no difference here, except that the Mind has had eternally the same perfections which, in our fiction, now come to it, and that is accompanied by the idea of God as an eternal cause. *If Joy, then, consists in the passage to a greater perfection, blessedness must surely consist in the fact that the Mind is endowed with perfection itself.*

(5p33s; my italics)

Though the passage deals with *man's* intellectual love of God, Spinoza's reliance on this passage in 5p36d shows that its chief claims are applicable to *God's* intellectual love (of himself) as well, and thus, it provides a general characterization of intellectual love.

The last sentence of this passage also hints at what will happen in the case of intellectual love with regard to the other two conditions. If I understand Spinoza correctly, his reasoning is as follows: Love, in spite of the great praises commonly heaped upon it, is a source of much misery.³⁹ The three conditions which constitute love show its inferiority. If love is to be ascribed to God, it must be perfected. Hence, all three conditions of inferiority should be straightened out, if not completely inverted.

Indeed, in the cases of the *explanatory dependence* and *external causation* conditions, Spinoza stipulates a complete inversion of the conditions in order for love to be ascribed to God. God's love is fully explained through his idea. God's idea is the adequate cause of his love, and thus, this love is an action, not a passion.⁴⁰ Spinoza states this point explicitly in 5p36d, where intellectual love is said to be "an action" of the mind.⁴¹ Similarly, the object of an intellectual love must be an *internal* cause. Therefore, in his demonstration of the proposition which states that "God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love" (5p35), Spinoza points out that God's *gaudium* "is accompanied by the idea of himself, i.e., by the idea of his cause."⁴²

The closest Spinoza comes to defining divine intellectual love is in 5p32c, where he characterizes it as the joy which necessarily arises in the mind when the mind knows itself through the third kind of cognition,⁴³ i.e., when the mind has adequate cognition of itself as proceeding from the formal essence of the attribute of thought (2p40s2, G II 122/18).⁴⁴ Notice that in 5p32c, Spinoza employs the notion of joy as defined in 3DA2 ("Joy is a man's passage from a lesser to a greater perfection"), not the one that appears in 3p11s ("that passion by which the Mind passes to a greater perfection"). The former, as opposed to the latter, allows for a kind of joy that is an *action* rather than a passion.

Notably, Spinoza has in his arsenal a notion which is quite close to intellectual love. This is the *acquiescentia in se ipso*, which he borrows from Descartes's treatise on the passions⁴⁵ and defines as "a Joy born of the fact that a man considers himself and his own power of acting [*Laetitia, orta ex eo, quod homo se ipsum, suamque agendi potentiam contemplatur*]" (3DA25). Indeed, in 5p36s, Spinoza identifies God's intellectual love with *acquiescentia in se ipso*.

From this we clearly understand wherein our salvation, or blessedness, or Freedom, consists, viz. in a constant and eternal Love of God, or in God's Love for men. And this Love, or blessedness, is called Glory in the Sacred Scriptures—not without reason. For whether this Love is related to God or to the Mind, it can rightly be called satisfaction of mind [*animi acquiescentia*], which is really not distinguished from Glory (by 3DA25, 30). For insofar as it is related to God (by p35), it is Joy (if I may still be permitted to use this term⁴⁶), accompanied by the idea of himself [as its cause]. And similarly insofar as it is related to the Mind (by p27).

This passage raises quite a few questions, not the least of which is how Spinoza understands the cryptic biblical term *Gloria* (or, in Hebrew, *Kavod*), and why he mentions it here,⁴⁷ but we shouldn't allow these to divert us from the more obvious question: why does Spinoza call this state of God's intellect (or of the human mind) intellectual *love*, when its characteristics are utterly opposed to his own definition of love?

Some commentators suggest that Spinoza developed the concept of intellectual love because he thought that all kinds of cognition should have equivalent affective states.⁴⁸ I am not categorically sure that this is the case.⁴⁹ But even if it were so, it is still not clear why Spinoza calls this state 'intellectual *love*.' A basic commitment to truth in advertising should make him avoid describing it as any kind of love, given his definition of love in 3p13s and 3DA6.

To finally answer this question, we must turn to 3p30 and 3p30s, where Spinoza explains the similarity and difference between love and *acquiescentia in se ipso* (or intellectual love):

3p30: If someone has done something which he imagines affects others with Joy, he will be affected with Joy accompanied by the idea of himself as cause, or he will regard himself with Joy. If, on the other hand, he has done something which he imagines affects others with Sadness, he will regard himself with Sadness.

3p30s: Since Love (by p13s) is Joy, accompanied by the idea of an external cause, and Hate is Sadness, accompanied also by the idea of an external cause, this Joy and Sadness are species of Love and Hate. But because Love and Hate are related to external objects, we shall signify these affects by other names. *Joy accompanied by the*

idea of an internal cause, we shall call love of esteem [gloriam], and the Sadness contrary to it, Shame – I mean when the Joy or Sadness arise from the fact that the man believes [credit] that he is praised or blamed. Otherwise, I shall call Joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause, Self-esteem [acquiescentiam in se ipso], and the Sadness contrary to it, Repentance [poenitentiam].

The topic of 3p30 itself (and the first three quarters of 3p30s) is only tangentially related to our issue; it addresses the affects of Love of Esteem and Shame that are species of Joy and Sadness, respectively, accompanied by the *imagined* idea of oneself as their cause. For our purpose, the crucial passage is the definition of *acquiescentia in se ipso* in the final sentence of 3p30s. “Joy accompanied by the idea of an internal cause” is *precisely* what intellectual love is, and unlike Love of Esteem, it is not grounded in imaginary belief. It seems, I suggest, that while writing the third part of the *Ethics*, Spinoza was keen on calling this affect “*acquiescentia in se ipso*”; only when he turned to develop the last sections of Part 5 did he attach the additional title of “intellectual love” to it. Why this turn of terminology? Influence or even pressure from his Collegiate friends – who were still committed to the Christian notion of divine love – might be part of the explanation. It is more likely, however, that at some point, Spinoza became aware of a certain lacuna in his detailed taxonomy of the affects. Both love (as defined in 3p13s and 3DA6) and divine intellectual love (as explicated in 5p32c⁵⁰) are kinds of Joy accompanied by the idea of an object as its cause. As Spinoza points out in his *Compendium of Hebrew Grammar*, love is a transitive verb, requiring a direct object.⁵¹ Thus, it may well be that by attaching the title of divine intellectual love to *acquiescentia in se ipso*, Spinoza’s aim was to establish a new category in his obsessive taxonomy of the affects: the category of Joy that is accompanied by the idea of its cause (a category which is then further divided into the species of love and divine intellectual love).⁵²

5 Conclusion

A Guest for the Night (1939) is one of the greatest novels of the Hebrew Nobel laureate Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1888–1970). Toward the end of the novel, the narrator recounts his meeting with a certain Leibtsche Bodenhaus, a pious soul and an amateur philosopher. Leibtsche warmly welcomes the narrator, wishing to share with him some thoughts. “Spinoza teaches us not to laugh, not to weep, not to be enthusiastic, *but to understand*,” says Leibtsche.⁵³ “Can I say that I fulfilled his teaching, except for laughing? In the other qualities, my dear sir, I am a total transgressor.” Still, it is not Leibtsche’s failure to follow the precepts of Spinoza to avoid weeping and enthusiasm that truly bother him. Something else weighs on his heart.

And now, my dear sir, I came to the end of the words of the sublime philosopher. He says, “but to understand” – and surely, however hard we try, we shall never understand. Let us take, for example, the verse, “God is angry every day”⁵⁴ – is it possible to understand why He is so angry? And if we had sinned against Him, does he have to make our lives a misery and direct all his blows against us? And would it not be better if He treated us according to the philosophic principle, which means: to understand?⁵⁵

Leibtsche Bodenhaus was unfortunately neither the first nor the last to complain about God’s anger. But unlike other seekers of divine justice, Leibtsche’s complaint is grounded in Spinoza’s teachings on the affects. In this paper, we have examined “the sublime philosopher’s” teachings, not about divine anger (Spinoza would easily brush away such a notion) but rather about divine love. The latter question bothered Spinoza from early on.⁵⁶ Whether his final word on the issue – in the conclusion to the fifth part of the *Ethics* – reached a stable position, I leave for the reader to judge.

Notes

- 1 Unless otherwise marked, all references to the *Ethics*, the early works of Spinoza, and Letters 1–29 are to Edwin Curley’s translation. In references to the other letters of Spinoza, I have used Samuel Shirley’s translation. I would like to thank Michael Della Rocca, Zev Harvey, and Mike LeBuffe for their most helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.
- 2 1p8s2, G II 49/35.
- 3 Leibniz (1989, 281).
- 4 See, for example, Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I q.36.
- 5 On the impossibility of ascribing affects to God, see Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, I, 59, and *Book of Science*, Pillars of the Law, I 14.
- 6 See Gersonides, *Commentary on Genesis 2:2*; Crescas, *Or ha-Shem* II 6, 1. Cf. Harvey (1998, 109, 2014).
- 7 “Porro quoniam Moses clare docet, Deum esse zelotypum, ne ullibi docet, Deum carere passionibus sive animi pathematis, hinc plane concludendum, Moses hoc ipsum credisse aut saltem docere voluisse, quantumvis hanc sententiam rationi repugnare credamus” (TTP VII, G III 101/18–22). I have slightly modified Silverthorne and Israel’s translation. They render “*animi pathematis*” as “mental passions.”
- 8 Cf. CM II 8 (G I 265/24–26):

God is improperly said to hate things, and love others. But when we say that God hates some things and loves others, this is said in the same sense Scripture uses in maintaining that the earth disgorges men, and other things of that kind. That God is angry with no one, *that he does not love things in the way in which ordinary people persuade themselves he does* – these propositions may be inferred sufficiently from Scripture itself.

My italics. Notice that the italicized phrase may insinuate that God loves things, though *not* in the way ordinary people conceive of love.

- 9 Cf. KV II 5 (G I 63/16–31). Notice, however, that Spinoza’s concept of love in the *Short Treatise* is different from that in the *Ethics*. The essential feature of love in the KV is the union (or the desire for union) with an adored object

(cf. Descartes, *Passions* art. 79, AT XI 387). In the *Ethics*, Spinoza rejects this understanding of love, claiming that the desire for union with an object is merely a *proprium*, but not the essence, of love (3DA6exp).

- 10 Though the issue cannot be adequately discussed here, let me briefly suggest that Spinoza's extraordinary claim about "the Mind's duration without the body" seems to be an attempt to replace the durational view of the mind's survival with his own view of the eternity of the mind, according to which the mind, insofar as it conceives itself as undetached from the substance, enjoys eternity, which is the existence of the substance.
- 11 For Spinoza's reliance on this motivation to deny divine love, see KV II 24 (G I 104/12).
- 12 For earlier Hebrew sources which similarly assert the identity of divine and human intellectual love, see the postscript to Harvey (1998, 107, 2014) and Idel (1988, 67).
- 13 TTP III.
- 14 TTP VI (G III 82, 88). Cf. the appendix to the first part of the *Ethics*.
- 15 In the following passage from the *Short Treatise*, Spinoza explains why he rejects the notion of God's love for man. Note that Spinoza stresses in this context that man's status is equal to that of all other finite things:

When we say, however, that God does not love man, that must not be understood as if he left man, as it were, to proceed on his own; [we mean] rather, that because man, *together with all there is*, is so in God, and God so consists of all of these, there cannot be in him any real love toward something else, since everything consists in one unique thing which is God himself.

(KV II 24, G I 14–19; my italics)

Spinoza's statement in the *Ethics* that God loves man insofar as he loves himself (5p36c) is essentially consistent with his claims in the *Short Treatise*. Both texts seem to allow for God to love man only insofar as man is a mode of God (just as God loves all his other modes). However, in the *Short Treatise*, this understanding of God's love of man is presented as a *rejection* of the traditional understanding of God's love of man.

- 16 See primarily Wolfson (1934, II 302–325), Harvey (1998, 104–107, 2014), and Idel (1988, 67).
- 17 The Spanish translation of Abravanel's *Dialogi di amore* was in Spinoza's personal library.
- 18 See, for example, Wolfson (1934, II 303–306).
- 19 TIE 17.
- 20 See Melamed (2012a).
- 21 See, specifically, Spinoza's exposition of John:

Because no one has seen God, no one recognizes God or is aware of him other than through love of his neighbor, and hence *the only attribute of God that anyone can know is this love, so far as we share in it.*

(TTP XIV, G III 176; italics added)

- 22 TTP XIV (G III 176/18–19). Indeed, before elaborating the seven dogmas of universal faith, Spinoza points out the principle underlying these dogmas: "There exists a supreme being who *loves* justice and charity" (*dari ens supremum, quod Justitiam & Charitatem amat*) (G III 177; italics added).
- 23 See 1p29s:

Before I proceed further, I wish to explain here – or rather to advise [the reader] what we must understand by *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*. For from the preceding I think it is already established that by *Natura*

naturans we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, i.e. (by p14c1 and p17c2), God, insofar as he is considered as a free cause. But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, i.e., all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God.

24 See 1p20c2.

25 KV II 24 (G I 104/9–12).

26 One commentator who followed this path is Martineau (1883, 273).

27 “*Dei natura gaudet infinita perfectione, idque concomitante idea sui*” (5p35d). Curley translates *gaudet* as “enjoys” and *gaudium* as “gladness.”

28 For a clarification of the two senses of eternity in Spinoza, see Melamed (2012b).

29 Spinoza defines the affects (at least) twice in Part 3 of the *Ethics*. First, he defines them in the course of proving the propositions of Part 3. He later repeats these definitions in a separate section placed at the end of Part 3. Occasionally, there are some minor discrepancies between the two sets of definitions. I will point them out whenever they are relevant to our topic. Notice that the definitions of the affects in the *Ethics* (and specifically the definition of love) are quite different from those in Spinoza's early *Short Treatise* (KV II 3–14). The *Short Treatise* is much closer to Descartes on this issue.

30 Cf. 4p59: “To every action to which we are determined from an affect which is a passion, we can be determined by reason, without that affect.”

31 See, for example, 1p1 and 1p4.

32 KV II 26 (G I 110/24).

33 Cf. Melamed (2013b, 61–66).

34 I state the three characteristics with reference to the mind only for the sake of simplicity. The characteristics of the body of the lover parallel those of the mind.

35 See Melamed (2013b, 163).

36 2ax3:

There are no modes of thinking, such as love, desire, or whatever is designated by the word affects of the mind, unless there is in the same Individual the idea of the thing loved, desired, etc. But there can be an idea, even though there is no other mode of thinking.

37 “God's essence excludes all imperfection, and involves absolute perfection” (1p11s, G II 54/31). For God's maximal reality, see 1p9 and 1p10s. Cf. 5p35d.

38 See Wolfson (1934, II 308) for a similar claim in Crescas.

39 See KV II 5 (G I 63/1–24) and TIE 9.

40 Cf. Pollock (1966, 282). For a similar point in Crescas, see Harvey (1998, 106–107).

41 “This Love the Mind has must be related to its actions (by p32c and 3p3); it is, then, an action by which the Mind contemplates itself, with the accompanying idea of God as its cause (by p32 and p32c), i.e. (by 1p25c and 2p11c), an action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human Mind, contemplates himself, with the accompanying idea of himself [as the cause]” (5p36d). Spinoza stresses this point in one of the annotations he added to Chapter XVI of the TTP:

For love of God is not obedience but a virtue necessarily present in someone who rightly knows God. . . . obedience immediately turns into love

which arises from true knowledge as inevitably as light emanates from the sun. By the guidance of reason we can love God, but not obey him.

- 42 Similarly, the (human) mind's intellectual love of God is accompanied by the idea of man's immanent, or internal, cause, i.e., God. Cf. Martineau (1883, 270).
- 43 For a detailed explanation of the nature of Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva*, or the third kind of cognition, see Melamed (2013a).
- 44 5p32c:

From the third kind of knowledge, there necessarily arises an intellectual Love of God. For from this kind of knowledge there arises (by p32) Joy, accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, i.e. (by 3DA6), Love of God, not insofar as we imagine him as present (by p29), but insofar as we understand God to be eternal. And this is what I call intellectual love of God.

- 45 Or, more precisely, from Henri Desmarets's 1650 Latin translation of Descartes's *Passions de l'âme*. See Descartes, *Passions*, art. 190 (AT XI 471, CSM I 396).
- 46 Here, Spinoza draws the readers' attention to the fact that strictly speaking joy – insofar as it is a passion – cannot be ascribed to God.
- 47 As usual, Harvey provides a helpful explanation by pointing out a crucial parallel with one of the concluding chapters of Maimonides's *Guide*:

After having expounded on 'passionate love' (*ishq* or *hesheq*) and on the pleasure of the disembodied intellect, Maimonides quotes Isaiah 58:8, which reads literally: 'Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearguard [*ya'asfekha*].' As Maimonides understands it, the text means: If you are righteous, i.e., if you love God passionately, then upon your death the divine Glory shall gather you up [*ya'asfekha*], i.e., your intellect will be united with the eternal Active Intellect (*Guide* III, 51). The similarities between the literary contexts of Spinoza's remarks about 'glory' and Maimonides' citation of Isaiah 58:8 prove that Spinoza's remarks allude to Maimonides' citation. There is also an external confirmation of this. In his *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Chapter V, Spinoza argues that Isaiah 58:8 presents the clearest statement of the prophetic teaching on ethics and *beatitudo*, and interprets the verse after the manner of Maimonides: If you are righteous in this life, then after your death *gloria Dei te aggregabit* (G III 71).

(Harvey 2014, 105).

- 48 Rice (2002, 94).
- 49 According to 2ax3, "there can be an idea, even though there is no other mode of thinking," such as love and desire. True, every idea, just like any other thing, must have an effect (1p36). Still, this effect could just be another idea which follows from it.
- 50 Assuming we adopt the definition of Joy in 3DA3.
- 51 CGH 13 (S 632). For a similar point in Crescas, see Harvey (1998, 106).
- 52 In the current paper, I have not addressed the question of whether divine intellectual love is one of Spinoza's infinite modes. I discuss this issue in Melamed (2013b, 132–135).
- 53 Agnon, *A Guest for the Night* (1968, 407).
- 54 "God is angry every day, and how long is his anger? A moment" (Babylonian Talmud, *Tractate Sanhedrin*, 1935, 105b).
- 55 Agnon, *A Guest for the Night* (1968, 407).

56 See Spinoza's admission of ignorance on this issue in the *Cogitata Metaphysica*: "God's will to love himself follows from his intellect, but how they are related, we do not know" (CM II 8, G I 264/8).

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