

Ze'ev Levy

Baruch or Benedict

**On Some Jewish Aspects
of Spinoza's Philosophy**



PETER LANG

New York • Bern • Frankfurt am Main • Paris

Table of Contents

Introduction Benedictus or maledictus - blessed or accursed?	1
Notes to the Introduction	7
Chapter 1 The Impact of Jewish influences	
1. <i>Philosophia perennis</i>	9
2. Spinoza and the spirit of Judaism	10
3. Modern inquiries into Jewish influences on Spinoza's philosophy	11
4. Spinoza's relation to philosophers before him	12
5. The difference between the <i>Ethics</i> and the <i>TPT</i>	14
6. The <i>TPT</i> as a literary background to the <i>Ethics</i>	16
7. Spinoza and his Jewish predecessors	19
8. Monism as against Dualism	20
9. Jehuda Abrabanel and Spinoza	22
10. The influence of Joseph Delmedigo	25
11. Hasdai Crescas' influence on Spinoza	26
12. Kabbalah and Mysticism	27

13. On the inevitable gulf between Spinoza's philosophy and prior Jewish Thought.....	31
14. On the crucial philosophical grounds for the rupture between Spinoza and Judaism.....	34
Notes to Chapter 1	36

Chapter 2 Esoterics and Hermeneutics - Spinoza Versus Maimonides

1. Spinoza as against Maimonides.....	41
2. Interpretation as a component of the relationship between philosophy and theology	44
3. Spinoza's own exegetical method	47
4. Spinoza versus Maimonides on the concept of creation ...	49
5. Meanings versus truths	53
6. Textual context and textual content.....	56
7. Bible criticism versus philosophy	58
8. Esotericism and heterodoxy; hermeneutics and dualism ...	60
Notes to Chapter 2.....	64

Chapter 3 Spinoza's Concepts of Judaism and the Jewish People

1. Spinoza's Break with the Jewish Community	67
2. Spinoza on the status of the Jewish people in the diaspora.....	69

3. On the status of the Jewish People in antiquity and some modern implications from it	76
4. Some of Spinoza's political inferences.....	81
5. Spinoza's concept of Judaism and its influence on philosophers after him	85
6. Conclusion: The relationship between the <i>Theologico-Political Treatise</i> and the <i>Ethics</i>	88
Notes to Chapter 3	93

Chapter 4 On Spinoza's Concept of Substance and on Ultimate Reality

1. The concepts of Substance and Ultimate Reality.....	97
2. Pantheism and Atheism	98
3. On the Jewish Background of Spinoza's concept of God .	99
4. On the logical and metaphysical foundations of the concept of substance	105
5. On the modes and the attributes	108
6. Necessity and Contingency	113
7. Substance and Ultimate Reality	114
8. Conclusion	118
Notes to Chapter 4	121

Chapter 5 On the Relationship between Religion and State

1. Hobbes, Spinoza, Mendelssohn.....	125
2. Freedom of Thought and Freedom of Expression	128
3. Mosaic Law according to Spinoza and Mendelssohn.....	131
4. The controversy on the "Pious of the Nations"	135
5. Spinoza and Mendelssohn on the essence of Judaism.....	137
6. Two bewildering contradictions and four embarrassing questions	140
7. Spinoza's threefold division: metaphysics, religion, Mosaic law	142
8. Consistency or inconsistency in regard to Mosaic Law...	145
9. A concluding comparison	149
Notes to Chapter 5	151

Chapter 6 The Problem of Normativity in Spinoza's 'Hebrew Grammar'

1. Spinoza's motives for his grammatical inquiries	155
2. On linguistic and grammatical normativity	160
3. Determinism, deduction, induction	164
4. On irregular forms.....	166
5. Letters and vowels.....	170
6. Substantive and Substance; masculine and feminine	172
7. Hebrew language versus Sacred tongue.....	174

8. Words, signs, meanings.....	177
9. The relation between form and meaning.....	182
10. Spinoza's " <i>Compendium</i> ", grammatical research in his time and contemporary linguistics	184
Notes to Chapter 6.....	188
 Chapter 7 Epilogue: Spinoza's Reception in Modern Jewish Thought	
Epilogue	195
Notes to Chapter 7	202
 Acknowledgments	
Index of Subjects and Terms.....	207
Index of Names.....	219