**Baruch de Espinoza or Spinoza**

Put your answers neatly in your journal – answer clearly with detail and explanation. This will count as a quiz grade when I collect your journals this week. Exam and Journals due Friday. If you finish the task - write a journal entry on Locke or Spinoza. Please work individually and no cell phones are required.

1. Provide at least 7 pieces of background information on Spinoza. Where is he from? Family? Job? Years? Religion? 2-3 major ideas. What makes him unique compared to past philosopher’s we’ve studied?

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2. How does Spinoza feel about nature and God?

3. Do you live your life according to Spinoza’s three “rules of conduct”?

4. Do you agree with Spinoza’s breakdown of “knowledge”?

5. How does Spinoza define “substance”?

6. What do think of Spinoza’s thinking with regards to God looking like a human?

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7. Explain how Spinoza feels about if the mind and the body are separate as Descartes stated.

8. How does Spinoza argue that free will does not exist? Do you agree?

9. Which of the three systems of ethics do you think explains 21st Century America the best? Explain your choice. Why were the other choices wrong?

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Happiness is the goal of conduct – happiness is the presence of pleasure and absence of pain

10. How does Spinoza define a “passion”?

11. Explain the meaning of the next two quotes and to what extent is Spinoza right?

“To hate is to acknowledge our own inferiority and our fear – we do not hate a foe we can overcome.”

“Passion without reason is blind and reason without passion is dead”

12. Spinoza discusses “determinism” at the end of the page – explain what he means and do you agree?

13. Read the large quote on page 5. Explain Spinoza’s thinking step by step? What value do you find in his thinking whether you agree or disagree?

14. Look back through the packet – pick 3 quotes about Spinoza or by Spinoza that you read within the packet. Record part of the quote so I can recognize it and then explain what it meant and why you chose the quote?

15. With regards to the philosophers we have studied this year - who is Spinoza most similar to and who is he most different from? Explain

**Baruch de Espinoza Born 1632 Durant –*The Story of Philosophy***

Jews left 70AD in mass from the Holy Land – Went to central Europe – up he Danube and the Rhine and went to Spain and Portugal – following the Moors. – Kicked out of Spain 1492 where they were mathematicians, medical, and philosophers. Those in central Europe became merchants and financiers. The Spinoza’s sailed along the Atlantic – to Holland (AMSTERDAM) a nation who had shown tolerance. First Synagogue 1596

Heresy was not accepted in Strong Jewish tradition either – one man who spoke of no life after death was forced to recant and then “walked on” by every member of his congregation. Publicly humiliated – he went home and shot himself. Spinoza witnessed his downfall. 1640 Uriel a Costa. Leaders were worried his ideas might offend their Christian hosts.

“The greatest Jew of modern times” . . . and greatest philosopher - A child of 8 years old in 1640.

His father was a successful merchant – and he was a favorite at his Synagogue and a scholar. HE read so much in fact that he began to doubt and question things.

Studied Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – but preferred the Epicureans, Democritus, and Lucretius – and the Stoics.

Studied Bruno 1548-1600 – romantic Italian – burned at the stake by the inquisition. Master idea of unity, - all reality is one substance, one in cause, one in origin, and God and this reality are one. Mind and matter are one – every particle of reality is composed inseparably of the physical and psychical. Unity in diversity – mind in matter, and matter in mind – to find a synthesis where the opposites and contradictions meet and merge – to rise to the highest the highest knowledge of universal unity which is the intellectual equivalent of the love of God.

Influenced by Descartes- subjective and idealistic

The mind knows itself more immediately and directly than it can ever know anything else – cannot know the outside world without the mind perceiving –

Cogito

Homogeneous substance underling all forms of matter and another homogeneous substance underlying the mind – this bothered Spinoza – he wanted unity. 117

1656 – Summoned before the leaders of the Synagogue for heresy. He had said God may have a body, angels might be hallucinations, that the soul might be merely life, and that the Old Testament said nothing about immortality. He was excommunicated. Which means that you are damned to hell and your loved ones could not communicate with you whatsoever. Read 118 – Excommunication

Heresy was treason and toleration was suicide.

He was sent away by his father and family – alone – solitude.

“For these men know that once ignorance is put aside, that wonderment would be taken away which is the only means by which their authority is preserved.”

Took up with a Christian Mennonite husband and wife in an attic outside of Amsterdam. Made a living by teaching and polishing lenses. Then he moved with them to outside leyden. Plain living and high thinking. He loved wisdom too much to be a “successful” man. Modesty – days of peace serenity, and joy. “It is unreasonable to wrap up things of little or no value in a precious cover.”

**On the Improvement of Intellect**

Ethics Geometrically Demonstrated 1665 but not published until 1675 appeared after his death in 1677

The Principles of Cartesian Philosophy 1663

A Treatise on Religion and the State 1670 Anonymously

Called the “most impious Atheist that ever lived on this earth”

122 – letter and response about no religion

Visited by famous people – Leibnitz, Simon De Vries left him his fortune – then 250 a year and finally Spinoza accepted 150 a year. Holland gave him an annuity of 50 a year.

Friends with Dutch General who was killed in 1672 by a mob after losing to the French. French General invited Spinoza in and he was fine with that – more a European than nationalist.

Asked to be the Philosophy Chair at the University of Heidelberg – refused – his letter is good page 124

Died of Consumption – poor lungs – glass polishing - dust layden house

Died at 44

*The Treatise on Religion and the State*

The language is deliberately metaphorical or allegorical

God and the process of nature are one.

He considers that the ethics of Jesus are almost synonymous with wisdom.

*The improvement of the intellect*

The greatest good is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole of nature.

His own rules of conduct:

1. To speak in a manner comprehensible to the people, and to do for them all things that do not prevent us from attaining our ends . . .
2. To enjoy only such pleasures as are necessary for the preservation of health . . .
3. To seek only enough money as is necessary for the maintenance of our life an health, and to comply with such customs as are not opposed to what we seek . . .

Knowledge: 1. Hearsay knowledge (day of your birth) 2. Vague Experience/Empirical Physician knows a cure – general impression “this usually works” 3. Immediate Induction or knowledge reached by reasoning “the sun is bigger 4. Immediate deduction and direct perception – mathematics. 2\*4\*X\*8 – X=?

*Substance = essence or reality to Spinoza*

*Perfect = complete*

*Ideal = Object*

Objectively = subjectively

Formally = objectively

**Nature and God**

Metaphysics (William James says metaphysics – is nothing but an attempt to think things out clearly to their ultimate significance, to find their substantial essence in the scheme of reality,) - or as Spinoza says their essential substance and thereby to unify all truth and reach that highest of all generalizations.

**Substance** betokens the very structure of existence, underlying all events and things, and constituting the essence of the world.

Also – substance is identified as nature and God. The universal laws of nature and the eternal decrees of god are one and the same. God is the causal chain or process, the underlying condition of all things, the law and structure to the world.

Substance – reality comprises just one substance – which can be conceived of either God or nature – this God/substance has an infinite number of attributes – we can only conceive two: Physical extension and thought. We do not have a separate reality from God – we are simply aspects of the infinity of God.

Good and evil – balance – not such thing because universe is massive.

Is God a person: Spinoza says its natural for people to envision God in their likeness – but by the same token – If a triangle could speak, I believe that a triangle, if it could speak, would in like manner say that God is eminently triangular and a circle that the divine nature is circular.

**Matter and Mind**

Mind is not material – nor is matter mental – the brain process is not the cause or effect of thought. The two processes are not independent and parallel. There are not two processes – two entities but one process seen inwardly as thought and outwardly as motion. Mind and body do not act upon eachother because they are one. Nothing can happen to the body that is not perceived in the mind.

So they cannot be separate –

Now Intellect and Will – no real difference –

Intellect = abstract term for a series of ideas – will an abstract term for a series of actions/volitions. They are the same – every idea(unless interrupted by another idea) leads at some point to an action. Will – should be called “desire” – the very essence of man. Desire is an appetite or instinct that we are conscious of – instinct tis the vague and varied form of “self preservation” – the will to live or the will to power is everywhere.

“Everything, insofar as it is in itself, endeavors to persist in its own being; and the endeavor wherewith a thin seeks to persist in its own being is nothing else than the actual essence of that thing.”

There is no Free Will! The necessities of survival determine instinct – instinct determines desire and desire determines thought and action.

“Men think themselves free because they are conscious of their volitions and desires, but are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire.”

Spinoza compares free will to that of a stone thinking – as it travels through space – that it determines its own trajectory and select the time and place of its fall.

Three systems of ethics – three conceptions of the ideal character and the moral life.

1. Buddha and Jesus – stresses feminine virtues – all men are equally precious. Resist evil by returning good – identifies virtue with love and tends to democracy with regards to a political system.
2. Machiavelli and Nietzsche – stresses masculine virtue – accepts the inequality of men – relishes the risk of combat and conquest and rule - Identifies virtue with power and exalts an hereditary aristocracy.
3. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – denies the universal applicability of the masculine and feminine virtues. Only the mature and informed mind can judge according to diverse circumstances. – when love should rule and power should rule. Identifies virtue with intelligence – advocates a varying mixture of aristocracy and democracy.

The beauty of Spinoza – is that he will blend these together into something unified.

Happiness is the goal of conduct – happiness is the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain.

“Pleasure is man’s transition from a lesser state of perfection”

“Pain is a man’s transition from a greater state of perfection to a lesser one.”

A passion or emotion is bad or good not in itself – but only as it increases or decreases our power. Virtue and power = same thing – virtue is the power of acting. “the more a man can preserve his being and seek what is useful to him, the greater is his virtue,.” Each man must love himself – seek what is useful to him, and desire what truly moves him to a greater state of perfection – built on egoism. A system of morals that teaches a man to be weak is worthless.

Spinoza dislikes humility - admires modesty – conceit makes men a nuisance to one another – its ok to talk if you can back it up

To hate is to acknowledge our own inferiority and our fear- we do not hate a foe we are confident we can overcome.

We think we are most effective when we are passionate but in fact we are most passive imprisoned by emotion –

A passion is an inadequate idea – thought is response delayed till every vital angle of a problem has a aroused a correlative reaction, inherited or acquired.

Passion without reason is blind and reason without passion is dead.

Control passions

By imagination and reason we turn experience into foresight, we become the creators of our future, and cease to be slaves of our past.

“Freedom is not from causal law or process, bur from partial passion or impulse, and freedom not from passion but from uncoordinated and uncompleted passion.”

To be a superman is not to be free from the restraints of social justice and amenity but from the individualism of the instincts.

This is how we achieve freedom – the passivity of passion is human bondage – the action of reason is human liberty. “Men who are good by reason, - men who under the guidance of reason – seek what is useful to them – desire nothing for themselves which they do not also desire for the rest of mankind.” Rule one’s self

“The evil which ensues from evil from evil deeds is not therefore less to be feared because it comes of necessity; whether our actions are free or not, our motive s are still hope and fear. Therefore our assertions are false that I would have no room for precepts and commands.” Determinism makes for a better moral life – it teaches us not despise or ridicule anyone

Determinism fortifiies us to expect and bear both faces of fortune with an equal mind; we remember that all things follow by the ultimate decree of God.

We shall accept the laws of nature gladly and find our fulfillment within her limitations.

He who sees all things as determined cannot complain.

“A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation not on death but on life.”

**Religion and Immortality**

“The greatest good is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole nature.”

“Our mind, insofar as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another, and so on to infinity; so that they all constitute at the same time the eternal and indefinite intellect of God.”

Pantheism

Merging the individual with the all

“Thus I have completed all I wished to show concerning the power of the mind over emotions, or the freedom of the mind. From which it is clear how much a wise man is in front of and how stronger he is than an ignorant one, who is guided by lust alone. For an ignorant man besides being agitated in many ways by external causes, never enjoys true satisfaction of the mind: he lives moreover, almost unconscious of himself, God, and things, and as soon as he ceases to be passive, ceases to be. On the contrary, the wise man, in so far as he is considered as such, is scarcely moved in spirit; he is conscious of himself, of God, and things by a certain eternal necessity; he never ceases to be and always enjoys satisfaction of the mind. If the road I have shown to lead to this is very difficult, it can yet be discovered. And clearly it must be very hard when it is so seldom found. For how could it be that it is neglected practically by all, if salvation were close at hand and could be found without difficulty? But all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare.”