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SPINOZA ON THE ETHICS OF COURAGE AND THE JEWISH TRADITION

Baruch Spinoza's elusive statement at the end of the third chapter of his *Theological-Political Treatise* has served as a source of inspiration for numerous thinkers, many of whom have used it in order to support their own disparate positions.[1] Spinoza's statement reads as follows:

> Indeed, I would absolutely believe that, unless the foundations of their religion were to make their spirits effeminate, they will someday, given the occasion–as human affairs are changeable–erect their imperium once more, and God will choose them anew [*imo, nisi fundamenta suae religionis eorum animos effoeminarent, absolute crederem, eos aloquando, data occasione, ut sunt res humanae mutabiles, suum imperium iterum erecos, Deumque eos de novo electurum*].[2]

Indeed, Jay Geller goes as far as to argue that this statement has "provided an optic through which leading Jewish and gentile writers and, more broadly, a variety of German (sub) cultures have seen Jewish-gentile relations and Jewish identity since the Enlightenment."[3] Of particular interest is the fact that two dominant streams of interpretation have regarded this statement as a paradigm of the modern Jewish approach to the virtue of courage. While Spinoza never explicitly utilizes the word courage (*animositas*) in this context, as he does in other parts of the *Theological-Political Treatise* and *Ethics*, some prominent interpreters have assumed that his denigration of effeminate spirits (*animos effoeminarent*) implies an absent courageous spirit. This verse became a clarion call for diverging approaches to modern Jewish courage, with the general goal being to audaciously overcome previously limited medieval boundaries. The meaning and limits of those boundaries and how they can be conquered depends on how one understands the nature of courage as a distinct virtue. Resulting from this, different meanings of sovereignty, election, and diaspora begin to emerge. Advocates of German enlightenment, such as Moses Mendelssohn, and proto-Zionist critics, such as Moses Hess, have both adopted Spinoza as their intellectual progenitor, finding their own position in this famous statement.[4] Thus, in his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), Moses Hess interprets this line as prescriptive guidance, in which the "effeminate spirits"

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represent the deficiency of physical courage possessed by Jews in the Diaspora and the need to regain it to reclaim Jewish political sovereignty. In Hess' restatement, "Spinoza conceived Judaism to be grounded in nationalism, and held that the restoration of the Jewish kingdom depends entirely on the will and courage (*muthe*) of the Jewish people."[5] In opposition to this Zionist interpretation is the liberal reading of the German Jewish enlightenment, as exemplified in the thought of Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn interprets Spinoza's statement (without mentioning Spinoza's name) in responding to a letter by an individual proposing the creation of a Jewish state.[6] He begins by implicitly rejecting knowledge of physical or moral courage, restricting his knowledge purely to intellectual courage. He charges that "whatever intellectual boldness (*kunheit*) I may possess extends, however, to matters of philosophical speculation alone."[7] In restating Spinoza's proclamation, he makes some subtle, but important changes. The inability to rebuild a state is not in his version a reflection of the qualities of Jewish religion, but of the harsh realities of the Diaspora. Mendelssohn's reconstruction of Spinoza's statement does not recommend a Jewish state, but instead absolves the Jewish religion of Spinoza's charge and thus leaves it free to be reformed by Mendelssohn and others as an enlightened and universal religion.

Both versions capture specific fragments of Spinoza' conception of courage, but are limited by their political and polemical ambitions, neither completely capturing Spinoza's multi-faceted model. While this is in no way to denigrate their separate modern political projects, it is important to note that Spinoza is not simply advocating Zionism or the German Jewish enlightenment. A comparison of Spinoza's diverse statements on courage in both the *Ethics* and the *Theological-Political Treatise* reveals a nuanced statement on the relationship between three different forms of courage: physical, moral and intellectual courage and an appreciation of their implications for Judaism. In order to reconstruct Spinoza's model of courage, several fundamental questions must be asked: first, how does Spinoza define courage and understand it in his larger ethical, psychological, and metaphysical framework? Second, what is the relationship between physical, moral, and intellectual courage in his thought? Is one superior to another and if so, how does it relate to the others? Third, what are its implications for understanding the Jewish tradition? Does the Jewish tradition (e.g., the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic tradition) have a notion of courage inherent to it, or is this something that was imposed on it externally? Last of all, from the historical as well as contemporary moral perspective, is the Jewish tradition too courageous or not courageous enough?

COURAGE AS A VIRTUE OF THE FREE MAN IN THE *ETHICS*

In Spinoza's *Ethics*, courage (*animositas*) is one of the two crucial virtues of the free and rational man (*Ethics* 3p59n).[8] Spinoza uniquely redefines courage as the ability to increase maximally one's power through thinking which leads to a unique state of intellectual freedom from the causality of natural physics. Thus, Spinoza attempts to harmonize the theoretical intellectualism of the medieval tradition of Aristotle and Maimonides with the focus on physical self-preservation in the modern revolt of Machiavelli, Descartes, Hobbes, and Bacon.[9]

To understand Spinoza's unique formulation of courage requires one to uncover the foundations of his ethical system and his perception of man's essence or purpose in the *Ethics*. Spinoza argues that physics, metaphysics, and ethics are all rooted in one principle, that of the *conatus*. This is the principle that all beings in nature strive to preserve their own physical existence. He gives the example in nature of fish swimming in the sea, pointing to the fact that it is their natural right for the stronger to devour the weaker (*TPT*, 16.2).[10] Man's essence in nature is likewise to preserve his own being (*conatus*, *Ethics*. 3p6-7), giving him the power to act freely (Ibid., 4p67), but for man this is defined as virtue (Ibid., 4p20). Man's unique virtue of self-preservation is achieved through acquiring knowledge and passionate love of God or nature (*amor dei intellectualis*, *Ethics* 4p27-28, 5p32-33 and *TPT* 4.2.3, 4.4.1-2).[11] If nature has no inherent teleology or ends to achieve, man creates an idea (or "ideal") of man as a model for his nature (*Ethics* 4pref).

This radical revision of nature and ethics requires an equally bold re-evaluation of the nature of God and famously argues that God and nature are equivalent (*Deus sive Natura*, Ibid., *Ethics* 4 preface). Spinoza combines these two seemingly disparate theses, of knowledge and power, in arguing that God, who is equivalent with "Substance" or nature, has the basic essence of pure power, a form of affirmation of infinite existence (Ibid., 1p34-36, 2p3n). From the power of God or nature we can only know two of the infinite attributes, those being "thought" (*cogitatio*) corresponding to our mind (Ibid., 2p1) and "extension" (*extensio*) corresponding to our bodies as well as physical motion and rest (Ibid., 2p2). As a result, wisdom is not guiding God or nature as in Aristotle's and Maimonides's model, but wisdom is a single form of God's power, not necessarily higher than any other such form or "attribute" (Ibid., 2p3n, 2p7).[12] Consequently, the human process of thinking and perfecting the intellect is for the sake of obtaining individual power and freedom so as to be the cause of our own actions in utilizing this Godly or natural power (Ibid., 4pref).[13]

It is within the attribute of extension of physical body as well as motion that the human emotions are rooted. The attribute of extension corresponds equally to the human body as well as to the physical universe (Ibid., 2p2). Spinoza, influenced by Hobbes' physics of bodies, argues that each and every body is constantly in a state of motion or rest, and determined as such by the motion or rest of another body it is in contact with (Ibid., 3p2).[14] As Spinoza poetically describes it, we are like ''the waves of the sea agitated by contrary winds, we fluctuate in our ignorance of our future and destiny'' (Ibid., 3p59n). The amount of power a human being has to actively control the actions of his body or be passively moved to actions by another body are called the emotions (Ibid., 3pref). An emotion whereby one has an increase in power can be described as causing ''joy'' and one whereby one has a decrease in power can be described as causing ''sadness'' (Ibid., 3p11). One can classify different emotions based on these states of power increase or decrease in different circumstances. For example, ''love'' is joy with an idea of an external cause and ''hatred'' is sadness with an idea of an external cause (Ibid., 3p13n).

The increase in power of active control to persevere is to choose active emotions over passive emotions through a rational understanding of the physical motions of nature by the mind. Becoming *completely* rational in liberating oneself from the emotions is almost impossible, since man is always affected by emotions, and therefore it is often only possible to combat one emotion with an opposing and stronger emotion (Ibid., 4p7). But determining and allying with the strongest emotion requires reasoning.[15] One notable example is of an individual determining whether to continue or to cease smoking. The knowledge of the dangers to one's health by cigarette smoke does not independently overcome the passionate desire one has for another cigarette. However, once one comprehends that the craving is a result of certain biological and chemical processes for which he is not responsible, one can choose to actively pursue smoking with a new active passion or seek to passionately give it up.[16]

For Spinoza, the strongest and most rational emotion that is able to overcome the weaker passive emotions is courage (*animositatem*), which can also be translated as strength of the mind (Ibid., 3p59). In defining courage as the maximization of one's power through thinking, it can be thought of as the strongest emotional surge guided by reason in an individual's ''power barometer'' and the strongest force to fend off the weaker passive emotions. The most powerful weaker emotions that Spinoza's strongest active emotion must combat are hope and fear (Ibid., 4p47n). Hope and fear are either a joy or sorrow about the uncertainty of something that happened in the past or will happen in the future (Ibid., 3p50). In dealing with the

relationship between the passive emotion of fear and the active emotion of courage, Spinoza both rejects the Aristotelian (and Maimonidean) model that defines courage as the rational balance of fearfulness and rashness, and Hobbes' model that utilizes common fear and attempts to devalue courage for the sake of stability.[17] For Aristotle, the courageous individual must still be fearful, but must rationally calculate the need for assertiveness in this circumstance.[18] Instead, Spinoza posits that one must not maintain fear, but completely master and overcome it (Ibid., 2p49n, 4pref, 5p10m). In overcoming fear, courage or strength of mind overcomes uncertainty, which is a manifestation of the rule of fortune in the world and the mind.[19] Thus, in the very first line of the "Preface" to the *TPT*, Spinoza attributes most evils of the human mind and hence of human life, such as superstition, to the inability of man to control all of the circumstances in his life, i.e., fortune. By continuing to courageously know all the causes of nature, one continues to acquire individual power and hence mastery.

Spinoza's model of courage, however, is limited in its effectiveness on politics. Although he upholds courage as an intellectual and moral virtue, thus making it a supreme goal, he admits that it cannot fully overcome physical courage, which is the root of war and conflict. Spinoza builds his model of the state on that of Hobbes' social contract, whose purpose is to create a state based on security and preservation. In doing so, Spinoza relegates physical courage to the pre-contract warlike state of nature. But Spinoza does not want to connect physical courage to moral or intellectual courage, considering it more a base impulse and passion, differentiating intellectual courage (*animositatem*) from bravery or boldness (*intrepidos*), which seems to be a lower form of emotion related to fear (Ibid., 3p59, 3def40).[20] Courage is thus limited in its ability to liberate most individuals from their passive emotions. As a result, for Spinoza there always appears to be some natural hierarchy between the intellectually courageous and the fearful or weak-minded.[21] If there were only courageously rational individuals, then they would create societies for the sake of friendship and common purpose, not war and conflict. Spinoza makes similar statements about how peace is an ideal grounded in knowledge in his *Political Treatise*. He argues there that peace cannot be seen as the absence of war, but as a union or agreement of minds (*PT*, VI.4) or as a form of virtue that arises from one's character (Ibid., V.4). In other words, peace is an outcome of one's rational understanding (Ibid., III.6). But the difficulty of achieving such a state of peace where physical courage is absent is exemplified in Spinoza's statement that "all noble things are as difficult as they

are rare'' (*TPT* 5p42n). Thus the modern state needs to exist for this realistic and necessary purpose.

COURAGE AS THE FULFILLMENT OF BIBLICAL *RUAH* OR SPIRIT IN *THEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL TREATISE*

It should first be noted that Spinoza's pedagogical project in the *Ethics* of inculcating courage generally lacks references to the Bible and the Jewish tradition.[22] Most of the Bible, as he explains, is merely a form of superstition, which human beings created due to being controlled by their emotions of fear and hope regarding the uncertainties of the future (*TPT* pref1.1-2). Instead of thinking about God's relationship to nature, the Jewish tradition prefers to imagine a God who is involved and guides every human desire and action (*Ethics* 1app). In light of Spinoza's rational understanding of courage, one would think that one would not find any discussion of courage whatsoever in the *Theological-Political Treatise*, and instead see a portrait of the Bible as merely enforcing obedience to a moral law lacking a basis in a true theoretical conception of nature (*TPT* 13.1.9). However, Spinoza argues that it is this religious-moral law that is the most useful tool to force the masses out of the state of nature and govern them (Ibid., 14.1.10).

This absence of courage as a topic worthy of analysis appears to be largely the case in the *TPT* other than one seemingly minor reference to it in a list of seven possible definitions of *ruah* in the first chapter on prophecy (Ibid., 1.17.3).[23] Is this merely an etymological point meant to disprove the rational nature of prophecy through disproving the uses of *ruah hakodesh* in the Bible, or is this a hint of something larger going on beneath the surface? It is my contention that Spinoza's hidden purpose in defining *ruah* as a form of courage may be an attempt to find a pre-prophetic stratum of authentic revelation held by the earliest Hebrews and to disentangle it from the politicization and imaginative interpretations of revelation by prophets, through separating the references in the Bible to *ruah* from those to *ruah hakodesh*. In other words, *ruah hakodesh* refers to an imaginative revelation and *ruah* refers to a naturalistic understanding of the relationship of the human mind and the emotions in light of the *Ethics*. By looking at the uses of *ruah* when not referring to God, one gets a glimpse of the remnants of the original or ancient use of *ruah* in a context before its later corruption by superstition. Thus, just as courage is needed to perfect the psyche of the *Ethics*, so courage is needed to perfect the true authentic pre-prophetic psyche of *ruah*. To be courageous in one's understanding of the Bible and to find these key words which are remnants of an earlier Hebraism, one must know

the true structure of the Hebrew language (*TPT* 7.5.32-33) about which Spinoza seems to assume the prophets and writers of the Bible were unfortunately not expert (*Heb Gram* V, p. 29).[24] As such, Spinoza is making the case for anti-prophetic Judaism, one closer to a natural understanding of the world and uncorrupted by religious leadership.

This becomes clear when one looks at how Spinoza textually makes this case with respect to *ruah* and courage. Spinoza interprets *ruah* as an equivocal term in the Bible. Spinoza's list can be broken down into two categories. The first, second, and seventh definitions of *ruah* are in effect all quite similar, based on a physical wind (*ventum*), breath (*halitum*) and respiration (*respirationem*) based on the wind of the body, and areas of the world (*mundi plagas*) defined so because wind blows there. The third, fourth, and fifth definitions of *ruah* represent the human psyche which can be divided into the emotions of the body and the reasoning of the mind, the subject of the second and third chapter of the *Ethics*. These definitions are strength (*viribus*), courage (*animositate*), virtue (*virtute*), capability (*capacitate*), tenet/opinion/thought (*sententia*), will (*voluntatem*), decree (*decretum*), appetite (*appetitum*), impulse (*impetum*), passion (*passiones*), and mind (*mentem*). If one attempts to re-organize all these definitions of *ruah* in light of the *Ethics*, one could conclude that *ruah* in the Bible, is the mind which, according to Spinoza's interpretation, is man's highest perfection and means of preservation through acquiring rational tenets in need of virtue or capability.[25] This in turn requires controlling the more passive passions, impulses, and appetites with a stronger and more courageous passion, will, or decree.[26]

While Spinoza's definitions alone may seem overly abstract, the significance of this list can be seen as a synthesis of the intellectualism of Maimonides' definitions of *ruah* in the *Guide of the Perplexed* I 40 and the corporeality of Hobbes categories of *ruah* in the *Leviathan* III 34. Hobbes' list is founded on the reduction of the concept of spirit to a physical or corporeal term, arguing that

> in the common language of men, *air* and *aerial substances* use not to be taken for bodies, but (as often as men are sensible for their effects) are called *wind* or *breath*, or ... *spirits* (as when they call that aerial substance which in the body of any living creature, gives it life and motion *vital* and *animal spirits*).[27]

Hence, in defining the different uses of *ruah* in the Bible he suggests that the use of *ruah* as courage, the third definition, is equal to an extraordinary zeal or the affect or motion of the body. But Hobbes sees this zeal or courage as dangerous and characteristic of the warlike state of nature, defining it earlier as "hope of averting hurt through

resistance," as opposed to fear which is productive for forcing people to join society.[28] This explains the advantages of Hobbes' laying stress on courage among the Judges, since he is attempting to highlight the problems of the theocracy during the time of the Judges as reminiscent of a state of nature, and the advantages of the stability of the Hebrew monarchy, which his sovereign will imitate.[29] Spinoza likely read this chapter of Hobbes and based his list on it.[30] Indeed, from Hobbes he seems to have adopted the importance of understanding the "spirit" of the Bible as reflective of the physical movements of bodies.

At the same time, Spinoza's understanding of *ruah* presents a more intellectual and theoretical side than Hobbes, defining it also as the eternal mind or intellect. While Hobbes does refer to the second definition of *ruah* as the "extraordinary gifts of the understanding," his examples of wisdom are mostly practical and not theoretical: Joseph managing Egypt's economics (Genesis 41:38), the people making Aaron's garments (Exodus 28:3), those who possessed ability in cutting stones or skill in craft (Exodus 31:3, 35:31). For a more theoretical understanding of *ruah* as wisdom, Spinoza has to turn to Maimonides. Maimonides understands *ruah* as referring to the eternal intellect, which does not perish with the body. Spinoza's sixth definition of *ruah* seems to refer to Maimonides' fourth definition of *ruah*, with both thinkers quoting Ecclesiastes 12:7, "and the Spirit will return to God" interpreted as the eternality of the mind.

Another important feature of the place of courage in Spinoza's list of meanings of *ruah* is the two biblical examples he references as evidence, Ezekiel 2:2 and Joshua 2:11. In Ezekiel, after seeing the vision of the chariot, the prophet falls onto his face. It is this inner strength, or *ruah*, that allows him both the strength to get up and the strength to continue hearing the voice that spoke unto him. Hence the strength is not just for physicality, but also for knowledge of the divine.[31] Similarly, the spirit of courage that Rahab, the harlot, lost was because of knowledge of the power of the God of Israel. In both cases, *ruah* is used in the sense of strength to know. While Spinoza describes such characters as using their imagination in their prophetic knowledge, the linguistic usage is useful for him in its revealing a remnant of an earlier use of *ruah* as suggesting the fundamental strength possessed by human beings which enables them to rationally know. Yet, in cases of physical strength without an intellectual component he attempts to explain them otherwise, as for example Gideon and Samson's "spirit of God": these he categorizes as "boldness" (*audacissimus*) (*TPT* 1.20.4). In a similar fashion, the Egyptian man that David found in I Samuel 30:12 whose *ruah* was revived by

food and drink could be interpreted as strength, but Spinoza chooses to categorize it as breath (*TPT* 1.17.3).[32]

The apparent irony of Spinoza's presentation of *ruah* is that for a thinker who argues so vehemently against the attempt to find theoretical truths in the Bible, he attempts to re-read some parts of the Bible through theoretical terminology![33] Spinoza's method of interpreting the Bible, though, is ultimately almost Machiavellian in the sense that on the one hand he attempts to find in the Bible a pre-prophetic Judaism, while also striving to use those principles for a whole new modern reading of the Bible. In this light, George M. Gross explains that

> in Spinoza's hands the Bible appears to be the last place that one should look even for a thoughtful understanding of justice and piety. Indeed, Spinoza's treatment of the Bible prefigures the emergence of the biblical higher criticism . . . [But] the framers of modern liberalism did not seek to expel the Bible from the city which they built, as Plato sought to expel the poets. More interestingly, therefore, Spinoza's treatment of the Bible heralds the cautious and confident terms of the Bible's ticket of admission into the modern city . . . Spinoza's critique of the Bible's teachings is an elaboration of the Bible's internal critique of its own teachings.[34]

Thus if one of the original uses of *ruah* was having the courage to think or know through reason, it appears that Spinoza wants the reader to use the Bible as a spirited guide to thinking courageously. His own work is, as it were, intended to be an education in courage: to read it properly requires one to take on and hence to cultivate strength of mind. Therefore, Spinoza is encouraging the reader to first free themselves from the shackles of the imagination of the Bible, but perhaps also return to reading it critically in order to reinterpret it anew in light of this new (or perhaps old) spiritedly rational understanding. One must then ask: where can one find examples of Spinoza's model of courage in the Bible?

COURAGEOUS CHARACTERS IN THE BIBLE: MODELS OF PHYSICAL, MORAL, OR INTELLECTUAL COURAGE?

Spinoza cultivates his ideal paradigms of courage through adapting and modifying Maimonides' tripartite structure of courage as physical, moral, and intellectual courage. To be physically courageous is primarily to fight in a war and place one's life on the line, to be morally courageous is to stand up for right and wrong in society, and to be intellectually courageous is to confront one's entrenched opinions and beliefs and strive to know the truth. Though this structure is ultimately

derived from the works of Plato and Aristotle and adapted into medieval philosophy by Al-Farabi, Maimonides reinterprets this framework for the Jewish tradition.[35]

Spinoza begins his reading of the Bible with a rejection of physical courage. He reasons that one of the crucial purposes of the Law of Moses is to serve as a social contract for peace and security through freeing man from the ''state of nature'' in which everyone regards it as their right to utilize physical strength and untrammeled courage to pursue their own survival (*TPT* 16.4.1, 17.4.2-3). Spinoza's reading of Exodus is dependent on a wholly new modern political understanding of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and their wanderings in the desert. His ingenious new reading seems to be built on an adaptation and qualified rejection of Maimonides' usage in *Guide* III 32 of the Exodus narrative for a different political purpose.[36] In Maimonides' reading of the Bible, Egypt is the paradigm for slavery where the Israelites lacked both political and intellectual freedom. In order to transform a nation of slaves into a nation with a strong military that could conquer a land and build a state, Moses' thorough knowledge of God and nature required him to trick the Israelites into wandering in the desert for forty years (Exodus 13:17–18). This was for the purpose of creating a state of misery and lack of comfort which, combined with freedom, was the essential precondition for training them to be courageous (*shajāʿah*, *Guide* III 24, 32), thus preparing them to learn the martial arts needed for conquest.[37] Consequently, Maimonides also saw that the reason the Israelites lost their kingdom in the end was due to their neglecting to study the art of war and the military virtues, in which courage obviously plays a major role (Maimonides, ''Letter on Astrology,'' p. 465).

Spinoza reverses Maimonides' paradigm by diminishing the cruelty of Egypt and intensifying the chaos of the wandering in the desert. While Spinoza argues that the Egyptian regime was oppressive due to its ''superstitious, cruel, and miserable slavery'' (*TPT* 2.9.23), he also claims that the Egyptians were justified in enslaving the Israelites due both to their overpopulation and also to their warlike behavior, at least as presented by the Pharoah in Exodus 1:9–11 (Ibid., 6.1.50). Of course, we must note that Spinoza decided to take the claim of the Pharoah at face value and to reject the apparent biblical irony, and so refused to judge it as a subjective self-justification, perhaps because he wished to blame the Israelites for having made their own fate by not assimilating into the culture of Egypt. In any case, although the Israelites refer to natural causes as divine causes or even miracles (Ibid., 1.5.5), Spinoza deduces that the plagues and exodus from Egypt are merely examples of good fortune enjoyed by the Israelites as well as luck that their superstition led them to believe that God was

interfering in nature for their benefit (Ibid., 6.1.45). It is also an example of a similar superstition on the part of the Egyptians to believe that the Israelites' God was working against them (Ibid., 6.1.46). Having left the Egyptian imperium, the Israelites were alone in the desert in a "state of nature." While the Egyptian slavery was oppressive, the war of all against all was much worse, where every man had the right and freedom to use his own strength to preserve himself however he might wish. While in this state they were free to create their own laws, build their own imperium, or occupy new land (Ibid., 5.3.2), the Israelites were so mentally enslaved that they could not do any of the above. Therefore, they created a social contract with God to legislate laws for them, with Moses as their interpreter (Ibid., 5.3.5, 17.4.3). To wean the people off Egyptian slavery and superstition as well as the desire to act according to their emotions by their own right, Moses forced the Israelites to be obedient to a single political law that would completely and forcefully regulate their action.[38] As Martin D. Yaffe argues

> These legally mandated activities filled daily life and so prevented the people, who had been slaves until recently and were unused to freedom, from misusing their private discretion in publicly disruptive ways.[39]

Of course, the advantage of Moses' law over Egyptian law is not only in relation to its superstitious elements, but also that it bears the virtues of justice and charity. While the Israelite polity may have thrived for a period from Moses to Solomon, for Spinoza the success and failure of the Israelite polity was ultimately not due to an abundance or lack of physical and military courage, but due to fortune and the inability to master it (Ibid., 3.5.1).[40]

Spinoza also rejects the idea that it was moral courage that inspired the prophets to stand up and criticize the government. This can be seen as a critique of Maimonides, who is the thinker famous for categorizing spiritedness or courage (*iqdām*) as one of the fundamental characteristics of biblical prophets (*Guide* II 38). Maimonides regards the division of power between king, prophet, and priest as a model of "mutual completion" whereby the kingship follows and politically promotes the religious-moral law (Book of Judges, Laws of Kings, III.1), while prophecy serves the larger interests of the state and checks the self-interested motives of the king with the truth of God (*Guide* II 38[41]).[42] Spinoza's critique of Maimonides, and the biblical author Ezra here, is an attempt at unconventionally understanding the motivations behind the prophets in courageously criticizing the king. He argues that the prophets were not using God's wisdom to criticize the kings, but were interested in achieving power for themselves and

overthrowing the king in order to replace him with someone else, which suited their private interests (*TPT* 17.12.54-59, 18.2.1-2, and 18.3.7-8).[43] On the surface, the Bible shows that the kings are the ones acting unjustly, while the prophets come in to counterbalance and correct the ways of the king by speaking on behalf of God, truth, and ethics. Spinoza reverses this biblical as well as Maimonidean understanding, suggesting that in truth the kings are mostly acting justly and for the good of the entire people, but are corrupted by the self-interest of the prophets![44]

Spinoza presents numerous examples of his re-reading of the relationship of the prophet and king throughout his work. One example is Samuel's removal of Saul from the kingship. According to 2 Samuel 15, Samuel removed Saul from power because Saul did not listen to the words of God and took the cattle of Amalek for himself while also sparing King Agag. Spinoza however rejects the Bible's testimony, claiming that it merely reflects the subjective testimony of Samuel who could not control Saul and who actually wanted to replace Saul with a king he could control (Ibid., 17.12.54).[45] Another example Spinoza provides is that of King Asa, King of Judah, and the prophet Hanani (2 Chronicles 16). According to the Book of Chronicles, in order to win a war against the King of Israel, Asa attempted to bribe a foreign power, the King of Damascus, to come to his aid militarily (Ibid., 16:2–3). Hanani therefore criticized Asa for relying on the King of Damascus and not God to win the war (Ibid., 16:7–9), and Asa consequently jailed the prophet Hanani for speaking out and contradicting the actions of the king (Ibid., 16:10). In Spinoza's version the tables are turned as the king is attempting to be pious and to carry out his own private and public business, when Hanani imposed his ignorant conception of piety on the king's negotiations (*TPT* 18.2.2). Hence according to Spinoza, Asa was justified in jailing the prophet for attempting to interfere in his rule.

Therefore, not only are the prophets dangerous for the stable rule of the biblical kings, their behavior was a central factor in the destruction of the Hebrew polity. Theirs is not a model of courage on behalf of the public good which is to be emulated, but rather a symptom of untrammeled ambition and private interest excited by inflamed piety which is rightly to be suppressed. In this regard, Spinoza is attempting to re-interpret the Bible according to the Roman historian Tacitus, who is quoted and referred to in the *Theological-Political Treatise* more than any other classical writer.[46] Tacitus was a supporter of the Roman religion of the empire and argued that it was threatened and weakened because of the new eastern religions or "prophets" challenging it for supreme authority.[47] He referred to the customs of Judaism as "perverse and disgusting" as well as a "barbaric

superstition,'' and to Christianity as a ''destructive superstition.''[48] But Spinoza differs from Tacitus with regard to the solution. For Tacitus, these competitive religions must be rooted out and not allowed to influence or deplete the strength of the Roman Empire, making him a strong proponent of the Roman war against Judea. Contrastingly, Spinoza suggests a different solution, similar to Hobbes: biblical religion has good moral lessons that can be useful if edited, controlled, and managed by the sovereign.[49] Spinoza, though, also sees the problem of the institutionalization of one religious sect in society as authoritative which (as had also plagued Rome) would likely lead to a situation where the people desire a nonreligious or nonprophetic rule. According to Spinoza's reading of the Bible, the choice of the Levites to minister the sacred services was merely a result of their noninvolvement in the sin of the Golden Calf and revenge on those who did partake in the sin (Ibid., 17.12.33). The emotional decision of Moses led to resentment on behalf of the people, due to the eventual corruption of the Levites (Ibid., 17.12.35). In contemporary terms, the Levites were living a life ''full of luxury and sloth'' (Ibid., 17.12.49) on state welfare funds. The population hence wanted mortal kings who did not consult with the Levites and who themselves went to worship other gods and speak to other prophets if politically necessary (Ibid., 17.12.54-57). But for Spinoza the problem of institutionalization of one religious sect as authoritative, as seen in the case of the Levites, is as great as a lack of sovereign control of any religion by political authority, as seen in the case of the kings and prophets. Or in other words, according to his reading of the biblical narrative, the theocracy of Joshua and the Judges is as problematic as the monarchy of the Kings, since the secular political authority was never able to exercise supreme control over the religion and its prophets with their mad courage. Spinoza's solution to this problem is for the sovereign to impose obedience on all citizens who must pay heed to religion, but a religion based on liberal principles of charity and justice which promote freedom of thought for all sects (Ibid., 14.1.7-14 and 19.1.5-7). This would allow freedom from ecclesiastical tyranny and corruption and also freedom from religious groups attempting to overthrow the regime.

The last and highest form of courage—intellectual courage—is not found in most characters in the Bible according to Spinoza, since at the beginning of the *TPT* he rejects the revelations and writings of most of the prophets and writers as pure superstition. Yet, his attitude toward the Bible appears to change, admitting later in the *TPT* that there are certain moral and political lessons that can be learned from the Bible and adapted to a liberal religion. Thus not all biblical characters are superstitious, according to Spinoza, holding a few

exceptions for biblical characters that one could perhaps call intellectually courageous. It would seem that it is these exceptions that Spinoza argues are worthy of imitation in contrast to the rest. The way to distinguish such examples in Spinoza's reading of the Bible is when he refers to a character as possessing "steadfastness of spirit" (*animus constans*).[50] This elusive term seems to refer to a strong and resolute control of one's self through reason. Only near the end of the *Ethics* (*Ethics* 5p36n), does Spinoza define the meaning of this term. Not only is it extremely similar or perhaps even equivalent to how he defines courage elsewhere (Ibid., 3p59n), it is also virtually equivalent to the biblical expression "Glory of God" (*kevod elohim*) as he understands it.[51] In doing so, Spinoza adopts Maimonides' reading of Isaiah 58:8 that "Glory of God" refers to intellectual love of God (*Guide* III 51 and *Ethics* 5p36n), which is the purpose of the natural divine law (*TPT* 5.1.16-18).[52] Achieving this love or "glory" thus requires steadfastness and courage.

The three characters that Spinoza refers to as manifesting a steadfast spirit are Adam (Ibid., 4.4.33), Job (Ibid., 10.2.5), and Solomon (Ibid., 4.4.39). For Spinoza (like Maimonides), Adam represents the paradigm of the human tension between one's rational and imaginative faculties, and his fall represents the greatest human problem—that man cannot control his emotions through reason (*Ethics* 4p68n and *TPT* 4.4.38).[53] The problem with this is that Spinoza, like Maimonides, seems to present two competing ways of interpreting the Garden of Eden story. In the one above, Spinoza attempts to read it as a philosophic parable (Ibid.), and in the other he reads it literally as a reflection of Adam's ignorance and imagination, by conceiving of God as commanding, speaking, and walking (*TPT* 2.9.1-3 and 4.4.18-22). While he presents both in the *TPT*, he argues that he will not employ the philosophic reading. This appears to be a reflection of the strategy of the first two chapters of the *TPT*—liberation from a dependency on prophecy for truth. At the same time, Spinoza is hinting that he could present a new liberal philosophic reading of this text, and does so eventually as a key biblical section of the *Ethics* (4p68n).

Indeed, one can read the rest of the Bible as an attempt to correct the sin of Adam. For Maimonides and the Maimonidean tradition, the law of Moses, whose highest purpose is knowledge of God (Book of Knowledge, Laws of Foundations of Torah I.1), is a correction of the problem of man as first revealed in the story of Adam.[54] But since Moses did not disclose all the deeper secrets of God, the rest of the prophets and biblical writers who wrote under a prophetic spirit progressively brought out these philosophic secrets concealed in earlier works. For example, Ezekiel expanded on metaphysics, Jeremiah on

the dangers and courage of a public prophet, King Solomon's three works (Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Song of Songs) brought out the nature of the soul and the pursuit of wisdom, and Job reasoned out the nature of providence and evil.[55] Spinoza adopts the Maimonidean model of understanding the nature of man through Adam, but does not envision a solution through Moses and most of the biblical prophets and writers. Instead, Spinoza foresees a solution only through Solomon and Job, both of whom he precisely designates as being ''steadfast of spirit.''[56]

Spinoza's portrayal of Job is unique among the biblical books and characters he surveys. Like his attitude toward most of the biblical prophets, Spinoza criticizes Job's understanding of God's power and role in providence as corresponding to his own imagination and low level of reason (*TPT* 2.10.5). At the same time, Spinoza argues that Job surpassed all in religion and piety, and one can learn about God's universal providence from Job 28:28 (Ibid., 3.5.17). Furthermore, in presenting a historical critique of many of the biblical books in chapter 7–10, Spinoza does not offer a conclusive solution to the problem of the Book of Job's historicity and authorship, desiring to ''leave the matter in doubt'' (Ibid., 10.2.1-4), and instead focuses on its philosophic message (10.2.5-6). One possible reason why Spinoza deliberately chooses to leave this matter unresolved is that he is employing Maimonides' hermeneutical technique of recognizing the problems in Job and reading it as a philosophic parable to solve these difficulties and teach a naturalistic message about providence.[57] For Maimonides, the Book of Job teaches an intellectualist reading of providence and theodicy, in which one recognizes that knowledge cannot prevent the occurrence of these events that are thought of as evil; instead, one considers them not evil but merely a necessary physical part of the order of the world, and the true way to avoid them is to know God and understand the causes of these events (*Guide* III 23).[58] Spinoza seems to adopt Maimonides' method of reading as superior to others in order to teach two crucial lessons from the Book of Job. The first is that providence applies to all equally and not just to Jews. This can be understood from his use of Job 28:28 and also from the fact that although Job is not considered Jewish in the Bible, he is seen as equally pious by God (*TPT* 3.5.17). The second is that through reason, one can understand the cause of all events as originating in God or nature. This can be seen through Spinoza's use of verses from Job in defining *ruah* in the first chapter and his attempt to find examples of reason there. For instance, he interprets ''as long as there is life in me and God's breath [*ruah*] is in my nostrils'' (Job 27:3) to be a reference to God's mind (*TPT* 1.20.9), and ''but truly it is the spirit [*ruah*] of men, the breath of God that gives them understanding''

(Job 32:8) to be a reference to the role played by science in virtue (*TPT* 1.17.6). He even sources Job 33:4 as proof for the immortality of the mind.[59] Hence, although it is uncertain and perhaps doubtful to Spinoza whether the original author of Job was intellectually courageous, through the help of Maimonides Spinoza was nevertheless able to retain Job as one of the heroic representatives of modern intellectual courage in his new edited Bible.

Perhaps even more so than Job, Spinoza interprets King Solomon as representing the supreme role model for wisdom and intellectual courage in the Bible.[60] The Bible itself describes Solomon as having a "wise and discerning mind" (1 Kings 3:12), and Spinoza refers to Solomon as "the philosopher" (*TPT* 6.1.94), who "excelled others in wisdom" (Ibid., 2.1.2). Indeed, he maintains that "there is no one in the Old Testament who has spoken of God more reasonably than Solomon who surpassed everyone of his age in the natural light" (Ibid., 2.9.28). Furthermore, when Spinoza attempts to dissect the works of the Bible according to their different authors and historical contexts, he lets Ecclesiastes and Proverbs off the hook in terms of critical reconstruction, attributing them to Solomon, the author to whom they are traditionally ascribed (Ibid., 10.1.9-10), unlike most of the works of scripture which he attributes to other authors. Also, instead of criticizing the authors or verses or passages of the works themselves, he criticizes the rabbis for only grudgingly accepting them into the Bible and for the incorrect reasons they offered for doing so (Ibid., 10.1.12 and 10.2.57-58). He therefore seems to highly value these two works attributed to Solomon. To him, they represent the only two works of the Bible that can be read literally and that deal explicitly with matters similar to philosophy; indeed, they can be read in a manner more consistent with the philosophy of the *Ethics*, without having to resort to reading the text as a parable, as Maimonides does. According to Spinoza, Proverbs can be read as the attempt to found morality on knowledge and not merely on simple obedience to law, as prophets frequently argue. This possession of moral knowledge is the necessary and sufficient condition of being good.[61] Similarly, Ecclesiastes can be read as arguing that individuals should attempt to discern truth through reasoning and should contemplate the world (Ecclesiastes 1:13). The conclusions reached by reason here are very Stoic, arguing for a preordination of events by God (Ibid., 2:14-15, 3:11), repetition of history in periodic cycles (Ibid., 1:9), and freedom only in the human heart.[62] Spinoza thus interprets Proverbs as teaching about the laws of nature or God, and that to truly live independently requires knowledge (*TPT* 4.4.36 on Proverbs 16:22 and *TPT* 4.4.37 on Proverbs 13:44). In a similar fashion, he interprets Ecclesiastes in such a way so as to disprove miracles, arguing that in

it Solomon teaches the fixed order of nature and human determinism (*TPT* 6.1.94-95 on Ecclesiastes 1:10–12, 3:11 and 3:14). Hence, Spinoza is interested in maintaining the image of King Solomon as author of these two works in order to counterbalance the image of Moses as perfect philosopher in the thought of Maimonides, which is based on legislative revelation, and in order to direct the philosophic reader toward the natural science of the *Ethics*. He also frequently translates the biblical "wisdom" (*hokhmah*) as "science" (*scientia*) in order to fit these works into the teaching of the *Ethics*, referring to Solomon's divine wisdom (1 Kings 3:28) as divine science (*TPT* 1.18.6).[63] One missing point that Spinoza conspicuously leaves out of his work is any mention of the Song of Songs, the last work of Solomon. This appears to be because the Song of Songs, unlike Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, does not explicitly deal with philosophy and wisdom; one has to read the text allegorically in order to argue for it, and Spinoza rejects allegorical interpretation.[64] Even though Spinoza favors the image of Solomon as philosopher, it seems that reading the Song of Songs allegorically would be problematic for his project, given that he advocates a mostly literal reading of the Bible. Therefore, no comment is likely better than a critical one.

The problem with Spinoza's interpretation of Solomon in general is that he contradicts himself in the various statements that he makes about him.[65] First, in the context of discussing the mathematical dimensions of the temple (1 Kings 7:23), it is evident that Spinoza believed that Solomon did not know mathematics, which is the key to a philosophic understanding (*TPT* 2.8.9-10) that is claimed for him elsewhere. Secondly, Solomon's indulgence of physical pleasures such as women, money, and honor, are clearly not fitting behavior for a philosopher (Ibid., 2.9.28). These pleasures appear to be, in Spinoza's judgment, outcomes of the emotions and not reason, a point which contradicts Solomon's wisdom as Spinoza presents it.[66] Thirdly, Spinoza's translation of three different words for wisdom, such as *hochma*, *da'at*, and *tevunah*, are translated promiscuously and interchangeably as science, prudence, and understanding in different contexts.[67] For example, *hochma* is translated as prudence (*prudentis*, Proverbs 13:44 at *TPT* 4.4.37), as science (*scientiam*, Proverbs 3:13 at *TPT* 4.4.38), and as wisdom (*sapientiam*, Proverbs 2:5 at *TPT* 4.4.40). Similarly, *daat* is translated as both science (Proverbs 2:5 at *TPT* 4.4.40) and wisdom (Proverbs 2:10 at *TPT* 4.4.43), and *tevunah* as both prudence (Proverbs 2:3 at *TPT* 4.4.40) and understanding (Proverbs 3:13 at *TPT* 4.4.38).[68] In other words, Spinoza appears to be hinting that Solomon did not write with exactness when it comes to using scientific terminology. Indeed, Spinoza appears to be "cleaning-up" the text by translating these terms differently, so as to maintain

the more exalted status of these two works and of Solomon himself as prolegomena to the *Ethics*. In this way, it can be deduced that Spinoza does not want to rid the Bible completely of intellectual courage and theoretical truth, but instead wants to limit it to the two Solomonic works of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Understanding Spinoza's reading of the Bible according to the three kinds of courage could suggest that Spinoza is implicitly re-editing the three sections of the Bible according to the three types of courage. While I will not go so far as to claim that Spinoza is consciously aware of this, I will suggest no more than that it is an interesting possibility. The "Five Books of Moses" are a project to get the Israelites out of the state of nature where wild physical courage is rampant, and transform them into a societal group with a social contract. The "Prophets" teach the lesson about the dangers of too much moral courage through the fact that too many prophets arose, contradicted one another, and challenged the kings, and that the only period of peace took place during the time of a wise ruler who controlled religion. The Solomonic part of the "Writings" hint at the possibility for intellectual courage. But as Martin D. Yaffe points out,

> In the end, there are limits to Spinoza's possible theological (or anti-theological) innovations. He cannot reorder the biblical canon as a corpus of books. He is too late–the canon is already complete. But he can, and does, reorder how we are to read (or perhaps misread) that canon.[69]

His reading of the Bible must put the emphasis on King Solomon, since only he represents the correct balance of all forms of courage (at least for the Bible), minimizing physical and moral courage and promoting intellectual courage. During Solomon's rule there were no wars (*TPT* 18.3.5), very few prophets to challenge the king's authority, a centralization of communication with God through him, and the beginning of intellectual courage that manifested itself in writing Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. While it is true that advocating a king as the ideal figure is contradictory to Spinoza's promotion of democracy as the best form of government, Spinoza uses Solomon as a model for criticizing the dangers of monarchy in the other bad kings (Ibid.), while maintaining the importance of strong rulers who promote justice (sourcing Ecclesiastes 9:2 at *TPT* 19.1.8 and 19.1.20).[70] As Jonathan Israel remarks,

> Solomon is viewed as a kind of precursor who, on the one hand personified the basic principles of what eventually was to mature to true philosophy and, on the other hand, embodied a critique of the normal conduct and attitudes of kings.[71]

One could even suggest that Solomon is superior to Christ in Spinoza's thought. For while Christ embodies the values of justice and charity in religious obedience, Spinoza's Solomon represents a figure who could actually employ such a law politically and transcend it intellectually.[72] In this sense, Solomon's superiority for his political-philosophical thought in its biblical incarnation can also be demonstrated on historical grounds by the impact it made, in that Spinoza's Solomon was an influential factor in the spread of Spinoza's ideas in Western Europe during the Enlightenment.[73]

CONCLUSION

One of Spinoza's most effective contributions to modern Judaism is the transformation of courage into a central Jewish virtue. Modern Jewish courage is the solely human ability to conquer one's physical, moral, and intellectual state of existence, transforming and recreating it anew. Both the German Jewish enlightenment and Zionism are, in a political sense, a continuation of Spinoza's legacy. But neither captures the complexities of Spinoza's teaching. Spinoza is not purely an idealist or a realist, but a passionate idealist who also recognizes the necessity of realism. Although he advocates the creation of the liberal European state where intellectual courage reigns, thus making physical and moral courage unnecessary, he is also aware of the limitations of this project. Physical and moral courage are likely still necessary even in the enlightened modern state, leading to the probability that a Jewish state may be the most effective means of achieving it. Spinoza's teaching on courage thus defies the dogmas of modern realists and idealists, challenging idealists to recognize the necessity at times of physical courage and realists to rise beyond material competition for the sake of intellectual courage. However, to what extent each form of courage is needed and must prevail ultimately depends on the wisdom of prudent future leaders. But Spinoza's teaching remains a constant voice for all modern Jewish thinkers, who have hearkened back to his words in trying to boldly overcome their grievances about the failures of Jewish history.

SUNY AT BUFFALO

NOTES

1. Jay Geller, "Spinoza's Election of the Jews: The Problem of Jewish Persistence," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society,* Vol. 12, No. 1

(2005), pp. 39–63 and Warren Zev Harvey, "Spinoza's Counterfactual Zionism," *Spinoza as Social and Political Thinker*, Jerusalem Spinoza Institute, Jerusalem. 1 June 2007.

2. Benedict Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, (ed.) Fokke Ackerman (Paris, 1999), pp. 56–57; and *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Martin D. Yaffe (Newburyport, MA, 2004), p. 42.

3. J. Geller, "Spinoza's Election of the Jews," p. 40.

4. It is important to note though that most of Mendelssohn's debt to Spinoza is not officially credited. Julius Guttman, Alexander Altmann, and Shlomo Pines note the uncredited parallels. See: Julius Guttman, "Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* and Spinoza's *Theological Political Treatise*," in *Studies in Jewish Thought: An Anthology of German Jewish Scholarship*, (ed.) Alfred Jospe (Detroit, 1981), pp. 361–386; Alexander Altmann, "Moses Mendelssohn on Leibniz and Spinoza," in *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, (ed.) Alexander Altmann (Ithaca, 1969), pp. 246–279; and Shlomo Pines, "Moses Mendelssohn in Relation to Maimonides and Spinoza: Two Notes," *Tarbitz*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (1982), pp. 150–152. Our specific example is discussed by Pines on p. 152.

5. Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem: A Study in Jewish Nationalism*, trans. Meyer Waxman (New York, 1918), letter 4, p. 64. See also: W. Z. Harvey, "Spinoza's Counterfactual Zionism," pp. 4–6. For a more extensive description of how the image of Spinoza was received and used by Zionist thinkers, see: Jacob Adler, "The Zionists and Spinoza," *Israel Studies Forum,* Vol. 24, No. 1 (2009), pp. 25–38.

6. Moses Mendelssohn, Letter to Anonymous, January 26, 1770 in *Selections from His Writings*, (ed.) Eva Jospe (New York, 1975), pp. 83–84 and analyzed in S. Pines, "Moses Mendelssohn in Relation to Maimonides and Spinoza," pp. 151–152.

7. M. Mendelssohn, ibid., p. 84. This is reminiscent of Kant's famous definition of enlightenment:

> Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of reason, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude*! 'Have courage to use your own understanding!'—that is the motto of enlightenment.

Though Kant's essay was published 14 years later in 1784. See: Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" trans. H. B. Nisbet in *Kant's Political Writings*, (ed.) Hans Reiss (Cambridge, 1970), p. 54.

8. Unlike many themes in Spinoza such as God and nature, the mind–body problem and freedom, among others, courage is not one highly discussed, with the two exceptions of Paul Tillich and Emil Fackenheim. See Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, 1952), pp. 18–23; and Emil Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (New York, 1982), pp. 54–58. Cf. Harry Austyn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of*

Spinoza: Unfolding the Latent Processes of His Reasoning, Vol. 2 (New York, 1934), p. 257.

9. H. Wolfson, *Philosophy of Spinoza*, Vol. 1, pp. 17–19. Wolfson is famous for his description of Spinoza as the "last of the medievals" and "first of the moderns." See: Joshua Parens, *Maimonides and Spinoza: Their Conflicting Views of Human Nature* (Chicago, 2012), pp. 4–5.

10. Aryeh Motzkin, "A Note on Natural Right, Nature and Reason in Spinoza," in *Philosophy and the Jewish Tradition: Lectures and Essays by Aryeh Leo Motzkin*, (ed.) Yehuda Halper (Leiden, 2011), pp. 105–109.

11. Warren Zev Harvey shows the similarities here between Spinoza and Maimonides in *Guide of the Perplexed* III 51 and *Mishneh Torah,* Book of Knowledge, Laws of Repentance, Chapter X. See: Warren Zev Harvey, "A Portrait of Spinoza as a Maimonidean," *Journal of the History of Philosophy,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (1981), p. 167 and "'*Ishq*, *Hesheq*, and *Amor Dei Intellectualis*" (unpublished).

12. See: Shlomo Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," in Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, (trans.) Shlomo Pines (Chicago, 1963), p. xcviii; W. Z. Harvey, "A Portrait of Spinoza," pp. 164–166; and Carlos Fraenkel, "Maimonides' God and Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*," *Journal of History of Philosophy,* Vol. 44, No. 2 (2006), pp. 169–215. Shlomo Pines and Warren Zev Harvey have argued that Maimonides' God comes "perilously close to Spinoza's attribute of thought (or to his 'intellect of God')." Harvey argues that Spinoza took Maimonides' argument about God in I 68 regarding God and the intellect to "its logical conclusions": if God cognizes everything in the universe, then if God cognizes extended space, He must be extended to all space. The one difficulty that both Pines and Harvey acknowledge is that Maimonides, unlike Spinoza, also presents a model of God as transcendent through the negative attributes.

13. Andrew Youpa, "Spinozistic Self-Preservation," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (2003), pp. 477–490.

14. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, trans. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, 1994), p. 8 (2.2).

15. By rejecting the ability to completely master the passions Spinoza is critiquing one of the basic tenets of Stoicism. See Matthew J. Kisner, "Spinoza's Virtuous Passions," *Review of Metaphysics,* Vol. 41, No. 4 (2008), pp. 759–783.

16. Steven Smith, *Spinoza's Book of Life: Freedom and Redemption in the Ethics* (New Havens, 2003), pp. 102–03.

17. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross (London, 1925), pp. 48–54 (3.6-3.9: 1115a-1117b) and Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 30 (6.17) and 59 (11.9). Hobbes describes courage as "hope of averting hurt through resistance," while fear "disposeth a man to anticipate or to seek aid by society, for there is no other way by which a man can secure his life and liberty."

18. Aristotle, *Ethics*, p. 48 (3.6: 1115a). Aristotle refers to objects of fear that it is beautiful for a courageous person to fear.

19. Spinoza appears indebted to Machiavelli for the goal of overcoming fortune or luck. Machiavelli's most famous description of this is in the 25th chapter of the *Prince* where he describes fortune as a Lady that "it is necessary, if one want to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down" (Machiavelli, *Prince*, p. 101). There are also many references to overcoming fortune in the *TPT*. See for example P1.1, 2.9.28, 3.3.7, 3.4.3, 3.4.5, 3.5.1, 4.4.45, etc. See the reference to "fortune (*fortuna*)" in the index of terms for a complete listing.

20. At 3p51 he defines bravery or boldness as he who "despises an evil that I usually fear" and at 3def40 as "the desire by which someone is led to do something which involves a danger which equals are afraid to undergo." For Hobbes similar lowering of physical courage or reduction of all courage to that physical impulse, see T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 30 (6.17), quoted at footnote 18.

21. W. Z. Harvey, "A Portrait of Spinoza," p. 168.

22. One must note that the *Ethics* is not completely empty of biblical references. The few sparse references are: Glory (5p36n) and Adam and Eve (4p68n), the Patriarchs (4p68n), Ecclesiastes (4p17n), and the Spirit of Christ (4p68n). Nonetheless, these do not seem to be the main intention of the *Ethics*, at least on the surface. There have been several attempts to present the *Ethics* as an important work in Jewish thought. See: Lenn Goodman, "What does Spinoza's *Ethics* contribute to Jewish Philosophy?" in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy*, (eds.) Heidi M. Ravven and Lenn E. Goodman (Albany, 2002), pp. 17–89, Warren Zev Harvey, "Maimonides and Spinoza on the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Binah,* Vol. 2 (1989), pp. 131–146, Harvey, "The Biblical Term 'Glory' in Spinoza's *Ethics*," *Iyyun,* Vol. 48 (1999), pp. 447–449 [Hebrew], Steven B. Smith, *Spinoza's Book of Life*, p. xv ("To understand the *Ethics* as Spinoza understood it is to regard it first and foremost as a reply to the author of Genesis"). The importance of the Adam narrative and Ecclesiastes references in the *Ethics* will be discussed below in reference to larger discussions in the *TPT*.

23. My thanks to Martin D. Yaffe for pointing this out to me and admitting that his translation of *animositas* there as "animation" should have been "courage" or "spiritedness." See also George M. Gross, "Reading the Bible with Spinoza," *Jewish Political Studies Review,* Vol. 7 (1995), pp. 22–28.

24. Spinoza argues there that "the Hebrews are accustomed to grant all things human attributes... and perhaps for this or another reason all names of things are divided into masculines and feminines." See: W. Z. Harvey, "Spinoza's Metaphysical Hebraism," in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy*, (eds.) Heidi M. Ravven and Lenn E. Goodman (Albany, 2002), pp. 107 and 109; and Ze'ev Levy, "The Problem of Normativity in Spinoza's *Hebrew Grammar*," in *Baruch or Benedict: On Some Jewish Aspects of Spinoza's Philosophy* (New York, 1989), pp. 164 and 172–73.

25. The *Ethics* definition may have been formulated much later than the writing of some of the *TTP* chapters. Though it would be a very large coincidence that all these terms used here would be crucial terms in the *Ethics*.

26. Whether the quotes he provides to back these up in the *TPT* are appropriate will be analyzed below. The sources of these quotes in the *Ethics*: "courage" and "strength" see 3p59; "virtue" see 4p20; "capability" see 2p14, 2p39n; "tenet/opinion/thought" see 3pref, 4pref, 5pref; "will" and "appetite" 3p9n; "passions" see 3p1n; "decree" see 3p2n; "impulse" see 4p37n1; "mind" see book 2.

27. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 262 (34.3); Paul D. Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity: Reassessing the Bible in Leviathan* (London, 1996), pp. 191–92.

28. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 30 (6.17) and 59 (11.9).

29. Ibid., pp. 322–323 (40.10). Ronald Beiner, "Machiavelli, Hobbes and Rousseau on Civil Religion," *Review of Politics,* Vol. 55, No. 4 (1993), p. 625.

30. William Sacksteder, "How Much Hobbes Might Spinoza Have Read?" *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 11 (1980), pp. 25–40.

31. Rabbi David Altschul in writing his biblical commentary in the late 1600s around the same time as the writing of the *Theological-Political Treatise* has a similar reading of this account. See Rabbi David Altschul, *Metsudat David* (Berlin, 1770), Ezekiel 2:2 on "*ruah*" and "*ka'asher.*" For a similar reading by Moshe Greenberg see *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York, 1986), p. 62.

32. Cf. David Altschul who argues that he was weak in strength from not eating (*mehuleshet hareavon*) and it was an exaggeration to describe the spirit as departing and returning. The 1985 JPS translation concurs with Altschul.

33. W. Z. Harvey, "A Portrait of Spinoza," p. 170; ibid., "Knowledge of Good and Evil," p. 131; ibid., "Biblical Term 'Glory'," p. 449; and Michah Gottlieb, "Spinoza's Method(s) of Biblical Interpretation Reconsidered," *Jewish Studies Quarterly,* Vol. 14, No. 3 (2007), pp. 286–318.

34. G. Gross, "Reading the Bible with Spinoza," p. 22.

35. Plato, *Laches*, trans. M. T. Tatham (London, 1938); Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 48–54 (3.6-3.9: 1115a-1117b); and Muhammad Shahjahan, "The Concept of Courage in the Philosophy of Al-Farabi," *The Islamic Quarterly,* Vol. 29, No. 4 (1985), pp. 234–239.

36. Shlomo Pines, "Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and the Jewish Philosophical Tradition," in *Jewish Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, (eds.) Isadore Twersky and Bernard Septimus (Cambridge, MA, 1987), p. 510.

37. Ibid., "Ibn Khaldun and Maimonides: A Comparison between Two Texts" *Studia Islamica,* Vol. 32 (1970), p. 170. Maimonides appears to elaborate and develop much farther this idea proposed by Abraham Ibn Ezra on Exodus 3:17.

38. Spinoza also seems to indicate that this was not successful since after they made the contract they began to abound in leisure in the desert (*TPT* 17.12.43).

39. Martin D. Yaffe, "'The Histories and Successes of the Hebrews': The Demise of the Biblical Polity in Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*," *Jewish Political Studies Review,* Vol. 7, No. 1–2 (1995), p. 59.

40. *TPT* 3.5.1: "the Hebrew nation was chosen by God in preference to the others . . . by reason of their society and fortune by which they acquired an imperium and kept that same one for so many years."

41. Perhaps this is the reason why "divinity" and "courage" are discussed together in the same chapter in the *Guide*. For a larger analysis of this see the discussion on moral courage in Maimonides above.

42. Aviezer Ravitzky, *Religion and State in Jewish Philosophy: Models of Unity, Division, Collision and Subordination* (Jerusalem, 2002), pp. 25–27. For a discussion of the biblical model of balance of power see: Daniel J. Elazar and Stuart A. Cohen, *The Jewish Polity: Jewish Political Organizations from Biblical Times to the Present* (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 71–91.

43. Warren Zev Harvey, "Spinoza Against the Prophets on Criticizing the Government," *Kivunim,* Vol. 12 (1981), pp. 83–90 [Hebrew]; M. Yaffe, "The Histories and Successes of the Hebrews," p. 66.

44. W. Z. Harvey, "Spinoza Against the Prophets," p. 68.

45. This is reflected in other sections of the *TPT*, such as 11.1.6 where Samuel is listed as ruling instead of Saul and in his critical reading at 9.1.33 where he argues that Saul ruled more years, but they were truncated from the biblical text.

46. Chaim Wirszbuski, "Spinoza's Debt to Tacitus," *Scripta Hierosolymitana,* Vol. 2 (1955), p. 176. For an analysis of the role of Tacitus more generally in the seventeenth century see: Arnaldo Momigliano, "Tacitus and the Tacitist Tradition," in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkley, 1990), p. 123, 130.

47. Samuel Safrai, *The Jewish People in the First Century* (1974–76), p. 1157: "What to him was dangerous . . . was the spread of Judaism which threatened the entire structure of Roman society. In Tacitus' view this was more of a threat to Roman society than the Jewish rebellions in the period from Nero to Trajan." Cf. Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1846), p. 440, who blames Christianity for the fall of the Roman Empire.

48. Tacitus, *Histories* (London, 1996), p. 195 (5.5), and *Annals* (London, 1896), p. (15.44).

49. Spinoza's adoption and creative use of Tacitus seems to be something he learned from the manner in which Machiavelli refers to Tacitus in *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago, 1998), pp. III 19-23. Like Spinoza, Hobbes also is wary of the subjective and private nature of the prophets' critique of the king, suggesting instead that only the sovereign should be able to interpret prophecy. See: T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 247–248 (32.7) and Paul D. Cooke, *Hobbes and Christianity*: *Reassessing the Bible in Leviathan* (London, 1996), p. 136.

50. The two exceptions to this use of steadfastness of spirit are the first and second chapter of the *TPT* (1.21.2 and 2.8.13) where Spinoza attributes steadfastness of spirit as a component of the external piety of the prophets, who are ignorant of theoretical knowledge. These two usages are not consistent with the *Ethics* and all later uses in the *TPT*.

51. The logic of his argument at *Ethics* 5p36n that a steadfast love toward God is equivalent to an acquiescence of the spirit which is also equivalent to the "Glory of God" in the Bible. Hence, the "Glory of God" is equivalent to steadfastness of spirit. At *TPT* 4.4.11, Spinoza also connects love of God to steadfastness of spirit.

52. W. Z. Harvey, "Biblical Term 'Glory'," pp. 447–449.

53. Shlomo Pines, "On Spinoza's Conception of Human Freedom and of Good and Evil," *Spinoza – His Thought and Work* [Third Jerusalem Philosophical Encounter, 1977], (ed.) Nathan Rotenstreich (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 149 and W. Z. Harvey, "Knowledge of Good and Evil," pp. 167–170.

54. W. Z. Harvey, "Knowledge of Good and Evil," p. 134.

55. Maimonides does not systematically discuss the Bible, but scatters his ideas throughout his works, a key form of esotericism (see *Guide* Introduction, p. 15). For Ezekiel see *Guide* III 1–7; Jeremiah see *Guide* II 37–38, III 54; Song of Songs see Laws of Repentance Chapter 10 and *Guide* III 51; Ecclesiastes see *Guide* II 29; Job see *Guide* III 22–23.

56. Edwin Curley is the only thinker I have found who has drawn a connection between Job and Solomon as biblical characters worthy of intellectual courage in Spinoza's thought, though he does not refer to it as intellectual courage or point out that "steadfastness of spirit" is used with only three characters in the *TPT*. That is my innovation. See Edwin M. Curley, "Maimonides, Spinoza and the Book of Job," in *Jewish Themes in Spinoza's Philosophy*, (eds.) Heidi M. Ravven and Lenn E. Goodman (Albany, 2002), pp. 174–175.

57. This would perhaps be a reason why Spinoza cites Maimonides *Guide of the Perplexed* regarding the Book of Job and not with reference to any other book of the Bible. However, in doing so, Spinoza seems to be recognizing the tenability of Maimonides' application of the five models of providence to Job, which recognition runs against the general tenor of his attitude to Maimonides as biblical interpreter.

58. Robert Eisen, *The Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (New York, 2004), p. 57: "Job learns that one can guard oneself from suffering; however, that protection is not physical, only psychological. This psychological immunity from suffering is achieved when Job perfects his intellect, contemplates God, and detaches himself from the material concerns of the world so that he is entirely caught up with the pleasure of focusing all his thoughts on the Deity."

59. This verse may be part of a polemic regarding life after death. Menasseh ben Israel, one of Spinoza's interlocutors, wanted to defend resurrection of the body after death and its reuniting with the soul and did so using Job 7:9 as proof (E. M. Curley, "Maimonides, Spinoza and the Book of Job," p. 167) in his *De La Resureccion de la Muertos*. Spinoza's use of Job 33:4 to prove the immortality of the mind (not the body) may be his rebuttal to Menasseh. See: Steven Nadler, *Spinoza's Heresy* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 175–176.

60. In idealizing King Solomon, Spinoza rejects the reading of his teacher Machiavelli in *Discourses on Livy* where Solomon did not rule

through wisdom, but through fortune and succeeded in creating a peaceful kingdom merely because his father David was "virtuous" (in the Machiavellian sense) and used his own arms to build a strong kingdom. See Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, pp. 52–53 (I 19) and for a discussion of Machiavelli's reading of the Bible see: Christopher Lynch, "Machiavelli on Reading the Bible Judiciously," *Hebraic Political Studies,* Vol. 1, No. 2 (2006), pp. 165, 181.

61. Michael V. Fox, "What the Book of Proverbs is About," in *Congress Volume: Paris, 1992*, (ed.) John Audrey Emerton (New York, 1995), p. 165. Fox there compares Proverbs to Plato's *Protagoras* where Socrates famously argues that all virtue is knowledge.

62. Michael V. Fox, *The JPS Bible Commentary: Ecclesiastes* (Philadelphia, 2004), pp. xi–xiii.

63. Martin D. Yaffe, "Interpretive Essay," in *Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. Martin D. Yaffe. (Newburyport, 2004), p. 309.

64. For a good discussion comparing the different philosophic readings of the Song of Songs, see Shalom Rosenberg, "Philosophical Hermeneutics on the Song of Songs, Introductory Remarks," *Tarbiz,* Vol. 59 (1990), pp. 133–141 [Hebrew] and Yossi Marciano, *Medieval Jewish Philosophic Commentaries on the Song of Songs*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem PhD thesis (Jerusalem, 2005). Another reason that Zev Harvey pointed out is that "Spinoza did not like poetry and despised erotic literature, and certainly had no patience for erotic poetry!"

65. Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 172–73.

66. While for Spinoza this is a biblical contradiction, the Bible itself does not seem to think the pursuit of wisdom is infallible. In fact, its view is to the contrary in that it sees the combination of wisdom and power in one man as highly dangerous without the limitations of the Law, and it looks at the corruption of Solomon as a particular proof of this. See: Kim Ian Parker, "Solomon as Philosopher King? The Nexus of Law and Wisdom in 1 Kings 1-11," in *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader*, (ed.) J. Cheryl Exum (England, 1997), pp. 234 and 240.

67. M. D. Yaffe, "Interpretive Essay," pp. 309–310.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., p. 298.

70. Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 408–09.

71. Ibid., "Spinoza, King Solomon and Frederik Van Leehof's Spinozistic Republicanism," *Studia Spinozana,* Vol. 11 (1995), p. 305.

72. Robert Mirashi, "Spinoza and Christian Thought: A Challenge," in *Speculum Spinozanum 1677-1977*, (ed.) Siegfried Hessing (London, 1977), pp. 415–416: "For unlike Christ, who represents only the universal Jew endowed with moral virtue and charity in Spinoza's eyes, Solomon is regarded by our Dutch philosopher as the most enlightened Jew of the Old Testament, i.e. a true sage and a man of understanding. That is to say that

Spinoza's doctrine of salvation, i.e. Spinoza's *doctrine of blessedness through knowledge*, precisely springs and *wells from Solomon*.''

73. Israel, ''Spinoza, King Solomon and Frederik,'' pp. 303 and 309. Especially is this evident in the works of Frederik Van Leehof who wrote a few works about Solomon ''discreetly engaged in propagating veiled Spinozism.''