

Neurology & *Pain Management*

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THE MUSICAL FUGUE FOR THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE MULTIPLE VOICES IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT (AND MYSELF)

*The work of loving favor once I came to see
transformed the whole of me though good or bad
one flavor drawing all to Thee rekindled by vise mark
I feel thee all about consuming all the dark in passion
I burn out.*

St. John of the Cross (A lo divino)

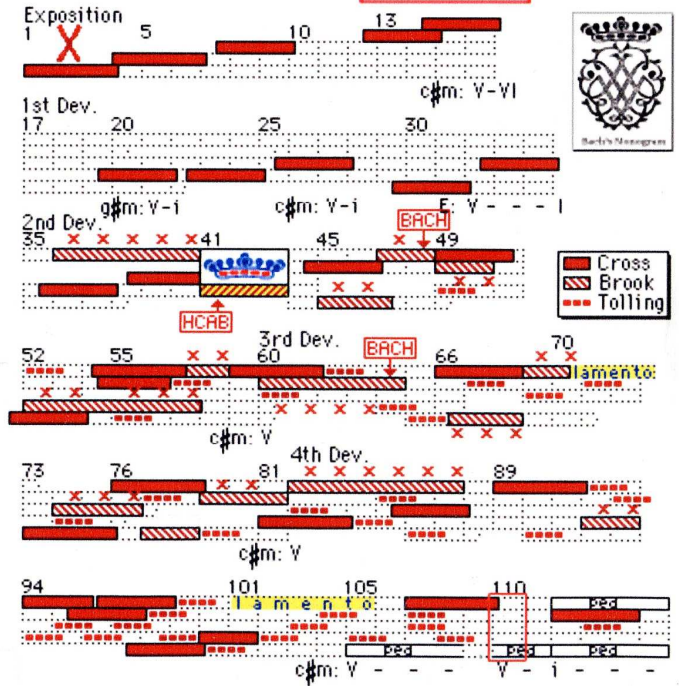
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Fugue No. 4 [Performance]
 C-Sharp minor [Português]
Well-Tempered Clavier Book I
 Johann Sebastian Bach

In this unusual work Bach has used musical and mathematical symbols to express religious belief. It is both complex and fascinating. In it we shall meet J. S. Bach the man who, by signing it with his musical signature, revealed himself to be as complex as his music. In this analysis we shall consider how the fugue represents: a lament, Christ's passion, the sign of the cross, three motives, Bach's name in tones, a crown, and Bach's numbers. I shall summarize these thoughts in a short conclusion.



p. 1



Bach C# Minor Fugue with Timothy Smith's Diagram

In this essay I will address the three voices that I hear in the central key text of the bible, the narrative regarding the revelation of God in Mount Sinai. Chapters 19 and 20 of the Book of Exodus narrate the story from the perspective of an observer in chapter 19 followed by the Decalogue or the 10 commandments in chapter 20 which appear to be a formalized set of rules. This is then followed sequentially by the ending 5 verses of chapter 20 describing the request of the People of Israel to have Moses as an intercessor. These three sections each have their own voice as if from a different viewer as if they came from different source material. I would like to show how these three different voices are manifest in such a diverse "text" as a Bach Fugue whereby the inter-relationship of the voices, however different makes for harmony and wholeness.

Let us examine the text itself first:

Exodus 19 and 20

א סני מדבר באו הזה ביום--מצרים מארץ, ישראל-בני לצאת, השלישי, בח' ד' ש'.

1 In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

ב ההר נגד, לישראל שם-ויחון, במדבר, ויחנו, סני מדבר ויב' או, מרפידים ויסעו ב

2 And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount.

ג ישראל לבני ותגיד, יעקב לבית ת' אמר כ' ה, רל' אמ' ההר-מן, יהוה אליו ויקרא; האל הים-אל, עלה ומ' ש' ה

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying: 'Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:

ד אלי אתכם ואבא, נשרים כנפי-על אתכם ואשא; למצרים יתיעש אשר, ראיתם אתם

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.

ה הארץ-כל לי-כי, העמים-מכל סגלה לי והייתם--ברית-את, מושמרת, בק' לי תשמעו שמוע-אם, ועתה ה

5 Now therefore, if ye will hearken unto My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine;

ו ישראל בני-אל, תדבר אשר, הדברים, אלה: קדוש וגו', כ' הנים ממלכת לי-תהיו תמוצ' ו

6 and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.'

ז יהוה, צוהו אשר, האלה הדברים-כל את, לפניהם וישם; העם לזקני ויקרא, מ' ש' ויב' א' ז

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.

ח יהוה-אל, העם דברי-את מ' ש' וישב; נעשה יהוה דבר-אשר כל, וי' אמרו יחדו העם-כל ויענו

8 And all the people answered together, and said: 'All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.' And Moses reported the words of the people unto the LORD.

ט לעולם יאמינו בך-וגם, עמך בדברי העם ישמע בעבור, הענן בעב אלך בא אנ' כי הנה, מ' ש' אל יהוה וי' אמר

י יהוה-אל, העם דברי-את מ' ש' ויגד

9 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee for ever.' And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

יא שמל' תם, וכבסו; מחרו היום וקדשתם, העם-אל לך מ' ש' אל יהוה וי' אמר

10 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their garments,

יב סני הר-על--העם-כל לעיני יהוה ירד, השלישי ביום כי: השלישי ליום, נכ' נים והיו אי

11 and be ready against the third day; for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

יג יומת מות, ברהר הנ' גע-כל: בקצהו ונג' ע ברהר עלות לכם השמרו, לאמר סביב העם-את והגבלת' בי

12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying: Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death;

בְּהַר יַעֲלֹ, הַמָּה, הַיָּבֵל, בְּמִשְׁרַךְ; יְחִיָּה לֹא, אִישׁ-אֶם בְּהִמָּה-אֶם--יִירָה יְרֵ-הָ-וּאֵ יִסְקַל סְקוּל-כִּי, יָד בּו גַּעַת-לֹא גִי.
13 no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live; when the ram's horn soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.'

שָׁמַל תָּם, וַיִּכְבְּסוּ, הָעַם-אֶת, וַיִּקְדָּשׁ; הָעַם-אֶל, הָהָר-מִן מִשֶׁה וַיֵּרֵד דִּי.

14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their garments.

אֲשֶׁה-אֶל, תִּגְשׁוּ-אֵל: יָמִים לִשְׁלֹשֶׁת, נִכְנִים הָיוּ, הָעַם-אֶל, וַיֹּאמֶר וּט.

15 And he said unto the people: 'Be ready against the third day; come not near a woman.'

הָעַם-כָּל וַיֵּחָרֵד; מֵאֵד חֲזָק, שִׁפְרֹק לְ, הָהָר-עַל כְּבֵד וְעָנָן וַיִּבְרְקוּם קִלְתֵּי וַיְהִי, רַהֲבִיק בְּהִי תֵת הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַיּוֹם וַיְהִי זֶט, בְּמַחְנֵה אֲשֶׁר.

16 And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a horn exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled.

הָהָר בְּתַחֲתֵית, וַיִּתְיַצְבוּ; הַמַּחְנֵה-מִן, הָאֶל הַיָּם לִקְרַאת הָעַם-אֶת מִשֶׁה וַיּוֹצֵא זִי.

17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

מֵאֵד הָהָר-כָּל וַיֵּחָרֵד, הַכְּבֹשֶׁן כְּעָשָׁן עָשָׁנו וַיַּעַל; בְּאֵשׁ, יְהוָה עָלָיו יֵרֵד אֲשֶׁר מִפְּנֵי, כָּלֹ עָשָׁן, סִינֵי וְהָר חִי.

18 Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

בְּקוֹל וַיַּעֲנֶנו וְהָאֶל הַיָּם, יִדְבַר מִשֶׁה; מֵאֵד וְחֲזָק הוֹלֵךְ, הַשִּׁפְרֹק קוֹל וַיְהִי טִי.

19 And when the voice of the horn waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice.

מִשֶׁה וַיַּעַל, הָהָר רֹאשׁ-אֶל לְמִשֶׁה יְהוָה וַיִּקְרָא; הָהָר רֹאשׁ-אֶל, סִינֵי הָר-עַל יְהוָה וַיֵּרֵד כֹּ.

20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

רַב מִמְּנוּ וְנָפַל, לְרֹאוֹת יְהוָה-אֶל יְהִרְסוּ-פֶן; בְּעַם הָעֵד רֵד, מִשֶׁה-אֶל יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אִכ.

21 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.

יְהוָה, בְּהֵם יִפְרֹץ-פֶן: יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ, יְהוָה-אֶל הַנִּגְשִׁים הַכֹּ הַנִּים וְגַם בִּכ.

22 And let the priests also, that come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.'

סִינֵי הָר-אֶל לְעַלֵּת, הָעַם יוֹכַל-לֹא, יְהוָה-אֶל, מִשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר גִּכ.

וַיִּקְדַּשְׁתוּ, הָהָר-אֶת הַגְּבֹל, יֵאמֶר רַ, בְּנוֹ הָעֵד תֵּה אֶת-הָכִי.

23 And Moses said unto the LORD: 'The people cannot come up to mount Sinai; for thou didst charge us, saying: Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.'

בָּם-יִפְרֹץ-פֶן--יְהוָה-אֶל לְעַלֵּת יְהִרְסוּ-אֶל, וְהָעַם וְהַכֹּ הַנִּים; עִמָּךְ וְאֶהְרֶן אֶתְהָ וְעֵלִית, רֵד-לֶךְ יְהוָה אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר דִּכ.

24 And the LORD said unto him: 'Go, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest He break forth upon them.'

{0} אֵלֵהֶם, וַיֹּאמֶר; הָעַם-אֶל, מִשֶׁה וַיֵּרֵד הִכ.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and told them. {S}

Chapter 20

{0} לֵאמֹר לְהִהָא הַדְּבָרִים-כָּל אֶת, אֶל הַיָּם וַיִּדְבַר אֵ.

1 And God spoke all these words, saying: {S}

פְּנִי-עַל, אַחֲרָיִם אֶל הַיָּם לֶךְ יְהִי-לֹא: עֲבָדִים מִבֵּית מִצְרַיִם מֵאֲרֶץ הַמִּצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר, אֶל הַיָּם יְהוָה אֲנִי בֹ.

2 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

לֵאמֹר מִתַּחַת, בְּמִיָּם וְאֲשֶׁר--מִתַּחַת בְּאֲרֶץ וְאֲשֶׁר, מִמַּעַל בְּשָׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר, תִּמְוֹנָה-וְכָל, כָּסַל לֶךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה-לֹא גֹ.

3 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

וְעַל שְׁלִשִׁים-עַל בְּנִים-עַל בֵּיתָ וְעוֹן פִּקְדֵ-קָנָא אֶל, אֶל הַיָּם יְהוָה אֲנִי כִי: תַעֲבָדֶם וְלֹא, לָהֶם תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה-לֹא דֹ, לִשְׁנָאִי, רַבְעִים.

4 thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God,

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;

ה {ס} .תִּימְצוּ וְלֹשְׁמֵרֵי, לֹא הִבִּי--לְאֵלִפִּים, חֶסֶד וְעֶשֶׂה ה

5 and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments. {S}

ו {פ} .לִשְׁוֹא שְׁמוֹ-אֶת יְשׁוּא-אֲשֶׁר אֵת, יְהוָה הִינֵק לֹא כִי: לִשְׁוֹא, אֶל הֵיךְ יְהוָה-שָׁם-אֶת תִּשָּׂא לֹא ו

6 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. {P}

ז לקדשו, השבת יום-את זכור ז

7 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

ח מלאכתך-כל ועשית, תעבד ימים ששת ח

8 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;

ט אֲשֶׁר, וְגֵרְךָ, וּבְהֵמְתְךָ מִתְרוֹצֵעַ עֲבָדְךָ, וּבִתְךָ וּבִנְךָ אֶתְהָ מְלֹאכֶה-כָּל תַּעֲשֶׂה-לֹא: אֶל הֵיךְ לִיהוָה, שְׁבֹת--הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיּוֹם ט בְּשַׁעֲרֶיךָ.

9 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates;

י יְהוָה בָּרַךְ, כֵּן-עַל; הַשְּׁבִיעִי בַיּוֹם, וַיִּנַּח, בָּם-אֲשֶׁר-כָּל-וְאֶת הַיָּם-אֶת, הָאָרֶץ-וְאֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם-אֶת יְהוָה עֲשֶׂה יָמִים-שֵׁשֶׁת כִּי י וִיקַדְשָׁהוּ--הַשְּׁבֹת יוֹם-אֶת {ס}

10 for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. {S}

יא לְךָ נִתְּנָה אֶל הֵיךְ יְהוָה-רֹאשׁ, הָאֲדָמָה עַל, יְמִיךָ יֵאָרְכוּ, לְמַעַן--אֲמַר-וְאֶת, אֲבִיךָ-אֶת כְּבֹד אִי

11 Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. {S}

יב {ס} .שָׁקֵר עַד בְּרַעַךְ תַּעֲנֶה-לֹא א {ס}, תִּגְנֹב לֹא א {ס}, תִּרְצֹחַ לֹא א בִּי

12 Thou shalt not murder. {S} Thou shalt not commit adultery. {S} Thou shalt not steal. {S} Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. {S}

יג {פ} .לְרַעַךְ אֲשֶׁר, וְכֹל, וְחִמְרוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וְאִמְתּוֹ וְעַבְדּוֹ, רַעַךְ אֲשֶׁת תַּחֲמֹד-לֹא א {ס}; רַעַךְ בֵּית, תַּחֲמֹד לֹא א גִי

13 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; {S} thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. {P}

Epilogue

יד מִרְחֹק וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ, וַיִּנְעוּ עִם הַיָּרָא; עֲשָׂן, הִהָר-וְאֶת, הַשֶּׁפָּר קוֹל וְאֶת, הַלְפִידִם-וְאֶת הַקּוֹל-תִּתְּ-אֶת רֵאִים הָעַם-וְכָל דִּי

14 And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the horn, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar off.

טו נְמוֹת-פָּן, אֶל הַיָּם עָמְנוּ יְדַבֵּר-וְאֶל; וְנִשְׁמַעָה, עָמְנוּ אֶתְה-רַדְבּ, מִשְׁה-אֶל, וַיֹּאמְרוּ וט

15 And they said unto Moses: 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.'

טז --פָּנִיכֶם-עַל יְרֵאתוֹ תְהִי, וּבַעֲבוּר; הָאֵל הַיָּם בָּא, אֶתְכֶם נִסוֹת רַלְבַּעְבוּ כִי, תִירָאוּ-אֶל, הָעַם-אֶל מִשְׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ זט

16 And Moses said unto the people: 'Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before you, that ye sin not.'

יז {ס} .הָאֵל הַיָּם שָׁם-אֲשֶׁר, הָעֲרָפֶל-אֶל נִגַּשׁ וּמִשְׁה; מִרְחֹק, הָעַם וַיַּעֲמֵד זי

17 And the people stood afar off; but Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. {S}

יח עָמְכֶם דְּבַרְתִּי, הַשָּׁמַיִם מִן-יְכִי--רֵאִיתֶם אֶתֶם: יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי-אֶל תֹּאמְרוּ כֹה, מִשְׁה-אֶל יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ חִי

18 And the LORD said unto Moses: Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel: Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

Each voice I colored differently. Each section appears to have a different writing style as well as the name of God being used.

In this meditation I wanted to share with you an insight I got when listening to the Bach C sharp minor fugue from the first book of the Well-Tempered Klavier.

First of all let me define a fugue as a musical style involving a specified number of voices usually three sometimes four and only a couple of times including this fugue of Bach's in which there are five voices. In the fugue each voice is exposed in an initial dominant relationship to the others and then it gets complicated and the voices start reacting to each other in a "contrapuntal" method. The fugue consists of a series of expositions and develops and somehow at the other end the composite whole is harmonic with all the voices balanced.

Bach, being a master craftsman, works out in Germanic detail the permutations of the different voices in their different positions so that where initially a voice may enter for instance theme A followed by another voice B, then later C, Bach will then play with the sequential relationships so that the permutation A, B, C, will be followed by B, C, A; B, A, C; A, C, D, etc. etc. What's interesting is the notion of counter subject, which is a figure that recurs immediately following the subject in the same voice, and it serves as a counterpoint sounding simultaneously in a different voice. The main section of the fugue is the exposition in which the subject has an answer and a possible counter subject then, if there is a developmental episode in which the motives from the exposition are treated in a sequence in a modulation in a contrary motion, a double counterpoint, a strato, an augmentation, a diminution etc. etc. Finally there is a coda the concluding segment of the entire fugue.¹

As I was listening to the C sharp minor fugue I was moved by the initial lament, which was so complex and sad, followed by the second subject, which was a sequence in the 36th block. It is heard in a high voice and sounded like a flowing brook. It had a serenity reminding me of Psalm 1 (a pastoral scene by a brook) and it is a series of continuous eight notes with no chromaticism and a complete contradiction to the agonizing opening sadness of the first subject.

What is amazing about the C sharp minor fugue is the vast literature of interpretation musical scholars in the 18th, 19th and 20th century invested in this single piece. It is an unusual work because it uses musical and mathematical symbols to express what apparently is a religious belief. It has defied easy analysis both in its complexity and its apparent theological overtones for these scholars. It is almost unique in the five themes rather than the usual three or four.

Timothy Smith for instance felt Bach signed his musical signature here, (see the crown in the introduction, revealing him to be as complex as his music. How the fugue represented a lament, the Passion of Christ, the sign of the Cross, Bach's name in tones, a crown and Bach's numbers.² For me however the imposition of any authorial intent to the piece distracts from the integrity of the final text and therefore as a typical post-modern reader imposition of theology whether intended or unintended by the author, and the investigation of the authorial intent whether Bach or Shakespeare, is of less importance to me than my reading of the text itself. It was with great delight that I

¹ A useful website to further understand the anatomy of the fugue and other works by Bach is Timothy A. Smith's work at the University of Arizona.

² Fugue No. 4 in C sharp minor The Well Tempered Klavier ; Book 1 . JS Bach by Timothy A. Smith 2002, University of Arizona.

came across Thomas Christenson in his penetrating analysis of this fugue. While admitting to the scholarship of the last 200 years regarding the Christological and theological underpinning that might have informed Bach, he left open to us, the listeners, the possibility to form our own interpretations by mere fact that we still get pleasure from this amazing piece of music some 200 years later without any prior theological background for understanding it. Christensen who noted the fact that Bach left out the final permutation of the subject interaction and other previous authors have also suggested that this might have represented either the resurrection or the “second coming”. Yet he allowed us the freedom to interpret the absence of that final permutation by someone so pedantic as the Germanic Bach and the implication of that omission to our own imagination.

For me the omission of this last permutation is Bach in his humblest mode, allowing the reader to insert his own addition to this music and the realization that this wasn't the finale, this wasn't the definitive, an ultimate expression of everything that is possible in the C sharp minor key. Which of course allows me the listener to insert my own reading of this text.

Before continuing please, please listen to this music. You can at least hear the first 30 seconds free of charge on I-tunes! I prefer Glen Gould as always when it comes to Bach. He was one of the finest pianists of the 20th Century.

So what does this all have to do with my reading a biblical text and my reading of my own biography and myself? In an analysis of Parshat Yisro which is basically Exodus 19, 20 and 21 there are difficulties in the text least of which is the fact that Chapter 19-the Revelation and Chapter 20-the Decalogue, seem to have been placed chronologically one after the other however verse 14 – 18 of Chapter 20 which immediately follows the Decalogue, appear as if the people are asking Moses to intercede with the Almighty prior to the Decalogue. All these text critical issues have been raised before; there is no need to rehearse them here.³ Suffice it to say that at some point in Chapter 19 (as far as I'm concerned around verse 16 – 17) those four verses of Chapter 20, 14 – 18 should be inserted to make sense and precede the actual Decalogue itself. If one reads the fact that the nation asked Moses to intercede prior to the Decalogue then one can understand how the Decalogue is addressed mainly to Moses and from him to the people. Least of the problems is the fact that the names of God are different in Chapter 19, the actions are taken by God in using his name YKVK (the Tetragrammaton) whereas in Chapter 20 the Decalogue is YKVK-Elohim and those last four verses in chapter 20 uses only Elohim. This of course has propelled the early Bible critics to suggest what is known as the documentary hypothesis and source critical theory in which there are multiple sources to the Bible arising from different times and different authorial voices. Again I have no interest in the history and archeology of the text as it pertains to authorship. What interests me is the integrity of the final redaction of the Torah itself and how it can speak to me. The text is sacred and Divine precisely because of its ultimate meaningfulness to my life and the myths contained therein that give expression to my deepest feelings personally and as part of a culture. It is after all for my and must remain a manual of spiritual discipline and so, what can I take from the vast critical literature that dissects the text with sharp surgical tools exposing the flaws and the gaps and the different voices in the text? Those are the kind of questions that

³ See vbmTORAH.org and especially the work of Tamir Granot in his lecture on the Dual Revelation at Sinai and text critical and source critical issues that further expose the problems in reading this text sequentially.

concern me; for if the text is a composite then why has the final Redactor (like Rosenzweig suggested for Moshe Rabeinu). What did this final redactor have in mind in this last composite in which let us say Chapter 19 is voice A, Chapter 20: 1– 20 is voice B and Chapter 20: 14 – 18 is voice C each with a different subject name for God and placed in so-called narratological order but not chronological order if we accept the analysis of these texts?

Which brings me back to the Bach fugue. It is precisely the complexity of the multiple voices and their interrelationship with each other and *their permutation of subjects in different voices, soprano, alto, tenor and base that give complexity and harmony to the whole*. I guess what I'm trying to suggest is that we should look at the text three dimensionally the way we listen to the Bach Fugue. Were we to understand the complexity of these three voices and their inter- relationship with each other, a third dimension of the text might emerge.

For me (and only for me) this suggests that the thematic's of Chapter 19 versus Chapter 20 have less to do with the act of Revelation and the contents of Revelation respectively, rather a deeper level looking at the integrity of Chapter 19 on its own. The subject is clearly YKVK and the alternate second subject is Moses as teacher with the purpose of the revelation being clear in verse 9; to impress upon the people the power and the belief in Moses himself. In contrast the subtext of Chapter 19 is the intimacy between the Almighty and the prophet. In verse 3 Moses goes up, in verse 7 he comes down to the people. In verse 3 God calls to him, in verses 9 & 19 God speaks to him and in verse 20 God descends. Moses is going up, Moses is coming down, and Moses is relaying messages to the people from God and reporting back to God. That intimacy and its connection with prophesy stands out to me as the hallmark of Chapter 19 when looked as a subject in and of itself. For whereas the overt message is establishing of the covenant with the people and the conditionality of keeping the covenant, the plan is revealed to Moses alone. In fact in the end God descends upon the mountain, Moses speaks and the voice of God responds from behind him like an echo so that the people hear the actual speech only from Moses with an echo type sound emanating from the Lord.

When we read the last subject, which is the end of Chapter 20 verses 14 – 19 sequentially, then the exclusive use of the Elohim divine name produces a different picture of distance, fear and trembling before the divine and the need for the intercession of the prophet between the people and God. As Tamir Granot has suggested, the 10 commandments are fairly unnecessary in terms of the Revelation's primary objective, which is the establishing of the belief in Moses prophecy. The divine name YKVK expresses the notion of prophecy in closeness to God and chapter 19 establishes the prophecy and authority of Moses as does chapter 20 verses 14 – 18. The combination of the two names of God which occurs in the Decalogue stand at the center of the event between subject A and subject C in a type of chiasmic structure in which the first two commandments are in the second person and the last eight are in the third person (and the Rabbi's do jump in with a midrash to the statement that Chapter 20: 14 –18 in which the people asked Moses to intercede actually occurs at the point between the second and remaining commandments). But the Decalogue, which expresses the essence of Revelation, does stand at the high point of the story from the narrative perspective.

From my listening to the Bach C sharp minor Fugue I came to the realization that the complexity of the fugue is precisely in the narrative sequence and structure of the multiple themes and segments and voices but also even more so in their complex interrelationship and the juggling of the permutations which Bach did so masterfully. So

to in my reading of the Biblical text the complex voices from whatever sources and source critical analyses have informed us the final compositional merited structure, allows us to see not only the sequence from the beginning to the end in a linear way as we listen to a piece of music but also to see the harmonic variations that are occurring at any one point. The harmonics that are occurring in the counterpoint between subject 1 and subject 2 and subject 3 weave all three together in the permutations of those subjects and allow for complexity and beauty that emerges when listening to the music. It also gives us different meanings that immerge when viewing from a three dimensional view of the text.

Timothy Smith, when commenting on Fugue #16, happened to be reviewing a work by Collin Fletcher in 1963, who was the first man to walk the length of the Grand Canyon below it's rim. Fletcher's journey spanned 43 miles and in his book *The Man Who Walked Through Time*, he wrote "that it had something to due with the colossal sameness of the canyon....the sameness of monotony but of endless repeated yet endlessly very patten" For Timothy Smith this was just like the Fugue! "Just substitute fugue for canyon in the foregoing sentence and you've got it!" (Footnote: Fugue #16 G-Minor well tempered Klavier Book II John Sebastian Bach by Timothy Smith 2004. Smith was backpacking with his brother on the Tont trail between Boucher and Hermit Creek. At the moment of inspiration the subject of this fugue was looping through his head at precisely the tempura one moves with 50 lbs on his back!) Fletcher developed the fugal analogy of an interweaving inter of the "scattered and disparate strands of life" an underlying "counterpoint to the unique basic rhythm of the universe". He used the canyon to illustrate "multiple parallels that permeate everything we know in point and counterpoint". The subjects and exposition of the canyon were parallel so well in that book and with the fugue. Most fugues have four layers named for the voices of soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The well tempered Klavier has one fugue for two voices, several in three voices and two in five voices one of which is the C sharp minor. The fugue above all is most famous for its double counterpoint but that's for another discussion.

Finally as it pertains to the biography of my life and the multiple voices and "scattered and disparate strands of life" I cannot think the better metaphor for the character assets and defects that we all live with. For surely life is a work in progress and so how does one live with deficits and the defects of character on an ongoing basis? I think the answer lies in the fugue precisely because of the complexity of life, the complexity of the human soul, it's ability to hold paradox and it's ability to continue through time like the fugue that we are able to relate to this magnificent work, to the work of the text, to read ourselves in the Biblical text and the read ourselves in the fugue. It is the very complexity of life and of the human soul that defies the neat answers that are thrown at us because there are no answers as Bach left open the very last permutation. It is that gap, it's that opening that demands that we ourselves complete the last permutation of subject matter, harmony, counterpoint, to produce a harmonic whole and a completeness to this work.

I'm indebted to Thomas Christensen whose lecture at the Franke Institute for the Humanities recently on "Bach: musician, mathematician, metaphysician" at the Gleacher Center on Wednesday, February 4, 2009, was such an inspiration to me in thinking about the difference between theological interpretation of music verses a kind of post modern reading.