

**A CRITIQUE OF SPINOZA'S CONCEPT OF FREEWILL AND  
DETERMINISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

*The freedom of the will seems to hold no significance in an absolute and inevitable chain of causation in Spinoza's ethical system. Furthermore, Spinoza's philosophy adheres to the most detailed terms for cause, reason, and nature: causation is the same as reasoning, reason is the same as cause, and cause is the same as basic causality. Can man then exercise his free will to choose a course of conduct without interference or one that is not compelled upon him? The purpose of this work is to provide light on Baruch Spinoza's conception of free will, often known as freedom of the will, and determinism. Exposition is the method employed in this work, and as it is being exposed, Spinoza's ideas on free will and determinism are made clear. Spinoza demonstrates that the activity of our minds is identical to the activity of our bodies by arguing against the idea of free choice and in favor of determinism, based on the findings. In accordance Spinoza, the oneness of nature and God is the only thing that exists, is not caused, and is the essential, effective cause of everything else. This study aims to make his thoughts more relevant by reintroducing this concept into society since modern man often seems to distance himself from himself and refuses to take responsibility for his deeds, which inevitably raises the question of responsibility.*

**Keywords:** Baruch Spinoza, Freewill, Determinism Nature, Man

**Introduction**

It is essential to understand that philosophy has examined the central query of what influences or that which impacts the activity of man in its ultimate search for truth. Is he acting on his own free will or under duress? And what standard can be used to determine if this activity is right or wrong? Since antiquity, the issue of whether or not human actions are free has drawn the attention of numerous philosophers and given rise to several schools of thought that are either in favor of or against it. Free will and determinism are age-old problems that have existed for as long as humanity itself; even before Baruch Spinoza, these two interconnected problems were discussed and contested in many philosophical eras. It is undeniable that philosophy's objective nowadays is not

to explain the world as it is, but rather to influence society and offer answers to some unresolved issues. Spinoza joined the discussion of these topics to offer his perspective on the recurrent wave of these troubling issues that had preoccupied philosophers before him. The issue of free will and determinism was never given prominence of place among the various topics of discussion in the ancient Greek era, as was previously stated.

Since it was thought that fate determines human behavior, this resulted. After being influenced by René Descartes' writings, Spinoza, a young adult who started his philosophical journey as an independent thinker, focused on the idea of free will, which he believes to be merely an illusion because man is a modified version of an outside force that governs his acts and actions. Free will and determinism are topics that are more ontological than merely ethical. In actuality, there is just one thing, which can be referred to as either God or nature, according to him. In cognition and extension, "Deus ex Natura" manifests itself.

Therefore, everything else is only a manifestation or alteration of the material. Spinoza affirms the determinism of man and everything in nature while simultaneously dismissing free will as an illusion. Therefore, this essay will attempt to construct an expository assessment of Spinoza's perspective and notion of free will and determinism, bringing it to term as one of the contemporary issues that shrewd man to a pulse, as whether he is really seen as one whose actions, decisions, and executions of such are already determined, therefore not to be.

This essay's main goal is to provide a philosophical exposition of Spinoza's ideas of free will and determinism, which will deepen the self-evidence of man's purpose in relation to ultimate reality, either as a free agent capable of making decisions without interference or as someone whose decisions and actions are already predetermined.

### **Spinoza's Notion on Human Freewill**

After establishing the nature of good and evil, truth and untruth, as well as where the wellbeing of a perfect man resides or consists, Spinoza realizes it is important to consider whether we achieve this wellbeing voluntarily or as a result of necessity. In order to do this, Spinoza felt that it was imperative to find out what the will is, as defined by those who believe in free will, and whether it can be distinct from desire. According to Spinoza, desire is the inclination the

soul has towards something it chooses to be good; as a result, before our desires tend toward something external, we have already internally decided that it is good. This affirmation, or more generally, the ability to refuse, is referred to as the will.

For Spinoza, the question of whether our affirmations are made voluntarily or necessarily—that is, whether we can make any affirmation or denial regarding a thing without some outside force driving us to do so—turns on whether our affirmations are made voluntarily or inevitably. Spinoza went on to say that something that cannot be explained by it or whose existence is unrelated to its essence must necessarily have an external cause and that something that is to be produced by a cause must necessarily be produced by that cause. It follows that every separate act of wanting this or that, every separate act of affirming or denying this or that of a thing, must also necessarily have an external cause.

Spinoza recognizes that things are caused by something outside of us, and he also thinks that the definition of a cause is something that cannot be free. Spinoza may have noticed as he continued to reason that the solution may not be for those accustomed to occupying their minds with things of reason rather than specific things that actually exist in nature, leading them to view a thing of reason not as such but as a real thing. Spinoza asserts that man now possesses this volition; he creates in his soul a general mode that he refers to as will (free will), much like how he creates the idea of man from this man and that man. However, because he fails to adequately distinguish between the real and the thing of reason, he eventually comes to believe that the things of reason are things that actually exist in nature. He considers that he is the root of several problems as a result. Thus, according to Spinoza, the will is merely a mode of thought, a product of reason, and not an actual object; as a result, it is incapable of causing anything because nothing arises from nothing. The will solely exists in the mind and is not a product of nature (Spinoza, 2001:125).

Spinoza assessed the idea that knowledge is essentially passive; it is consciousness of the essence and existence of things in the soul, such that it is never we who affirm or deny something about a thing, but rather the object itself that affirms or rejects something about itself in us. Some people won't confess this, perhaps out of respect for Spinoza, as it seems to them that they are perfectly capable of denying anything different from what they know about the

object. However, this is only because they are unaware of how the soul perceives the object, independently of or without the words used to represent it.

Spinoza thought that since God is the immanent and only cause of everything, and man is but a finite part of nature, he lacks free will and must act in accordance with nature's requirements. Nature, after all, displays a definite, unchanging order that cannot be disregarded. Man cannot defy nature's scheme of life, and must therefore live in accordance with it. Consequently, acknowledging the eternal laws and following their instructions constitutes man's exercise of free choice. When something exists solely as a result of its own nature and is motivated to act solely by self, which something is said to possess free will. As stated by Spinoza, the will is a faculty of affirmation or denial, not a desire. It is a faculty by which the mind affirms or denies what is true or false, not a desire by which the mind pursues or rejects something. On this, Donceel asserts: The intellect directs the will. The intellect wants truth to be what it knows being to be. It is good as such, and goodness as such is the measure by which man judges his will (Donceel, 1967:384). The purpose of the will has the same extension as that of the intellect that leads it.

We would realize that everything that happens, regardless of how happy or sad we find it to be, was absolutely predestined. Without a doubt, Okogbuo maintained that human will is free under all circumstances and that, even though we can cast doubt on some instances of freedom, we know that we cannot, in fact, cast question on all instances of free will (Okogbuo, 2007:53).

As explained by Lawhead, the implication of free will is obvious because he stated that free will, like contingency, is an illusion based on a lack of understanding of divine nature and how the entire system logically follows from nature. Humans are tricked into thinking they have free will, and the only reason for this is that they believe they are aware of and conscious of their own acts and are unaware of the factors that determine those behaviors (Lawhead, 2002).

Consider the scenario where you have always wished you could play the violin. You have the impression that you made this choice on the spur of the moment without any planning. However, according to Spinoza, you share this misconception with the stone because you are unaware of the factors that led to the development of that desire in the first place. Spinoza argues that men are tricked into believing they have free will or are free in this context. There is no

absolute free will or free will in the mind; the mind is decided to this or that volition by a cause, which is determined by another cause, which is determined by another cause, and so on and so forth (Spinoza, 2001:40).

Furthermore, it would appear that free will is incompatible with an absolute and necessary order or with Spinoza's ethical theories, which believe that everything in nature is supremely flawless and results from an everlasting necessity. The idea of "decision" as a sufficient depiction of "free choice" is rejected by Spinoza. As a result, he was able to make a choice even though he had alternative options. This can either be a necessary indicator of how well-versed we are in science or a symptom of how ignorant we are.

Additionally, decisions made by people are neither random nor capricious; for Spinoza, this notion stems from ignorance. Therefore, "will" and "decision" is subject to necessity. Will is eternally caused and in no way can it effectively support the idea of "free choice"; it is just a required or restricted cause. God alone determines the existence and operation of the will. As a result, it vehemently rejects the idea that "free will" equates with being unpredictable or uncaused. Human conduct can neither be considered arbitrary nor accidental because causes are fixed. The range is therefore global. The idea of "free choice," whether understood in terms of will or decision, is precluded by necessity. God could not have created the world in any other way or in another order than the one he really achieved. As a result, man was unable to take any other course of action than the one he took. Because he derives his entire life from God, Spinoza believes that man is not free but rather determined.

### **Spinoza's Conception of Determinism**

Determinism is the belief that everything in the universe is subject to and acts in accordance with established natural laws. These laws inevitably determine these and are dependent upon them. Always, the preceding law determines the conclusion. Hence Spinoza, Baruch, held the opinion that God's decree and providence, derived from his eternal rule, entirely determines man's acts in the cosmos as a part of nature in all of their deeds. In his ethical writings, Spinoza held the view that all things must spring from God's divine nature and that this leads to an infinite number of things that must necessarily exist in an infinite number of ways.

As a result, man lacks willpower and is instead forced to accept decisions over which he has little to no control. However, Spinoza did not take into account the views of his forebears or later contemporaries. Instead, he placed man in the perspective of God's nature. According to Spinoza's perspective, man is a finite being created in the domain of the "natura naturata," a portion of nature or of God. The active source of all comes from God, who is eternal, and his boundless essentialities.

This is the case since he unavoidably possesses an understanding of both his and everything else's essences. Then, God behaves in accordance with the inherent law of his nature. In his book on ethics, Baruch Spinoza argues that all things follow logically from God's divine nature, and that there are an infinite number of things that can be done in an infinite number of ways. Thus, he cannot be forced to behave by anything other than himself. Therefore, God has countless ways to accomplish his tasks. As a result, we claim that everything has necessarily developed according to the same requirement.

It can be stated in the same manner that a triangle's three angles are equal to two right angles, which is how triangles have always been. In other words, create two right angles from the triangle's basic shape. The divine nature also has an endless number of repercussions that flow from it. As the angles of a triangle are the same thing as a triangle's essence, so are things in the world in connection to God. This is so because every particular item is only a different way that God's characteristics are expressed, or a different way that God's attributes are modified. According to Spinoza, nothing that occurs in nature can be traced to any of nature's vices (Spinoza, 2001:110).

Everywhere, nature is constant and the same. Therefore, there are limitless traits and infinite methods in divine nature. These all manifest as a result of whatever God is like. Without him, absolutely nothing can be done or even thought about. Everything complies with God's laws alone. Man is a part of nature and all that he possesses. Every mode that exists inescapably and inexorably must originate from either the absolute nature of God or from some characteristic that has been altered by an alteration that existing inevitably. It follows that nature must necessarily govern man. By doing this, man acts in accordance with God's nature, which is devoid of free will and choice.

Contrary to common opinion, Spinoza rejects the idea of determinism. He thinks that while his predecessors have produced many wonderful works to guide man's existence, none of them have established the nature and power of consequences or what the mind is capable of. He disagreed with several philosophers, including Descartes, who supported or endorsed the idea that the mind may affect how the body behaves physically. Spinoza argued against this idea. Since if the mind has authority over the body, man has reasoned that he is because of the very fact that he thinks, clearly and unmistakably demonstrating that he is. He is aware that his entire nature or essence is thought.

As a result, even if the body were to stop existing, the mind, which he is and thinks, would still exist. As a result, the mind has control over the body since it decides to move the body in a certain way. Spinoza contends that everything is a part of nature and must follow the laws of nature or God in opposition to this. Consequently, we only act in accordance with God's will. The mind is therefore unavoidably determined. Additionally, as God's acts are governed by the laws of his own nature, he is not acting with "freedom of the will" because even God cannot change His own nature because it is what it is and must be.

Consequently, God is internally determined but free from eternal compulsion. This lawhead declares that only in the way and the sequence in which they have been generated could things have been created by God. The possibility that the world may have been different would imply that God's nature could have been different than it is which would be ridiculous given that Spinoza has already demonstrated that everything necessarily follows from God's given nature. Spinoza contends that there is no contingency in nature because of this (lawhead, 2002:249).

People's perceptions of Spinoza and his theories of free will and determinism serve as an essential guide for understanding the human person in terms of being either determined by nature or endowed with free will. Further supporting this idea, Spinoza asserts that "the kind of detachment and apathy that could make us carefree will also hinder meaningful relations." His moral stance is suitable for isolated, celibate lens gender, but not for those who have interacted with families, friends, and other people who have social commitments (Lawhead, 2002).

If we believe that everything is predestined to be the way it is, we will be inspired to fight against injustice and actively work to improve the world (Lawhead, 2002:254). Nevertheless, it is clear that God and man are the two most important things in Spinoza's conception of free will and determinism.

### **Free Will and Moral Responsibility**

It is simple to demonstrate why man has the ability to make decisions. Every form of striving immaterial being is free, at least in the sense that it is not predetermined from without, according to Donceel's philosophical anthropology of 1967. The case for free will is simple to construct if these premises are accepted. As we have shown, man possesses an intangible form of knowledge. As a result, man must also engage in an intangible form of striving. Since immaterial striving is also free, man too possesses a form of free striving known as volition.

Man's free will, however, does not merely entail being allowed to act as he pleases. Many animals are free to do anything they choose. However, their nature and environment determine what they do; they have no control over this. Man, on the other hand, has the capacity to carry out his desires, but he is free to choose them without interference from outside forces.

Since man wills as necessary as soon as he decides, "This is good," he does not will what he wills out of necessity. Man, to put it mildly, decides that something is necessarily wonderful when it satisfies his definition of goodness. Donceel considers that the intellect directs the will on this. The intellect seeks truth as it is because it recognizes being as such. Since virtue as such is the criterion by which man measures his will, the object of the will has the same extension as the intellect that directs it (Doncel, 1967:384).

Therefore, there is not a single thing on earth over which man must make a choice. (This is excellent.) There isn't a single thing that we aren't free in relation to. In other words, we are free to will and not to will because we can also say, "This is good, but not perfectly good," since we are evaluating each good that is offered to us in comparison to the ideal good. The idea of the ideal good is supported by our intellect since it is immaterial. Thus it follows that the foundation of our free will is ultimately the immateriality of our will and intellect. As we are spirits, we are therefore free.



### **Demonstration of the Freedom of the Will**

Argument from common consent:

A vast majority of men hold the beliefs that their will is free, that we are in control of our own fate, and that we are accountable for our deeds. We all understand that everyone has the right to express their free will. The man on the street is more confident and persuaded that he is mindful of his activities and aware of them, and that his neighbor is free. Determinism is only accepted by the educated, and even among them, only in theory and not in actual life.

To support this, Okogbuo claims that everyone, including those who disagree with this viewpoint, has a strong conviction that they are in control of the majority of their activities. "I feel free," a person says. The determinist's arguments have not been able to dispel this feeling. Even when we question the distributive nature of our freedom, we are certain that we cannot question collectively (Okogbuo, 2007:53).

On the basis of this claim, Okogbuo clearly maintained that the human will is free under all circumstances and that, even though we can cast doubt on some instances of freedom, we know that we cannot, in reality, do so for all of them. We also cite Spinoza as evidence for this when we asserted in his Ethics that "a free man thinks of nothing less than death" (Okogbuo, 2001). It simply means that there are a few vestiges of the idea of free choice even in his determinism.

### **Moral Responsibility Argument**

Another benefit of free will is this. As to this reasoning, people's freedom as agents is the only way to make sense of moral responsibility and sensations like regret, remorse, reward, and punishment. Aquinas provided a traditional formulation of this defense. Some people have suggested that the need to make a decision is what moves a person's will. To act out of necessity and in a way that one cannot resist doing so does not seem to be commendable or blameworthy; hence this opinion is heretical since it eliminates the basis for merit and demerit in human deeds. This point of view must be seen as being unrelated to philosophy because it contradicts not only one's religion but also all of the foundational ideas of moral philosophy. (Aquinas 1994:18) There is no virtue, moral obligation, duty, or morality. Attributing blame to individuals will be useless if we are entirely determined. Reward and subsequent punishment so lose any moral relevance. We absolve people of punishment because we think they were capable of acting differently if they had wanted to. The term "free will"

or "freedom of the will" refers to the capacity to choose a different course of action.

### **The Psychological Argument**

People naturally perceive and hold that the will is free, as it would seem to be. They hold to this belief because they are conscious of the freedom of their choices, whether directly or indirectly. Donceel continues his argument by saying: They are indirectly aware of their free will due to the numerous examples of behavior that can only be explained by acknowledging the freedom of the will (Donceel, 1967:375). They are directly aware of their free will in the very act of making a free decision.

These claims led to the conclusion that we are conscious of our free will at the exact moment that we are using it. Spinoza, please respond to this question: why should we be reduced to being variations of nature? We have the impression that we can freely select any course of action since we are aware that we must consider a number of options before making a choice.

### **Effects of Determinism as the Basis of Human Behavior**

The determinists hold that cause and effect regulate every aspect of the cosmos. They include philosophers and psychologists like Sigmund Freud, Baron von Holbach, B.F. Skinner, and Baruch Spinoza. The absolute free will of man, in Holbach's view, is an illusion since he made it plain that man's actions were controlled by the law of nature, which man cannot change. Spinoza, for his part, believed that man was a component of a greater totality that he referred to as nature or God. According to him, man makes up nature's attributes and is an integral component of it. This indicates that everything is a product of nature and follows logically from either God's or nature's laws.

Thus, we only act in accordance with God's will. And this amply demonstrates that she is determined rather than free. The determinists agree that punishment and reward can have an effect on behavior and ultimately result in a change in it. Why punish or praise one of his behaviors when it was predetermined by antecedent variables to behave in a certain way is the great question. This implies that it is unfair to punish someone for misbehaving when it is clear that he would not have behaved differently. As a result, determinism either directly or indirectly rejects man's ability to think and make decisions. He is essentially on par with other lower animals as a result.

Again, owing to the determinists, everything a person does, thinks, or believes in is decided by an external force; if this is the case, then knowledge cannot exist. By what authority and by what criteria can the determinist assert validity for his conclusion if knowledge is not possible? What criteria and validity does Spinoza claim to have met in order to achieve the aforementioned "blessedness"? Aristotle also claimed that all human actions "are directed towards the attainment of certain ends; every human action is a means to an end that is good" (Richard, 2001). However, there is one goal that is pursued for its own sake and not as a means to another goal.

Since they lead to this ultimate end, which by itself does not lead to any end, all other ends are sought after. To Spinoza, this is what "blessedness" alludes to. According to Aristotle, this is a soul activity that is in line with virtue. Happiness is the aim that is pursued for its own sake, and everything a person pursues as an end or as good, he seeks it as a means to or of happiness (Omogbe, 2006:164). Omogbe adds these lines to his. As a result, we conclude that all people have the capacity for free will, which allows them to make decisions and pursue happiness. However, there is only one method to achieve all of these goals, and that is through the exercise of free will.

### **The Problem of Causality Vis-À-Vis Determinism**

When we examine the determinists' case, we can see that many of them confuse determinism with causality. They contend that since every action has a cause, it is thus not free but predetermined and that there is no such thing as an action without a cause. David Hume, Baruch von Holbach, and Benedict Baruch Spinoza were deterministic thinkers who made this argument. The claim that an action is free, as made by these determinists, implies that it has no cause and is solely the result of chance.

However, to argue that an action is free does not imply that it has no reason. Omogbe sees this cause as the scenario that prompts a person to choose what should be done or how to act in a certain situation (Omogbe, 2006). For instance, when someone decides to eat because they are hungry, the cause of the activity is hunger. However, it is a voluntary action because the person did not feel pressured or coerced to eat once they realized they were hungry. The decision to eat it or not is up to the individual.

Therefore, although having a reason (hunger) for occurring, eating is a voluntary action. Actions are the outcome of free decisions; they are not determined by their causes. The interaction of free will occurs between a cause and an action. However, libertarianism, or indeterminism, exaggerates human free will. It is the belief that human acts have no causes at all; nevertheless, the term "free action" does not imply that an action has no causes, and vice versa.

The reason for a free action is internal (motive or desire), but a coerced action has an external cause. As a result, behaviors brought on by one's desires, wishes, ideas, emotions, impulses, instincts, or other internal psychological states of the mind are considered free actions.

### **Free Will and Determination as Pragmatically Useful Concepts**

#### **The Cash Value Determinism**

Spinoza found that determinism is subjectively unsatisfactory; for him, when one acts, he or she is not in control of such because they are powerless to alter the situation or make different choices. Spinoza claims that everything is a modification of God or nature because of this. The psychological determinist holds that psychological elements, such as "needs" for Maslow or "instinct" for some people, determine how people behave. Economic determinists believe that the state of the economy dictates how individuals behave in society, and metaphysical determinists of many schools of thought believe that human behavior can be predicted when certain circumstances are taken into account.

Therefore, free will is the only option available to them. Psychology makes little sense when discussing free will since they hold the view that human behavior can be predicted in specific circumstances and assert to have a firm understanding of what makes a person tick. So, one of determinism's virtues is the ability to foresee what people will do. But we query: How effective are psychologists? When he asserted that whatever follows from any attribute of God, in so far as it is transformed by a modification that, through the same attribute, existing necessarily, must exist necessarily, Spinoza also obtained insight into determinism based on a metaphysical viewpoint.

Furthermore, he asserted that everything in God is free to act since God has endowed man with free will together with responsibility. Nothing can be or be thought of as existing without God, he added. Let's use the stoic's free will and determinism as a case study as well to further explore the implications of

accepting determinism. The world is predetermined according to the Stoics. They believe that a person's "freedom of attitude" is their only real freedom. Specifically, the capacity to accept things as they are and to exercise free choice in how one chooses to act toward them (Lawhead, 2002).

Since everything is predetermined or deterministic, the stoics held that there is no way to modify the way things turn out. According to this brief explanation of the Stoics' perspective on free will and determinism, Spinoza's ideas were somehow affected by the Stoics. A stoic is someone who feels that there is nothing that can be done to change the circumstance and that there is nothing that can be done to help themselves.

In practical terms, this will cause the person to become inactive or passive. Now that we have seen what determinism is really worth, we must consider what a world where everything is predetermined might be like. It is evident that to imagine a deterministic universe is to imagine a machine with every component linked and designed to operate in a specific manner. Is everyone and everything in the world the same if it is? Does that include man? We resolutely respond "no" to this query since even Baruch Spinoza, whose deterministic writings and philosophical reflections on human free will and the universe in which he lives, are merely expressions of his free will, is a mere human. Man is unable to become an automaton; he needs to possess reason. It is for this reason that Boethius defined a person as "persona est naturae rationalis individuae substantia" in his Christological treatise; Aquinas modified him to define man as "the most perfect of rational nature." Man may therefore make decisions because of his rationality.

### **Free will and the Ultimate End of Man**

Man has free will, hence it is sufficient to say that he has the power to choose freely between options. In other words, he has the option of acting or not. In Okogbuo's own words, he absolutely states: "Actions that are classified as human acts Acts committed with conscious awareness of their nature and purpose and with the permission of the will are referred to as human acts (actus humani), also known as personal acts. They are all deliberate activities that were chosen and carried out consciously. They are carried out under the direction of men. Every action a man takes is his responsibility (Okogbuo, 2007:126).

The fifth section of Spinoza's ethics, which is concerned with the way, the method, and the approach that lead to liberty, contains the ideas of free will, liberty, and man's ultimate goal. According to Baruch Spinoza, man has a finite amount of free will, but he can only be claimed to have free will when he is in the right relationship to God, as human free will is impossible when man is thought of as being distinct from God. Spinoza draws a conclusion to this in his essay, saying: "I have attained the highest form of knowledge when we see things as part of an external, logically connected system with God as its cause." Spinoza links this to the "intellectual love of God," which he terms the source of our salvation or blessing (Lawhead, 2002:253).

### **Limitations on Human Free Will**

The discussion of free will thus far implies that, despite our belief that we are free beings; the free will being explored is not unlimited free will. Although we are unsure, we also declare that there will be no free will because accountability, often known as free will without limitations, has nothing to do with it. Thus, contrary to the claims of many philosophers who support unbounded free will, some forms of limitation are necessary for human free will to make sense. However, unrestrained free will is not truly free. It demonstrates that man must be impacted by his own limitations while taking into account his bodily nature as well as his limitless nature. Baptista asserts that he thinks a person's capacity for free will is constrained by emotion. One cannot always accomplish all of their goals (Battista, 2019:101). We can only attempt to philosophize about Spinoza's ideas; we cannot judge him for his ideas.

We have to admit that he deserves some credit for what he said in chapter four of this limitless human free will, where he stated, "That the other action or power of a man may be so far surpassed by the force of some passion or effort that the effort may obstinately cling to him." Now that we have reached this conclusion, we can conclude that although though man is free, he is nevertheless subject to some restrictions. However, as was previously mentioned, limitations do not imply determinism. The ability to weigh two options rationally and make a decision is the foundation of man's free will.

### **Evaluation of Baruch Spinoza's Conception of Freewill and Determinism**

Given that Spinoza made an effort to provide men guidance through his works so they may avoid feeling fear, anxiety, and sorrow, we can thank him for his belief that God or nature created the universe. Because of this, he declared in his

ethics, "We do everything by the will of God alone." In addition to providing the soul with any form of relaxation, it also has this journey that teaches us how to achieve our greatest satisfaction. Count only on your understanding of God. It is so challenging to understand how everything that occurs fits within the laws of nature (Spinoza, 2001:29).

Spinoza also submitted that humans must act in a manner that is consistent with and dictated by nature if they want to be free and at peace with themselves. He didn't acknowledge the presence of human will power until after people had failed to understand that all that happens is in line with nature. Spinoza believed that since God is entirely and completely incorporated in all he has created, there is nothing outside of God. He believes that nature is a manifestation of God. God and nature are different names for the same reality.

Therefore, Spinoza is a relativist in that he held that nothing is good or bad in and of itself, but only in and of itself in relation to something else; this compatibility approach is also obvious in his hazy responses to the question of free will. Spinoza's deterministic viewpoint makes it obvious that he was a member of the Descartes and Stoic school of metaphysics.

It might be implied that Spinoza was influenced by Cartesian ideas. Individuals are not free because everything is bound by natural laws and necessity principles, and we will only achieve emotional freedom once we realize this. When we are freed from the illusion of contingency, Lawhead, quoting Spinoza, argues that we will no longer feel entirely dependent on our circumstances and will be in control of our lives. We can never have complete free will or freedom of the will because reason can only function within the constraints of our nature to provide us a limited amount of control over our lives (Lawhead, 2002:252).

The same disconnected and uncaring mindset that may make us carefree will hinder meaningful interpersonal interactions. Do we struggle for justice and actively try to make the world better if we think that everything is predestined to be the way it is? However, Spinoza did not address the problems with determinism or free will. We think that man's inability to resolve the problem looks to be a result of his attitude toward inclusive reality. Since, everything that happens in nature is predetermined, and then man is virtually unable to alter it. He restricted everything to the round and sterile world of nature or God.

Additionally, he derived fairly coherent conclusions from plausible axioms and assertions using intellectually sound reasoning, but without any existential significance or pragmatic support. He should not have started with the idea of God since one cannot know God or the truth by conceptualizing ideas; one must first comprehend the subject before affirming the existence of God. As a result, Spinoza frequently emphasized the superiority of essence over existence. This is not feasible, though, because being is the act of essence. If God is in complete control of every decision a man makes, then God and man are simply on equal footing.

Despite the fact that we all acknowledge that man has power, God is fundamentally different since he is an eternal entity who is perfect and unchanging. But 'being' neither remains constant nor has no bounds. Infinite entities cannot be either of their formal or material components since they cannot share his existence. "No," since the existence of infinite beings is an ongoing existence, as opposed to the existence of finite beings, which is a separate potency embedded into their nature.

If we focus on this, we can conclude that Spinoza's notion of free will, freedom of the will, and determinism may not be practically applicable. This is because we cannot regard ourselves as being determined by the forces of nature. Thanks to the power that God gave him, man has transcended nature and is no longer bound by the laws of what is beneath him. If natural forces are determined by nature or other outside factors, man cannot tame or control them.

The fact that a person with free will responsibly participates even in the world's planned occurrences makes it impossible to completely dismiss Spinoza's beliefs, though. It is clear that Spinoza's theory offers guidance on how we ought to behave in situations when we have some degree of power or control but do not naturally react in the way we would like. It's also fascinating to read that Baruch Spinoza considers that by adopting this viewpoint, there won't be any free will because everyone will be able to "freely do whatever things are best." Despite the fact that this makes some sense, it is difficult to describe how a concept of free will works.

### **Conclusion**

There are many arguments in favor of determinism; however it seems that there is just a theoretical determinism, not a real-world one. These are due to the fact



individuals who accept determinism themselves either explicitly or indirectly do so. When disrespectful children and offenders are punished and good deed performers are praised, this is demonstrated. Thus, it illustrates that man is responsible for each action he chooses to take and complete. It is evident that man is still free, responsible for his actions, and in charge of his course of action despite all the forces he encounters in life. Therefore, after thoroughly and thoughtfully examining Spinoza's perspectives on human free will and determinism, as well as their advantages and disadvantages, we assert with Thomas Aquinas that "man is a being embedded with freewill though limited." As a result, since man is a finite and limited being, he can only exercise a certain amount of free will. This is for the reason Aristotle thought that virtues occupy a space in the middle.

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