

Book review

Didier Njirayamanda Kaphagawani **Leibniz on Freedom and Determinism in Relation to Aquinas and Molina**. Aldershot: Ashgate 1999, 99-72850 (ISBN 0754610322), 151pp (Hardcover).

This book stems from Kaphagawani's doctoral thesis. Its primary aim is to demonstrate the superiority of Leibniz over Aquinas and Molina regarding the solution to the problem of freedom and necessity. It consists of nine chapters: chapter 1 is the Introduction, chapter 2 and 3 are, respectively, expositions and analyses of Aquinas' and Molina's views on freedom and determinism, chapters 4-8 are on Leibniz himself, with chapter 9 being the conclusion.

Kaphagawani examines Aquinas' views on freedom and determinism in chapter 2. For Aquinas, human freedom is rooted in reason, with knowledge, appetite, and exercises of choice as three necessary conditions for free choice. So, free choice is both cognitive and appetitive, in the sense that objects must first be known by the intellect before they are desired by the will. Thus, for Aquinas, the intellect leads the will since the object of the will is initially comprehended by the intellect. As such, free choice is a joint exercise of the will preceded by reason/intellect.

Although Aquinas maintains that the intellect precedes and directs the will, this however is not to say that for Aquinas, the act of free choice is necessitated by the intellect. In his view, human beings are free agents, and hence their actions are not necessitated. While the necessary can only be, according to Aquinas, the contingent is merely a possibility: can be or not be. And this makes it possible to hinder or avoid a contingent event before it occurs. Nevertheless, Kaphagawani argues that Aquinas' position raises problems with regard to the infallibility of divine fore knowledge of contingent events.

Firstly, if God fore knows all that human being shall do, then there is no human freedom; secondly, admitting that human acts are merely contingent, makes it possible for God to know in advance that contingent events are possible not to be.

Additionally, Kaphagawani argues that Aquinas confuses things by defining contingent events as those that can be foiled or hindered from taking place. By this Aquinas intro-

duces the concept of time to the notion of contingency, making it dependent on time, as if contingency consists in the pastness, presentness and futureness. Such a conception of contingency leaves no room for accounting for possible or potential events, which in reality neither occurred, nor are, and shall never be. Furthermore, Aquinas by insisting that the will, in matters of choice is dependent on the intellect does provide a deterministic account of free choice, that the will is dependent and necessitated by the intellect. And his claim that human beings are free agents certainly contradicts the assertion that the will is dependent on reason/intellect.

Molina's concept of freedom and necessity, which is a reaction to the determinism maintained by Aquinas, is exposed and analyzed in chapter 3. For Molina, freedom is pure indifference. Free choice is independent of divine causality, and it does not consist of any intellectual antecedents. Thus, free choice is not a joint exercise, product of both the will and the intellect. On the contrary, it is solely a product of the will because in Molina's view, the act itself originates from the will. The will is free and indifferent to act or not to act. By divorcing the will from the intellect, Molina does away with the element of necessitarianism prevalent in Aquinas' conception of freedom.

Kaphagawani sees two basic weaknesses in Molina's argument. Firstly, he points out that Molina fails to do away with the intellect, because he maintains two contradictory convictions. While holding that freedom is indifference with regard to whether to act or not to act, Molina also holds that the will not to act is totally different from willing to act. The reason being that, willing not to act involves some knowledge of the advantage of not acting, while the will to act does not. Yet the notion of cognition and comprehension implied in knowledge are activities of the intellect. How then does knowledge of the disadvantage and the benefit of not acting exclude the intellect? Secondly, Molina fails to reconcile his belief that human beings are creatures of God and his claim that human acts originate from a free will. The belief that human beings are created by God, implies that whatever humans do is ultimately dependent upon God. Consequently, humans are not free but determined.

In chapters 4-8 Kaphagawani shows that Leibniz's understanding of freedom and determinism is a synthesis of the ideas of Aquinas and Molina. For Leibniz, reason alone does not constitute freedom; for voluntary action must also be spontaneous and contingent. Intelligence provides knowledge of option for we can only will that which has been perceived by the intellect. Spontaneity is the spring of human action; it is contingency without compulsion (what is neither necessary nor constrained). So, freedom, according to Leibniz, consists of intelligence, spontaneity, and contingency. By includ-

ing contingency in his definition of freedom, Leibniz goes beyond Aquinas who maintains that free choice is merely intellect and spontaneity.

Contingency is for Leibniz the third requisite for freedom defined as "for that whose essence does not involve existence." This definition is limited in that, it applies to beings and not events; for beings only have essence. Hence, contingent beings by possessing an essence without involving existence make it possible, therefore, that they might not have existed. Yet Leibniz's understanding of contingency unlike Molina's does not consist in indifference where by any reason for the existence or non-existence of any being could have been provided.

According to Molina, freedom consists in contingency as indifference of equipoise, whereas Leibniz's understanding of freedom consisting of spontaneity, rationality and contingences. Contingency then, is not pure indifference, as Molina asserts for this raises the crucial question on how it is possible in the state of pure indifference to have a determination without a source. And Molina's denial of the existence of causes and pure indifference makes it impossible for him to account for the execution of free action. Leibniz's conception of contingency makes it possible to conceive of an event as that which might not have happened.

Leibniz on Freedom and Determinism in Relation to Aquinas and Molina is certainly an excellent book—a rare achievement. It discusses the views of three prominent philosophers on the crucial issues of freedom and determinism, and also examines Leibniz's conception of freedom in relation to his philosophical doctrine.

Of course, Kaphagawani is not the first to write a book on Leibniz. Recently, Professors Parkinson, Ross and Brown have examined Leibniz's view on freedom and necessity. Parkinson's *Leibniz on Human Freedom* is a thorough examination of Leibniz's views. But Parkinson does not take into consideration Leibniz's views in relation to his philosophical doctrines. This is achieved in the works of Ross and Brown. But even these works have not examined Leibniz in relation to those of Aquinas and Molina as Kaphagawani does.

So, Kaphagawani's fundamental contribution to the literature on Leibniz's is that in addition to examining Leibniz's conception of freedom and necessity, and relating it to his doctrine, Kaphagawani relates them to the views of Molina and Aquinas. It is a good source book for undergraduate as well as postgraduate students of philosophy interested in the controversial topic of Freedom and Determinism.

Lawrence Masautso Mpekansambo
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O. Box 280
ZOMBA
MALAWI.