

**EINSTEIN.** Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955) was a German-born physicist. He is best known for his theory of relativity, which was then deemed the 'greatest feat of thinking about nature' and, 'probably the greatest scientific discovery ever made'. Of interest to me are this great thinker's views on religion and ethics. By his own definition Einstein was deeply religious, though he deemed religious beliefs 'childish superstitions, the product of human weakness'. He believed that: "Persons who are religiously enlightened appear to be those who have liberated themselves from the fetters of desire. They are occupied with ethical thoughts - regardless of whether they believe in a Divine Being. In this sense religion is the age-old endeavour of human beings to be conscious of righteous values." Einstein did not believe in the God of religion: "If something is in me that can be called religious, then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our sciences can reveal it."

*Einstein's beliefs are influenced by the thinking of philosophers of the Enlightenment, in particular the Portuguese/Dutch Baruch de Spinoza (1632-77). Spinoza contended that everything that exists in nature is one and there is only one set of rules.*

*He argued that God and Nature are two names for the same Reality - or Energy - that underlie the universe. Spinoza's (and Einstein's) ethical doctrine is that the love for - as well as the knowledge of - God/Nature are dependent on reason and order.*

*Einstein's general theory of relativity describes the phenomenon of space/time curvature - which explains gravity - and foresaw that massive objects bend light, which helps scientists to measure the enormous distances of galaxies in the cosmos.*

*Relativity also confirms the existence of mysterious, invisible black holes. However, I must say, since I am not shocked by these matters (theory of relativity, quantum mechanics et al) it means (according to physicist Niels Bohr) that I do not understand them.*