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THE BLOCH SACRED SERVICE: A COMPOSITION
FOR JEWS OR A COMPOSITION FOR HUMANKIND?

BY
STEVEN I. WEISS

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Master of Sacred Music Degree

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
School of Sacred Music
New York, New York

January, 1996
Professor Mark Kligman, Advisor
Dr. Leonard Kravitz, Consultant

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this project. We have laughed together and been there for each other in hard times, I value his friendship greatly.

My girlfriend, Jennifer Tolman is one of the most important people in my life. I have grown to love her and I look forward to sharing many more happy experiences with her.

All through my schooling, my family has supported all of my endeavors, even if some of them were a little off the wall. I am blessed with a loving sister, grandmother, and aunt, and I thank them for all of the support they have given to me over the years.

Last but certainly not least are my parents--Fern & Mitchell Weiss. They have been there for me in every happy moment of my life and have comforted me in the sad ones. Ever since I decided to become a cantor at age 13, they have done all that they could to help me reach my goal. As I finally arrive at the doorstep to my goal, it is my pleasure to dedicate this work to them with much love from their son.

January 1996

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INTRODUCTION

I am still studying the Hebrew text. I have now memorized entirely the whole service in Hebrew. I can write it in Hebrew from memory. I know its significance word by word. . . . But what is more important, I have absorbed it to the very expression of my soul. It far surpasses a Hebrew service now. It has become a cosmic poem, a glorification of the laws of the universe. . . . The very text I was after since the age of ten. . . . A dream existed. . . . It has become a "private affair" between me and God.¹

The above quote, from Ernest Bloch's letter to a friend regarding Avodath Hakodesh, states the composer's devotion and impassioned commitment to Judaism as expressed through his music. All of the ideals which he believed in so deeply are expressed in this short, yet poignant statement. It shows Ernest Bloch's deep love for Judaism and his connection to it. It is important to note the extent to which he immersed himself in the Hebrew text which he relied upon for his composition. Ernest Bloch's love of mankind and his philosophical ideas are also expressed in this quote. Bloch does not see himself merely as a Jew, nor does he allow his compositions to be exclusively for Jews. Rather, he uses descriptions such as "cosmic," and "laws of the universe." These are not particularistic descriptions of his compositions. Ernest Bloch lived a life of universalistic ideals and genuine concern for humankind. These ideals were incorporated into many of his works and discussed by him throughout his life. Ernest was deeply affected by a universal

¹Letter by Ernest Bloch found in, Robert Strassburg, Ernest Bloch: Voice in the Wilderness (Los Angeles: California State University, 1977), 70.

milieu which enveloped his thinking and vision. These visions were incorporated and shown through his compositions. Whether it was nature, science, or national and world politics, or other customs and beliefs of other religions, he strove to incorporate his personal feelings into his compositions. These compositions ranged from small chamber works and piano concertos to major symphonies as well as an opera. All of these works portrayed some aspect of Bloch's life whether it was the country he was living in or feelings about universalism that he wanted to express through music. Aron Rothmuller comments:

Whether the starting point of his musical conception was his Jewish spiritual world with all its emotional feeling and mood, or his loyal and admiring attitude to America, or his attachment to his native Switzerland, always there is a central personality binding them together and welding them into an affinity of ideas: The distinctive personality of Ernest Bloch.²

Though he wrote many compositions, it was the works that expressed his Jewish and universal views that has received the most acclaim. Two examples of such works are Schelomo, and Avodath Hakodesh. Ernest Bloch was not a religious man, avoiding organized Jewish religious organizations and holiday observance. However, he had a deep passion for Judaism in his soul which came out through his music.

²Aron Rothmuller, The Music of the Jews (New Jersey: A.S. Barnes Co., Inc., 1967), 221.

Between 1912 and 1916, Bloch created seven works so impressive in their individuality and 'Jewishness' that he was hailed by many music critics in America and Europe as a modern prophet of music. Bloch himself designates the compositions of this four-year period as his 'Jewish Cycle.'³

One of his most revered works is Avodath Hakodesh (The Sacred Service). Written over a four year period (1930-1933), and utilizing the text of the Reform Jewish Shabbat Morning service,⁴ Avodath Hakodesh combined Blochs deep desire to write music with a Jewish textual content while expressing a universal message to all of humankind. He had a deep belief that though the text was Jewish and particularistic in its content, its message was one that could and needed to be transmitted to the world. Bloch wrote and spoke extensively following the writing of Avodath Hakodesh about the messages he hoped the service would convey to the world. He continually maintained that it was not a work for the Jewish people alone. Rather, it is a work given by him to all of humanity. Bloch writes:

For fifty minutes I hope it will bring to the souls, minds and hearts of the people, a little more confidence, make them a little more kind and indulgent than they were and bring them peace. I have not written to astonish the world with a spectacular achievement. I have a message to deliver--that is all.⁵

³Strassburg, 26.

⁴The text was taken from The Union Prayerbook for Jewish Worship (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1940).

⁵Speech given by Ernest Bloch at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, September 16, 1933, found in Strassburg, 137.

This message was one of universalism--in which all races and religions are looked at as equals. This idea is in stark contrast to particularism, in which one race or religion is elevated and segregated above the rest. Bloch's universal message was expressed in Avodath Hakodesh both in the musical expressions and motifs he used in its composition as well as in his own interpretation of the Hebrew prayers making up the text of the work.

Ernest Bloch wrote many major documents on the composition. Some of the key sources are: Program Notes for the American Premiere in New York City, a speech, delivered by him at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and a series of letters to Cantor Reuben Rinder, who commissioned Bloch to compose Avodath Hakodesh.⁶ Bloch was faced with a great challenge--to take a liturgy that by its very nature is particularistic and make it universal using music. It is this very duality of particularism and universalism in this work that has captivated the attention of both Jews and non-Jews. Perhaps the answer lies in stating the question and not in finding a concrete answer. It is important to see how this message is received. How easy is it for both Jews, as well as non-Jews to receive this universal message through hearing this work? This question shall be looked at and developed over the course of this paper.

⁶These letters are reproduced in Appendix II, found at the end of this paper.

The composition of Avodath Hakodesh raises another related issue. Is the work a sacred piece, utilizing the text of the prayerbook and meant for performance in a synagogue, or is it a secular piece, utilizing a sacred text, but used in a sacred, oratorio context? Though it was composed using the text of a Jewish service, the work has been performed all over the world, mostly in secular settings such as concert halls, as well as in many churches and synagogues. There are inconsistencies between what Bloch has written and said about the work, and actual performances of it. One example is where the world premiere took place. Though Bloch was commissioned to compose Avodath Hakodesh by Temple Emanu-El of San Francisco, the world premiere took place in a concert hall in Turin, Italy. Additionally, his writings reflect the desire to produce a work acceptable to the entire world, and not just to Jews. It became much more than a service for the synagogue. By looking at the sheer number of instruments and voices required to perform the work, one can see how this work was transformed from a Sabbath service to a major choral oratorio work.

Musical thematic analysis can also help to answer this question. By looking at the musical development the reader will see the use of the cantus firmus--a reoccurring theme throughout the work. Indeed, Bloch employs a six note cantus firmus in all five sections of Avodath Hakodesh. This use of a reoccurring melody is influenced by the Catholic mass, and is an example of the non-Jewish religious as well as the secular influences upon Bloch.

Avodath Hakodesh is regarded by many as one of the greatest Jewish works ever created. Indeed, Bloch served as the mentor and teacher for one of the foremost Jewish composers, Isadore Freed. However it is difficult to say how Bloch's composition influenced other composers and compositions for the synagogue. It is difficult to find other large scale works for the synagogue. It is possible that other composers realized the limitations that a composition the size of Avodath Hakodesh put on the performers as well as the ability to perform the work.

These major issues of universalism, and sacred versus secular drama, as well as how Avodath Hakodesh influenced other composers and compositions will be investigated in this study.

CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE OF ERNEST BLOCH

In considering Ernest Bloch's life, one can see different key influences on both his Jewish education and upbringing as well as in his technical music training, and philosophical ideals. All of these influences were synthesized and incorporated into the writing of Avodath Hakodesh. Bloch's Jewish upbringing owes much to his father, Maurice Bloch. His earliest experiences with Judaism occurred with his father, in their home. His technical training and philosophical ideas were heavily influenced by the teachers he was associated with as well as by the countries where Bloch studied and lived.

In order to clearly denote these influences, I have divided this chapter into smaller sections indicating specific time periods in Bloch's life. These categories have been taken and adapted from Robert Strassburg's Ernest Bloch: A Voice in the Wilderness.

A. THE EARLY YEARS: 1880-1896

Ernest Bloch was born on July 24, 1880 in Geneva, Switzerland to Maurice and Margarethe Bloch. He was born into a family that practiced Judaism and were well versed in Jewish culture. His paternal Grandfather, who died before he was born, was president of the Jewish community of Lengnau in the Argau canton of Switzerland.⁷ His father, Maurice Bloch had a very strict Orthodox

⁷The Argau canton is an area located just outside the city of Geneva, Switzerland.

Jewish education. He studied Hebrew extensively and at one time in his life, wanted to become a Rabbi. However, upon reaching adulthood, he elected to become a merchant, owning and operating a clock shop. Jewish customs and ceremonies were very close to the heart of Maurice Bloch and he made sure that his children learned them as well.

The impressions of earliest childhood are often the most powerful; indeed, memories of the lighting of candles on the Sabbath eve, and of the festival rituals, remained with him throughout his life. He [Ernest] had Hebrew lessons until his ninth year, and became a Bar Mitzvah at thirteen.⁸

Part of Bloch's preparation for his Bar Mitzvah included learning and memorizing the Ashkenazic system of trope as well as synagogue chant. Many people say that these melodies came out in the compositions making up the Jewish cycle (1912-1916), a period which will be discussed later in this chapter.

It is interesting to note the contradiction between how Bloch's life is described by others and how it is described by his daughter Suzanne Bloch. In a letter to Robert Strassburg, she negates much of the impact Bloch's father had on him. She states:

From what EB [sic.] told me, I don't think that the lessons had much of an impact though EB absorbed the essence or atmosphere of whatever he was exposed to rather than the material--and when he composed the Jewish cycle--this is what came out.⁹

⁸Alexander Knapp, "The Jewishness of Bloch: Subconscious or Conscious?" Proceedings of the Royal Music Association, 1970-71, 100.

⁹Strassburg, 2.

However, Bloch's father influenced him greatly. Through his Jewish education as well as the melodies which Ernest used in his compositions and which he ascribes to his father, it is clear that he It is clear that Ernest learned much from and was strongly influenced by his father.

Ernest Bloch's life in music began at a very early age. Though neither of his parents had any musical abilities, all of the children showed an inclination for music. Ernest's sister, was a pianist. It was through his sister's playing, on the piano, of Swiss folk melodies, salon music, and opera *potpourris* in vogue during the eighties, that Ernest made his first acquaintance with the world of music.¹⁰ Thanks to his musical experiences, Ernest decided at a very early age what it was that he wanted to do. In an interview with Norman Graves, celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday, Bloch discusses his decision to enter the world of music.

I don't believe I was more than nine or ten when I made up my mind what I would do. Certain professions were closed to me. Neither of my parents were musical. Yet music it was to me. I would compose music that would bring peace and happiness to mankind.¹¹

Maurice Bloch always wanted the best for his children, and he was against Ernest going into music. He made it very clear that responsibility to the family and the business took precedence over all matters. Though against it, he was eventually convinced by

¹⁰Ibid., 4.

¹¹Norman Ryland Graves, "At Home with Ernest Bloch," *Etude*, October, 1955, 16.

Bloch's teachers that Ernest had great talent in music which needed to be explored further. He began formal studies under Emile Jacques-Dalcroze in December, 1896, and made considerable progress in solfege and composition studying under his tutelage. Bloch was very impressed with Dalcroze's love and spirit for Swiss folk music. This spirit was internalized in Bloch and was released through his compositions. Bloch states that after years of study he could become a composer "whose music would stir the world and bring peace and happiness to mankind."¹²

B. PARIS AND GENEVA: 1903-1912

Though still young, both in age, and musical experience, Ernest Bloch's years in Paris and Geneva was extremely important to his development as a composer, with particular emphasis on his Jewish identity.

Bloch's years in Paris impacted his Jewish identity because of his acquaintance with Edmund Fleg, a poet and historian with whom he became very close.

Edmund Fleg was born in Switzerland in 1874. His student days were occupied with the study of philosophy, comparative literature, and German culture. The Dreyfus affair aroused his interest in Judaism, and by 1913, he had become the leading representative in France of the emerging Jewish renaissance.¹³

¹²Ibid., 16.

¹³Strassburg, 18.

Fleg's interest in Jewish life, history, and culture interested Bloch. In the same year that he completed the vocal score to his opera Macbeth, Bloch began to realize the important role that his heritage was to play in his creative life. Fleg's intense interest in the Dreyfus affair, and his awakened interest in Judaism, had sparked a similar response in Bloch, who until that time had not given much thought to his Jewishness. Bloch wrote a very important letter to Fleg in 1906, in which he discusses his sudden rediscovery of his life as a Jew:

I have read the Bible. I have read fragments from Moses, and an immense sense of pride surged in me. My entire being vibrated, it is a revelation. I will find myself again in this. It stirred me so much that I could not continue reading, for I felt fear. Yes, Fleg, I had the fear of discovering too much 'me' myself, to feel in a sudden blow all that had little by little agglomerated and struck to me drop away, leaving me naked, in this past that was within me. I would find myself a Jew, raise my head proudly as a Jew, and then how can I stand the life I am leading? . . . All this will germinate in-who knows? Perhaps you and I will find in this the release of our bonds. The music is in us. It is important that we express, show the greatness and destiny of this race. . . . In reading certain passages of the Bible, I regretted to have only music as a means of speaking. But the Jews do comprehend music. Yes, Fleg, this idea must enlighten us both.¹⁴

This letter shows the deep conviction Bloch had to Judaism, as well as his desire to express it through music. Surely, his compositions over the succeeding years and eventually Avodath Hakodesh

¹⁴Letter to Edmund Fleg found in Suzanne Bloch, Program Notes for Lincoln Center Performance of the Sacred Service, December 4, 1969, 8.

accomplished these desires. However, though he expressed these convictions, Bloch was too involved in completing his opera Macbeth to work on music reflecting his Jewish idea. Though he put off writing Jewish music, the influences of Fleg on Bloch began to penetrate his psyche. He began to internalize his connection with the Jewish community and more importantly, his Jewish self. These feelings came out in his later compositions and in Avodath Hakodesh in particular.

Due to his father's illness, Ernest Bloch returned to Geneva in 1911. Bloch's opera was premiered and though acknowledged as an important work, was severely criticized by both critics as well as by other composers. Some called the work "Barbaric"¹⁵ while others described it as "Indecipherable noise."¹⁶ Bloch began to take stock of his life and what was important to him. At the same time, he began to lecture on aesthetics and composition at the Geneva Conservatory. "During the ensuing years, he delivered more than a hundred lectures on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from 'The Jewish mind in Music' and 'Art among Primitive People.'¹⁷ The most significant aspect of his introspection was his return to his Jewish identity. "I am a Jew, and I aspire to write Jewish music. . . . Because I am sure that this is the only way I can produce music of vitality and significance--If I can do such a thing at all"¹⁸

¹⁵Strassburg, 23.

¹⁶Ibid., 23.

¹⁷Ibid., 25.

C. THE JEWISH CYCLE: 1912-1916

The four years encompassing the Jewish cycle were very significant to Bloch. There are many emotional factors that led him to compose the seven works during this period. These works are Psalm 114, Psalm 137, Israel Symphony, Three Jewish Poems, Psalm 22, Prelude, and Schelomo. Robert Strassburg writes that if Macbeth had been more successful, he would have gone on to write other operas.¹⁹ However, the bad reception that it received led him to pursue new interests, the center of which was to write Jewish music. Strassburg cites three explicit factors which led to Bloch's new composing direction:

- Bloch's desire to raise his head proudly as a Jew.
- Bloch's awareness that there was germinating in him a new kind of music that would "express the greatness and destiny"²⁰ of the Jewish people.
- A feeling of alienation from the mainstream of European music, arising out of his experience with Macbeth.

With the composition of these seven works, Bloch fulfilled his greatest desires. They brought Bloch the highest accolades in the world of music and elevated him to the forefront of composers.

Bloch created seven works so impressive in their individuality and Jewishness that he was hailed by many music critics in

¹⁸Olin Downes, "Ernest Bloch, The Swiss Composer on the Influences of Race in Composition," The Musical Observer, March, 1917, 11.

¹⁹Strassburg, 26.

²⁰*ibid.*, 27.

America and Europe as a modern prophet of music. Bloch himself designates the compositions of this four year period as his Jewish cycle.²¹

In an essay entitled "Man and Music" written for The Musical Quarterly, Ernest Bloch wrote about his philosophy of writing as a Jewish prophet of music. In it he states:

Only that art can live which is an active manifestation of the life of the people. It must be a necessary, an essential portion of life, and not a luxury. It must have its roots deep within the soil that brings it forth. . . . A work of art is the soul of a race speaking through the voice of the prophet in whom it has become incarnate.²²

Though all of the compositions are important to Bloch, two stand out as expressing his innermost feelings. In 1913, while Bloch was composing the Israel Symphony, his father died. The deep love and respect Ernest had for his father led him to lay aside his Symphony in order to compose the Three Jewish Poems, dedicated to his fathers memory.

By the creation of Three Jewish Poems, Bloch fulfilled his obligation as a son, providing in effect his own Kaddish prayer within the year of his fathers death, and honoring in an unusual but deeply personal manner the paternal memory in perpetuity.²³

²¹Ibid., 26.

²²Ernest Bloch, "Man and Music," The Musical Quarterly, XIX, October, 1933, 376.

²³Ibid., 32-33.

Another event that was significant in Bloch's life and compositions was the outbreak of World War I in August of 1914. The start of the war confirmed Bloch's despair for the future of mankind, and the pessimism that he felt building up inside of him. He found an outlet to express these feelings in what is probably his most famous composition, Schelomo, written for cello and orchestra in 1914. With the composition of this work, we are again reminded of the influences which Bloch's father had on him. The middle section of the work includes a Gemora Niggun, which is described by Bloch as "a motive which my father often sang in Hebrew, and which assumes a great importance"²⁴

While nearing the completion of the Jewish cycle, Bloch wrote another letter to Edmund Fleg. In the letter, he reflected on the Jewish elements in his works. Additionally, he gave a prelude to the composition of Avodath Hakodesh. It is interesting to note the aesthetic elements of this letter. Here again, Bloch discussed the natural laws, freedom of the soul, and the need for free forms of expression. He writes:

I note here and there, themes that are without my willing it, for the greater part Jewish, and which begin to precise themselves and indicate the instructive and also conscious direction in which I am going. . . . I do not search to give them a form, I am producing nothing so far, but I feel that the hour will come and I await it with confidence respecting this present silence imposed by natural laws that know. There will be Jewish rhapsodies for orchestra, Jewish poems, dances

²⁴Ernest Bloch Program Notes for the Royal Academy of Saint Cecelia Orchestra, Rome, Italy, January 22, 1933.

mainly, poems for voice for which I have not the words, but I would wish them Hebraic. All my musical Bible shall come, and I would let sing in me these secular chants where will vibrate all the Jewish soul in what it has profoundly national and profoundly human. New forms need to be created, free and well defined, also clear and sumptuous. I sense them without seeing them yet before me. I think that I shall write one day songs to be sung at the synagogue, in part by the minister, in part by the faithful. It is really strange that all this comes out slowly, this impulse that has chosen me, whom all my outer life have been a stranger to all that is Jewish. One would almost say that no exterior barrier could be found, so that the soul would be even freer, and could surge out without constraint.²⁵

Over the course of the four years encompassing the Jewish Cycle, Ernest Bloch makes the first important steps in expressing his Jewish identity. It also solidified Bloch's role as the leading Jewish composer of the twentieth century. After composing Avodath Hakodesh, Bloch took further steps, in reaching the pinnacle of his Jewish identity.

D. BLOCH IN AMERICA - THE EARLY YEARS: 1916-1925

As the war in Europe raged on, with no end in sight, Ernest Bloch was unable to further his career, and it became increasingly more difficult to support his family. He made the decision to move to America, in order to teach as well as continue with his composing. He hoped that he would eventually have the means to bring his entire family over to live with him.

²⁵Letter by Ernest Bloch found in Suzanne Bloch, Program Notes for Lincoln Center Performance of Sacred Service, December 4, 1969, 1.

Bloch applied for and was hired as the touring conductor for the Maud Allen Dance Troupe which was based in New York City. Bloch left Europe by boat in July, 1916, and arrived at Ellis Island a short time thereafter. The sight of New York harbor and in particular, the Statue of Liberty for the first time, would later serve as the inspiration for his America symphony. Bloch struggled during his first few months in America, but gained his first real foothold into American music when he met David Mannes in late 1916. Mannes was in the process of forming a school in New York City and offered Bloch the position of the head of the Theory department. Bloch's new found position gave him a new start in the American concert scene. "Bloch not only made America aware of a genius in its midst, but also started a career whose meteoric ascent was quite unlike anything seen in the annals of American music."²⁶ His successes allowed him to return to Europe in 1917, in order to bring his family to the United States. Bloch continued to succeed upon his return to America. His new found acclaim led G. Schirmer, the largest music publisher in the United States, to begin publishing many of his works.

Among the many thoughts which Bloch expressed in articles and letters to friends on the subject of his Jewishness, the following, written in 1917, stands out remarkably:

Nationalism is not essential in music, but I think that racial consciousness is. The two things are not the same, and I think

²⁶Strassburg, 46.

that is where many composers get confused about the real issue. A man does not have to label a composition 'American' or 'German' or 'Italian', but he has to be an American, German, or Italian, or even Jewish, at the bottom of his heart if he expects to produce any real music. I, for instance, am a Jew, and I aspire to write Jewish music, not for the sake of self-advertisement, but because I am sure that this is the only way in which I can produce music of vitality and significance--if I can do such a thing at all! This does not mean that I must use Jewish folk-melodies--although I have done this at times. The use of a folk-theme may sometimes limit and constrain the composer instead of inspiring him to write more freely and personally.

I believe that those pages of my own in which I am at my best are those in which I am most unmistakably racial, but the racial quality is not only in folk-themes; it is myself! . . . Racial feeling is certainly a quality of all great music, which must be an essential expression of the people as well as the individual. Does anyone think that he is only himself? Far from it: He is thousands of his ancestors. If he writes as he feels, no matter how exceptional his point of view, his expression will be basically that of his forefathers.²⁷

Here is the clearest example that though Bloch is labeled as a Jewish composer, much of the Jewish elements occurred unconsciously. The music and message came from deep within his soul and he expressed them as best he could.

Although Bloch was known throughout America as a predominately Jewish composer, Strassburg points out that his religious views remained rather nonconformist. Because he had a life-sized crucifix in his home, rumors began to spread that Bloch had converted from Judaism to Christianity. In my opinion, this action showed his universalistic ideas and concerns for all

²⁷Knapp, 101.

humankind and religions, rather than a message solely for Jews. When confronted by a lady about his apparent inconsistencies, Bloch responded by stating:

My dear madam--yes it is true that I am a Jew. But I should also be equally proud to call myself a Christian--a true Christian. For He is to me only the symbol of that Christianity which both Jew and Gentile strive to attain. Who, indeed will have the temerity to call himself Christian?²⁸

With the writing of the Viola Suite, in 1918, Bloch began his departure from compositions of Jewish inspiration and content. He did not return to a composition of Jewish content until he began to compose Avodath Hakodesh, in 1930.

Bloch continued teaching and performing in New York until he was invited to found and direct the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1920. He looked at the offer as an opportunity to further his career and went to Cleveland, where he remained until 1925.

Bloch met with many successes while in Cleveland. The school went from seven students when it opened its doors to nearly two hundred by the end of the second year. He completed nearly twenty-one compositions, some of which received critical acclaim: Sonata #1, Piano Quintet # 1, Piano Mystique, and Concerto Grosso # 1.

While in Cleveland, Bloch began to write extensively on the problem of music pedagogy in America. His concerns and solutions appeared in a number of national publications such as Musical

²⁸Saerchinger, Cesar, "America, The Land of Promise and Fulfillment for One of Switzerland's most Gifted Sons," Musical America, September 7, 1918, 5.

America and Etude. Strassburg writes that the aesthetic message underlying these writings is Bloch's unfailing concern with character and truth in art.²⁹ Some of Bloch's writings and philosophies offended members of the Cleveland Institute board who thought he was out of touch and too extravagant in his solutions. He became very sure in his unwillingness to compromise any aspect of the welfare or ideals of the Cleveland Institute which resulted in his leaving in 1925. He desired an working environment where his philosophies would be more appreciated and widely accepted. He found that at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

E. ERNEST BLOCH IN AMERICA - SAN FRANCISCO: 1925-1930

Ernest Bloch found San Francisco much more accepting of his writings than did Cleveland. He joined the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory, with a substantial salary. During this period, Bloch was able to write many compositions. Two of his major symphonic works, America, and Helvetia were written early on in his tenure in San Francisco. These two works suggest the indebtedness to the land of his adoption as well as to the land of his birth. His universal caring for humankind is reflected again in these two works. In a radio broadcast given in 1939, Bloch discusses the philosophical ideas in these two works as well as in Avodath Hakodesh. Bloch states:

²⁹Strassburg, 58.

A common ideal pervades these three works. This ideal is the brotherhood of man. . . . In the forward of America, I wrote this 'The ideals of America are imperishable. They embody the future credo of all mankind. Their union in common purpose and unwittingly accepted guidance of widely diversified races, ultimately to become one race, strong and great.' The same ideal is also embodied in Helvetia. Like America, Switzerland was built by men of different races, uniting willingly and gradually since 1921 and in spite of different racial character and four different languages, they have been able to create a beautiful and harmonious unity. Nowadays these ideals are questioned by many and we live in troubled times but I remain convinced that some day they will prevail over all mankind.³⁰

However much feeling and emotion he put into the works, both of the symphonies were severely criticized as lacking emotional appeal. These criticisms were ameliorated in 1926, when he received the Musical America Award for America, and in 1929, when Bloch received honorary membership in the Academy of Saint Cecelia in Rome. That same year, Bloch received the commission that would change his life. He was asked by Cantor Reuben R. Rinder to compose a Sabbath Morning Service for the Temple Emanuel Congregation of San Francisco. Rinder was known for his practice for commissioning and performing new liturgical works. He was particularly fond of Bloch, and began to pursue the possibilities of the commission as early as 1927. He was aided in his pursuit by Mr. Gerald Warburg, a very influential member of the San Francisco community. As the

³⁰Speech by Ernest Bloch in radio broadcast, transcribed by Steven Weiss from "A Tribute to Ernest Bloch with Response by the Composer" conducted by Arthur Fielder, March, 1939.

details of the commission came into place, Rinder disclosed the plans to Bloch:

The plan for the commission of yourself to write a service is well on its way and it is only a matter of getting the O.K. from the chairman of the music committee of Temple Emanuel who is now in Europe. . . . Mr. Gerald Warburg who is now on the coast is very helpful in shaping the plans and so is Mrs. Sloss. When could Mr. Warburg and I pay you a visit?. . . . He is quite an admirer of yours. . . . He is playing cello with the Stradivarius Quartet. . . . There are so many things of interest to talk over.³¹

Once Bloch accepted the commission, he energetically undertook the study of both Hebrew and nineteenth century synagogue music in preparation for the upcoming task. Though he studied Hebrew as a child, Bloch had forgotten most of it. He asked for and received guidance from Rinder. Under his tutelage, Bloch painstakingly mastered liturgical Hebrew, so that every nuance of the prayers would be available to his creative imagination. "With the tireless diligence of a philologist, he dissected every Hebrew word, studying its root and translating it into both French and English.³² His letters to Cantor Rinder reflect the depths to which he strove in order to find the true meaning of every word.

With the excitement and anticipation brought on by the commission, Bloch made the decision to leave the San Francisco Conservatory and free himself from all of the administrative and

66. ³¹Letter by Cantor Reuben Rinder to Ernest Bloch, 1929, found in Strassburg,

³²*Ibid.*, 67.

financial responsibilities in order to devote himself exclusively to the composition. He now had the opportunity to pursue his 'private affair' which he referred to in the quote opening this paper. His leaving was also made possible by the trust created by the Rose and Jacob Stern family of \$100,000. The Sterns were patrons of the arts in San Francisco and directed that the interest from the money be provided to Bloch for a ten-year period starting in 1930.

With his financial situation now secure, Bloch decided that he would leave America in order to work on Avodath Hakodesh. The preceding ten years, during which he directed two of America's leading musical institutions, had drained his physical energies, and he desired to go back to seclusion. He found it in the country of his birth, Switzerland. It is possible that he returned to Switzerland in order to return to his Jewish roots and remember what his father had taught him.

F. BLOCH IN EUROPE: 1930-1939

Following his resignation from San Francisco, and now financially secure, Ernest Bloch lived in seclusion at Roverdo Capriarsco, in the Canton of Ticino, until he completed Avodath Hakodesh in 1933. He suffered from a great deal of depression and illness while composing this work. This is one of the reasons as to why it took him nearly four years to complete it. In a letter to Cantor Rinder, Bloch reflects on his ill health as well as his high hopes for his new work:

I am not happy, and rather tormented as usual! And not altogether in good health, with terrible nights of sleeplessness. . . . I am battling against notes, sounds, rhythms, to extirpate out of my soul all of the unexpressed music which is latent--since centuries which was awaiting this marvelous text. . . . It will be a great work, I know. . . .³³

The thoroughness with which he studied the Hebrew text and the extent to which he internalized it in order to produce a work that would reflect his innermost feelings is shown in the quotation cited above the introduction to this paper. Bloch intended to write a great choral work, not for the critics, nor for the 'tradition' to which he subscribed. Rather, he was writing a work for the common man. He considered himself a simple person and was trying to express to the listener through music the thoughts and expressions of a simple man.

When Bloch completed the work in August, 1933, he stopped to reflect on the masterpiece that he had created. All of his emotions, feelings, and musical talents were incorporated into Avodath Hakodesh. In a letter to a friend, Bloch expressed his excitement and satisfaction with the work. To Bloch, it was no longer a simple commission by a synagogue in California. It is now a work of art, and one that would be shared with the entire world:

I must give you a few data about the 'Sacred Service'. In Europe too there is great interest and I received news and cables from around Italy and England--but I hope the world premiere can be arranged here [San Francisco] under my conducting, records made immediately--and possibly, too, the

³³Ibid., 69.

publication in English. . . . Clarence Barchard is publishing the Hebrew and English version, and I hope that some plans can take shape to have a New York premiere in the middle of November. After that I must go abroad, as Torino, Milano, Naples, and Florence all want me to conduct the work. I have reserved my rights for Europe. . . and a publication of the work in Italy probably [sic].³⁴

Though he expressed the hope of the world premiere taking place in America, it did not take place in Temple Emanuel, for which it had been commissioned, but rather in Turin, Italy on January 12, 1934. The critics gave the work glowing reviews and described it as Bloch at his best. The second performance took place in Naples a few months later, with Bloch conducting. He returned to America to arrange for the American premiere which was to take place in Carnegie Hall and not in San Francisco. It is ironic to note that Temple Emanuel had to wait until March, 1938, five years after its completion before they could perform the work. Even then, Bloch was unable to be there due to a revival of his opera Macbeth, being performed in La Scala.

What Bloch had created was a work of epic proportions, a Jewish oratorio that embodies "the essence of Israel's aspirations and message to the world."³⁵ Avodath Hakodesh is written for baritone Cantor, mixed chorus, and large orchestra. It is divided into five parts, representing the liturgy of the service, and performed

³⁴Clare R. Reis, "Previously Unpublished Composer's Letter's," Musical America, January, 1963, 15-19.

³⁵Ernest Bloch, Program Notes for the Sacred Service, Record Flap, London, LLP., 123.

without a break. The work has been compared to other epic choral works by the likes of Bach, Handel, and Beethoven. It has now been performed all over the world and with increased frequency.

Bloch wrote a very different work immediately following Avodath Hakodesh. In 1935, he wrote his Piano Sonata, dedicated to Guido Agosti. Here again, we find Bloch writing a work that expresses his view of life. In speaking about the final movement of this piano work, Bloch describes it as being "obscure and mysterious, like the great interrogation of life and the future which loses itself in the unknown."³⁶

Bloch continued with his composing throughout the 1930's and reached a milestone when his opera, Macbeth was revived in Naples, Italy. Both American and European critics acclaimed the production and the music. Unfortunately, Bloch's triumph was short lived. After only three performances, the Italian government shut down the opera in anticipation of Hitler's visit in May, 1938. Though the rise of anti-Semitism had begun to overtake Bloch, many well known conductors, musicologists, composers, and scientists joined together and formed the Ernest Bloch Society in London. The honorary president was Albert Einstein.

With World War II raging in Europe, and seeing so many of his friends losing their lives, Bloch lost all of his creative energies and decided that he would return to the United States with the hope of

³⁶Ernest Bloch, Liner Notes for the Recording of the Piano Sonata, Record Jacket, Music Library, 7015.

restoring his emotional stability and renewing his musical creativity.

G. BLOCH, THE RETURN TO AMERICA: 1939-1952

Bloch returned to the United States in the winter of 1939, filled with pain, and warning of Hitler's intentions in Europe. Bloch was again able to pick up on his second greatest love next to composing, teaching. In 1940, he was appointed as Professor of Music at the University of California at Berkeley. Bloch was immensely gratified by teaching again. He enjoyed arousing people to a deeper sense of understanding and love for music.

Bloch directly influenced the lives and careers of hundreds of music students. He taught an entire generation of America's most talented composers, among them Roger Sessions, Douglas Moore, Bernard Rogers, Randall Thompson, Quincy Porter, Ernst Bacon, Theodore Chanier, Herbert Ewell, George Antheil, Henry Cowell, Mark Brunswick, Isadore Freed, Frederick Jacobi, Esther Leginska, and Leon Kirchner. His daughter, Suzanne also received her early, intensive training in theory and composition from him.³⁷

Bloch and his family lived in Oregon in the small community of Lake Grove, near Portland. He traveled back and forth to California in order to teach. The constant travel put much stress on the family, almost to the point of separation and Mrs. Bloch decided to remain in Portland with the family while he traveled to and from California. Bloch's age began to take a toll on him. In 1941, while on his way to

³⁷Strassburg, 80.

Berkeley, Bloch was forced to stop at the resort village of Agate Beach, Oregon. He immediately fell in love with the surroundings and began to walk along the beach. During his walk, he found a beautiful home for sale and, soon after, purchased it. It was in these new found surroundings that Bloch's creative pause came to an end. In the eight years following he wrote a series of suites, concertos, string quartets, and organ preludes all in succession.

Bloch's self made seclusion at the Agate Beach caused him to complain that the outside world had forgotten him. However, his opinion is contradicted by the fact that he received many different honors and awards during the forties and fifties. One of his greatest honors came from the Reform Jewish movement. In 1950, the Chicago Federation of the American Hebrew Congregations decided to honor Bloch by hosting a six day festival of his music on the occasion of his Seventieth birthday. He concluded this very important period in his life by retiring from the University of California in 1952. An article written by three members of the faculty places in retrospect the lasting influence that Bloch had on the teachers and the institution:

The legacy of Ernest Bloch is in two parts, the intangible and the tangible. The intangible is the impact on his friends, associates, and students: The model of an exemplary musician, unswervingly dedicated to the canons of his art. The tangible is the body of his works written over a period of sixty years: Music that speaks with vigor, eloquence, and beauty.³⁸

³⁸A.I. Elkus, W.D. Nenny & E.B. Lawton Jr., "In Memoriam, Ernest Bloch," Preface to the Catalog of the Autograph Manuscripts of Ernest Bloch at the University of

H. BLOCH - THE FINAL YEARS: 1952-1959

Now that his teaching duties were over, Bloch rededicated himself to composition with a new surge of energy. One after the other he wrote ten chamber works, four for orchestra, including two symphonies. When asked what gave him this energy, Bloch points to his undying faith in God: "All my life I have attended God's university. This has made me rely on my thinking. . . . In God's university one finds many instructors with Nature as the head of the family."³⁹

Despite Bloch's emphasis on the idea of a sane mind and a healthy body, his age began to catch up with him. His health began to deteriorate during the fifties, foreshadowing the cancer that would eventually end his life in 1959. Considering the illness that he was suffering from, his accomplishments during the last few years of his life are to marvel. His final compositions were hailed by critics and fellow musicians as the best that Bloch had to offer. He was honored not only in the music world but in the Jewish world as well. He received honorary degrees from both the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Hebrew Union College in Humane Letters.

In the fall of 1958, Bloch learned that he had to have an operation in order to treat the cancer. Before he would allow it, he insisted on completing Two Last Poems, bearing the subtitles "Maybe..." and "Life Again." It is gravely meditative music which he

California, 1952, 6.

³⁹Ernest Bloch, "Thoughts at Seventy," Etude, February, 1951, 10.

wrote as a last attempt to reflect on his Hebraic heritage, as well as to express his philosophical acceptance of his impending death.

Ernest Bloch survived the surgery by ten months, but he would compose no more music, finally giving in to the illness he was afflicted with on July 15, 1959.

Though Ernest Bloch has left this world, he left a legacy of music and values that are to be marveled and emulated. In a talk with David Ewen, Bloch summarizes his beliefs and convictions:

Spiritual values never die. The universal must prevail. This crucial idea has permeated all my life and most of my works from the first C-Sharp Minor Symphony to my Sabbath Service. -My ultimate faith and belief is in the unity of man, in spite of real racial values and dissimilarities.

My faith is in justice--even delayed--on earth, on the right of each man to live as decently and usefully and giving to the community what he has to give, according to his gifts, his forces. This is the great idea of our great prophets, and also, in many ways the ideals of other races, like Confucius, Buddha, and Christ.⁴⁰

Ernest Bloch certainly gave all of his gifts to the community and to the entire world. Through his compositions which stir the soul, and move the listener to new heights, and through his writings which challenge the reader to not accept mediocrity and always strive toward the ultimate goals of peace and happiness for

⁴⁰David Ewen, "Ernest Bloch, The Composer Speaks," The Book of Modern Composers (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), 252.

all humankind, Ernest Bloch has left a legacy that will live on indefinitely.

CHAPTER 2

UNIVERSALISM AND AVODATH HAKODESH

In order to gain a full understanding of the issues involved with universalism and particularism, it is important to first have a working definition. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics defines universalism as:

The setting aside of the belief that a nation or race is privileged to enjoy the special protection and favor of God, or to deity when it recognizes as peculiarly its own; and contemplates all nations and races as standing, actually or potentially, in one and the same relation to one and the same God.⁴¹

This is in stark contrast to a general Jewish definition of particularism which states that "There is a focus on Israel's unique relationship with God rather than God's general relationship with the world."⁴²

Many of the Jewish writers and thinkers on universalism agree that the term universalism refers to a posture that rejects the election of Israel as a chosen people. Instead of the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, universalism is understood as the mission of Israel as being a light unto the nations, beyond the confines and needs of only the Jewish people. In Gates of Understanding 2, Dr. Lawrence Hoffman writes that:

⁴¹ James Hastings, The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 529.

⁴² Ronald Isaacs & Kerry Olitzky, A Glossary Of Jewish Life (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1992), 207.

God has chosen this particular people, and charged it with the task of bringing about the Messianic age of universal peace and harmony. This task is what we reform Jews call our 'mission' to work in partnership with the creator of all to achieve universal redemption from evil.⁴³

The leaders of the Reform movement during the first half of the twentieth century accentuated and made explicit the universalism implicit in classical Judaism. The writers of Reform Jewish liturgy went as far as changing the text of the prayerbook to eliminate references to Israel and Jews as a chosen people. It can be argued that the writers of the Union Prayerbook made a conscious effort to remove the particularly Jewish elements from the prayerbook in favor of a more universal and less particularistic liturgy. Prayers like the "Aleynu" were changed and others removed completely so that the focus was on universal justice rather than particularistic aspects of Jewish theology.

Yet, there is a dilemma when dealing with Ernest Bloch's ideas as they relate to Avodath Hakodesh. "Liturgy is intrinsically particularistic. The worship service is a time for the community to evoke it's inner history--it's own singular experience of the living

⁴³Lawrence Hoffman, Gates of Understanding 2 (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1982), 42.

God."⁴⁴ Though Bloch chose to use the Reform prayerbook text, he makes further strides in expressing a universal message through a new and innovative musical interpretation of it. Ernest Bloch in the writing of his service is attempting to take a liturgy which is particularistic in its content and give a universalistic message to the world. We are presented with a dichotomy. Can something be both particularistic and universalistic at the same time?

This question is addressed by Dr. Eugene Borowitz, one of the premiere Jewish theologians of the twentieth century. Borowitz says that the answer is yes, Jews must be particularistic while giving a universal message. However, they are first and foremost Jews, with an important history to remember.

No caring Jew can easily forget that the very people that proclaimed itself the great example of universal humanism did it's methodical best to destroy us while the liberal democracies found ways to mitigate the murder; therefore, many Jews were not shocked that as freedom came to Eastern Europe, ugly religious and nationalist anti-Semitism reappeared.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence Hoffman, The Changing Face of Jewish and Christian Worship in North America (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 39.

⁴⁵Eugene Borowitz, Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 183.

The theological task is to manifest "a bipolar faith, one dialectically juxtaposing the importance of particular instances to that of ideal universals."⁴⁶ More than it being our task, Borowitz cites it as a commandment. "Whereas contemporary philosophy can at best only commend universal human dignity, Hebrew scriptures command it."⁴⁷

Bloch took this commandment to heart. Borowitz makes a very important personal statement that relates to the writings of Bloch as well. He states:

I retain my strong universalism, because of my Jewish faith--that is, because I am a particularist. The same is true of many Christians and adherents of other religions as well. We cannot surrender, in the name of humankind, our vigorous commitment to our distinctive faith without thereby surrendering the very mandate that alone can now require us to dignify all humankind.⁴⁸

Though writing for the world and attempting to deliver a universal message, Ernest Bloch still was connected to his Judaism and his upbringing. It was from this standpoint that he composed and wrote about Avodath Hakodesh.

⁴⁶Ibid., 183.

⁴⁷Ibid., 185.

⁴⁸Ibid., 187.

Ernest Bloch's ideas about universalism fit easily into the working definition. He made a conscious effort to remove the "chosen people" idea from the service in favor of a more universal interpretation. It is clear that Bloch identified himself as a Jew. However, his message was one for the world. Bloch's writings on the work reflect his message. He looked at the text of the service as a great message to be given to the world. "I did not write that only first-class artists could interpret it; but that any modest musicians, providing they could sing the notes and felt the text could carry that message."⁴⁹ In the previous chapter, I discussed how Bloch put all of his life experiences into his compositions. This is especially true of Avodath Hakodesh. Bloch states:

Had I been born on a desert island I could not have written it. It contains life with its joys, sufferings around me and within me, the plants, rocks, clouds, the birds, the animals; all of nature have contributed to it. I have been only the humble worker, trying to do his best.⁵⁰

Bloch has an explanation for each and every part of the service. It is clear that he had an inner struggle to find the hidden meaning behind the words. He uses words like "unity", "laws of nature",

⁴⁹Quote by Ernest Bloch, taken from Strassburg, 137.

⁵⁰Ibid., 137.

"cosmic", "suffering", and "hope" to describe just some of the feelings he encountered during the composition of Avodath Hakodesh.

It contains the old Jewish message of faith and hope in life. It is a human thing. When I used the word 'Israel', I thought of it in a symbolic way. I wrote it from my heart, with my roots in the Jewish soil, for the whole outside world. The entrance of the Jewish element is dramatic.⁵¹

All of these inner feelings combined to give his universal message to the world.

The clearest way to see how Ernest Bloch envisioned his universal message is to look at his writings about Avodath Hakodesh. One of the best sources is a series of letters written by Bloch to Cantor Rinder over the course of the writing of Avodath Hakodesh (a copy of these letters appear in Appendix II). Additionally, Bloch wrote the program notes for the American premiere, as well as a speech, delivered in 1933, when the composition of Avodath Hakodesh was nearing it's completion. Bloch begins his program notes by discussing the message. He looks at the work as a gift to all of mankind.

Though intensely Jewish in its roots, this message seems to me above all a gift of Israel to the whole of mankind. It symbolizes for me, far more than a 'Jewish service', but, in

⁵¹Quote by Ernest Bloch, taken from Strassburg, 139.

it's great simplicity and variety, it embodies a philosophy acceptable to all men.⁵²

He describes the work as a whole drama, that is divided into five parts much like the Catholic mass, and must be performed without interruption. In his Program Notes, Bloch lays out the different interpretations he has for the individual parts of the service and how each of the prayers fits into them. One simple way to express these parts and interpretations is in chart form. In chart 1, I have presented the liturgical passages that form each of the five parts of Avodath Hakodesh. In chart 2, I have presented Bloch's interpretations of these prayers (see Charts 1 & 2 on p. 63-64).

It is interesting to note that when looking at the liturgical parts, "Tzur Yisrael" appears twice--in part I, and part V (see chart 1). This prayer does not traditionally appear in this part of the service. Bloch moved this text consciously in order to emphasize his point, that of universal human suffering. All of the interpretations presented in chart 2 were discussed in detail by Bloch through his writings. His message and interpretation of the text will be discussed as this chapter develops.

⁵²Ernest Bloch, Program Notes of the Schola Cantorum of New York, April 11, 1934 Sacred Service, 6.

It is clear from looking at these liturgical interpretations that they are not particularly Jewish but can be applied to other liturgies as well. In order to understand how Bloch conveyed his message through his music, I shall now discuss each part of Avodath Hakodesh in detail, showing how Bloch delivered his universal message through the music.

PART I

Ernest Bloch looks at the opening of the work as a meditation, simple, yet mixing the secular and the sacred which is a part of everyday life. He calls the opening six note motive⁵³ cosmic, as if coming right out of the universe and giving the work a musical and spiritual unity. The "Ma Tov" text serves as an invocation, inviting the listener to become involved emotionally in the music. He describes his interpretation of it as if it is coming out of the desert, "the Temple of God in Nature."⁵⁴ He looks at the "Barchu" as a more liturgical element and "Shema" to be the great proclamation of faith, "the essential affirmation of unity."⁵⁵ Both the "Barchu"

⁵³See Theme A on page 71.

⁵⁴Ibid., 7.

⁵⁵Ibid.

and "Shema" cause an exuberant response of great adulation and exaltation by the choir.

To Bloch, one of the most important moments are those where the orchestra plays an interlude. He inserted these interludes into the service to replace the responsive readings which he found disturbing. It was more important for him to create a mood for people to go into silent meditation and prayer.

The "V'Ahavta" prayer was one that Bloch found to be of a different character than the prayers appearing before it. In his opinion, it showed that religion can and must be a part of everyday life.

In many ways, it characterizes the union of religion and everyday life. Simplicity and grandeur in all things--a kind of sublimation of these things and their sacredness. It is the idea, too, of certain symbols kept constantly in sight, in mind, and alive--not a religion of words, but of acts.⁵⁶

Bloch describes the "Mi Chamocho" prayer as a response to an important announcement, culminating in the triumphant exclamation of "Adonay Yimloch." His interpretation of the "Tzur Yisrael" shows his deep understanding of the text. He takes a very radical approach to the text, changing it from a specific plea for Jews, to one for all

⁵⁶ibid

people. The translation below reflects a more traditional interpretation of the text. It is important to note the difference between the prayers emphasis on Israel and Bloch's emphasis on all humanity. It is not a plea for all Israel but must be looked at as a tragedy, "all the misery, the sufferings of humanity--symbolized in a crowd of poor, persecuted people,"⁵⁷ symbolizing the suffering of all humanity.

O Rock of Israel, come to Israel's help. Fulfill your promise of redemption for Judah and all Israel. Our Redeemer is the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel. Blessed is the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.⁵⁸

It is important to note that Cantor Rinder composed the music for the "Tzur Yisrael". Bloch liked the traditional version so much, he included it exactly as Rinder had composed.

The symbol of the Rock 'my helper, my shelter' is symbolic of the whole misunderstanding of the world, the lamentation of the rich because they are poor and the poor because they are, all asking for the help of God, thus with the Amens ending the first part.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid

⁵⁸The text is taken from Gates Of Prayer - The New Union Prayerbook (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975), 305.

⁵⁹Speech by Ernest Bloch presented at the University of California at Berkeley, June 7, 1933, found in Strassburg, 141.

Here we see a clear example of taking a prayer which is clearly particularistic and giving it a universal message by means of interpretation and explanation. The translation of the text, along with the interpretation by Bloch shows the depths which Bloch went to in order to give his message to the world. In the mind of Ernest Bloch, universalism is not only in the content of the text, but in the expression of it.

PART II

Ernest Bloch describes the "Kedusha" as coming from another world, and a dialogue between God and man. He compares it to the "Sanctus" of the Catholic church in its message. He uses the words "seraphic" and "mysterious" to describe the "Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh." To Bloch, it is a call to the one high above the heavens. He looks at this dialogue as a higher chorus in the heavens and another crowd on earth, giving a response.

In the second part we are in another world, more earthly, this is the sanctification, a dialogue between God and Man, the chorus discovering the law of the atom, the stars, the whole universe, the One, He, our God. Then the crowd on earth taking up the chorus, our King, our Messiah, our liberator, then the exaltation, and hallelujah.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Ibid., 141.

The "Echad Hu Eloheinu" is interpreted by Bloch to symbolize the affirmation of the beginning of the world by the cantor and then the chorus as if the people are reaffirming their faith. This part ends with the choir exalting with joy as they sing "Yimloch Adonai L'olam" thus affirming their faith and the idea of perpetuity.

PART III

The third part deals entirely with the service for the reading of the Torah. "The taking of the Torah from the ark is the greatest symbol of the whole service, and, for me, of our philosophy of life -- Jewish or non-Jewish, the need of justice, of order in this poor little planet."⁶¹ In his program notes, Bloch quotes the philosopher Goethe to symbolize the necessity for order, discipline, and limitations: "outwardly limited, inwardly unlimited."⁶² One must be free in their thinking, and careful in it's public expression. In Bloch's mind, before one can deal with the law and understand it, one must first submit to its discipline and

⁶¹Letter from Ernest Bloch to Cantor Reuben Rinder, dated November 26, 1930, found in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 4.

⁶²Bloch Program Notes, 8.

restrictions and a purification of the heart. To do this musically, Bloch begins this part with a short prelude, followed by "Y'hiu L'ratzon" expressing these feelings. One of the ways he brings in the mystical element was by eliminating the orchestra part. It begins with the women's voices a capella, with the men following, coming out as if the text and the music is coming down from heaven.

With the preparation now complete, Bloch begins by having the cantor intone "Su Shearim." He describes it in the following quote: "I interpreted this as clouds rising. . .high in the sky. . .darkening receding, out of mans heart--that the lights may enter it."⁶³

In the speech at Berkeley, Ernest Bloch admits that he had trouble understanding the hidden meaning behind some of the texts. One such text was the "Su Shearim."

When I read 'Lift up your heads, oh ye gates and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in'⁶⁴ I could not understand what this was about. It mystified, puzzled, and worried me. I was in the Switzerland mountains at the time, the day was foggy, the fir trees drooped, the landscape was covered with sadness, I could not see the light. Suddenly, a wind came up, the clouds in the sky parted and the

⁶³ibid., 8.

⁶⁴The text comes from the Psalms and can be found in the service for the reading of the Torah.

sun was over everything. I had understood. I felt God was within me at the time in lifting up the clouds.⁶⁵

He continues with his interpretation of its meaning. Bloch again puts a universal spin on the text by describing the doors as

A door⁶⁶ painted with the varnish of communism, technocracy, the cults, sects, fetishism's of today. . . . Once we remove the clouds from our mind and life, and our hearts become as a little child, then the truth will come in as a king of glory.

He was deeply moved by the symbolism he found in the text. He wanted to express the wish "that all man may liberate himself from hate, prejudice, dark instincts, regression, all that lowers him and prevents him from seeing the truth, from going forward, from rising above himself."⁶⁷ With the Torah being taken from the Ark, the cantor and chorus call out for all of mankind to walk in the Light of the Lord. Part III concludes with the same sense of exaltation found in part II as the choir sings "L'cha Adonai."

⁶⁵Strassburg, 140.

⁶⁶In my opinion, there are two explanation for what the "doors" refers too. First, the doors are the entrance to heaven which must be opened in order for one to enter. Additionally, these doors may be the doors to justice, and freedom for all humanity. It may be that Bloch had both of these interpretations in mind when he wrote this work.

⁶⁷Bloch, 8.

PART IV

Part IV begins in much the same way as part III concluded. It begins with a glorification, however this time for putting the Torah back in the ark. "Man has been washed of all his miseries. He has absorbed an idea, a faith, he is no more alone--and the whole color has changed."⁶⁸ Though the Torah is now back in the Ark, and is hidden, Bloch states that "it must become a part of our life, remain alive in the hearts of men."⁶⁹ After the call by the cantor, the chorus exalts with the singing of "Hodo Al Eretz." Bloch uses the fourth part to remind the listener of the greatness, wisdom, and perfection's found in the Torah. The cantor and choir alternate in the singing of "Torat Adonai" as if the cantor is the teacher and the choir the pupils, telling them never to forsake what they have been given.

The fear of the Lord enters in the softest way, like a little wind, not as a mighty earthquake. 'Thus a good doctrine was given to you, do not forsake the precepts, the tree of life, the supporter of health, for those who follow this pathway are sure of happiness.'⁷⁰

⁶⁸Bloch Letter, 5.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 8.

⁷⁰Strassburg, 141. The text of the quote is Bloch's translation of the traditional "Etz Chayim" prayer.

This part ends with a stirring, yet contemplative chorus of "Etz Chayim," a prayer of peace.

PART V

In this last part, Ernest Bloch makes the ultimate effort to symbolize the texts and to make their message universal. He describes this part as a epilogue to the whole work. With the fifth part comes the whole realization of humanity, the love of God and commitment to the faith. He states how moved he was by the text though at the time he was in great distress. This part begins with the recitation of the "Vaanachnu" prayer, expressing the peace and solemnity of the Sabbath. Bloch found the message of the next liturgical passage so important that in the directions for the performance of Avodath Hakodesh, he directed that the text be sung in a recitative style using the language of the country where was performed--be it in English, French, Italian, or German. It was important that the universal message of undying faith and hope be expressed directly to the people hearing and performing the work. Though Bloch used the interpretation of the texts to give his message, such as in "Tzur Yisrael," we see here for the first time,

Bloch giving emphasis to the actual text rather than the music or interpretation to express the message. The chorus responds to the dramatic invocation by singing in Hebrew "On that day the Lord shall be one, and His name shall be one!"⁷¹

There is a sudden mood change that occurs immediately following the choir's exclamation. We come to the dark and tragic remembrance of the dead.

This is the thought of those 'who have finished their earthly cause. . .the memory of those who have departed but have not ceased to be.' Then at the words 'in the divine order of nature' is expressed the whole philosophy of the work. All this, from the recitative in English, is a projection, more general, more universal, of the hidden philosophy of the service proper, a kind of radiation, of announcement, of its central idea to the whole of mankind. It is, in fact, the conception of the Hebrew Prophets, the living, universal, eternal contribution of Israel to all humanity.⁷²

Bloch writes how deeply moved he was by the text. He was in great distress during the writing of this part and it was then that he found the interpretation for this text:

Something within myself was breaking my life and heart. Then appeared a philosophy of the whole life and death, that in the fullness of time we shall know why we are brought sorrow as well as happiness, to wait patiently and be of good courage,

⁷¹Composer's translation of the prayer "Bayom Hahu."

⁷²*Ibid.*, 9. Text for quotes come from the Union Prayerbook, 150-151.

then surely our souls would be satisfied. Not to question, but to have faith and not judge people's actions.⁷³

His musical direction for this part reflects how he saw this text coming across to the listener.

On my sketches I have here almost a need of voices, repeating, rather muttering a kind of supplication, very cloudy, misty, distant, almost not to be heard. . . . I hope you understand what I mean, it must be as if from a distant crowd--humanity, a kind of lamentation of supplication, hopelessness in the face of death, dust, the nothingness of man. The music here is almost stagnant, slow, veiled, stopped--a very dramatic moment, to remind us all, what we are, how stupid our pride, our possessions, our vanity, our hardness of heart, our wars, our cruelties--and then our light will come."⁷⁴

In order to emphasize this drama and supplication, Bloch takes the "Tzur Yisrael" and places it in the part. As I expressed earlier in reference to "Tzur Yisrael" in Part I, it does not traditionally appear in this section of the service. Bloch moved a piece of the liturgy from its natural position in the service to another position in order to emphasize his feelings and emotions.

It was important to Bloch to bring the focus back to the dramatic, tragic aspect of the Jewish experience one more time before concluding the work. Bloch uses the "Adon Olam" in order to

⁷³Quote by Ernest Bloch, found in Strassburg, 142.

⁷⁴Bloch Letter, November 26, 1930, 10.

try and explain life and death, peace, and ultimate faith in God. It was through this prayer that Bloch hoped to shine the light of peace. Suzanne Bloch writes that it was this poem which her father loved the most. When her father was nearing the end of his life, she attempted to interview him specifically about the importance he put on "Adon Olam." However, he died a few days before the recording. It embodied all of the beliefs and philosophies to which Bloch ascribed. "I do not know anything which unites more closely science, the real, great, eternal science, not fads!--and religion than this Adon Olam!"⁷⁵ Bloch ascribes to Cantor Rinder his experience and interpretation of the text:

It is the greatest philosophy of all! An atheist can subscribe to it, if he changes the name of God into the "Laws of the Universe." This Adon Olam seems to me the final word of all metaphysics! This Lord of eternity who did reign 'before all forms were created!' and who will after the 'entire annihilation of all these forms', when the worlds have disappeared, vanished, still rule alone. . . . The two last strophes are quite different--no more cosmos, but earth and man--the microcosm, after the microcosm--It is God leaning toward man--as the Jehovah of the cosmos. This is our Christianity, the God near man, and not in need of taking a human shape, of being crucified, but without shape, without beginning and no end, ever present--and in the last strophe, it is man towards God.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Ibid., 13.

⁷⁶Ibid., 6.

Clearly, Bloch is deeply moved by the text and puts a universal slant on all of his interpretations, even referring to Christianity. Another example of the importance he found in this prayer is how he interpreted the last verse, "Beyado afkid ruchi. . ."

Into His hand I commit my spirit
And with my spirit my body
The Lord is with me --
I shall not fear.⁷⁷

It is interesting to note the similarities between Bloch's interpretation of the verse and the Lords Prayer (Psalm 23) which reads in much the same way. Besides his universal interpretation, we see here, the composers acceptance of death just as he accepted life:

with serenity, confidence, and the conviction that man is too small, too limited, imprisoned in the narrow wall of his senses, to be able to understand the Infinite, the Absolute. . . . He ignores entirely the causes, of which all is essential--Time, Space, Matter, Thought. . . . Thus, as a last resort, he commits himself, soul and body, into God's hand--or if one prefers, he relies humbly upon the huge forces, the laws, the everlasting and higher truth of the universe--and their ultimate wisdom."⁷⁸

⁷⁷Bloch, "Program Notes," 9.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 9-10.

BENEDICTION

As with the other parts of Avodath Hakodesh, Ernest Bloch struggled in an attempt to end the piece with a meaningful and hopeful text. He chose to use the "Priestly Benediction." It was not easy for him to compose the ending. He had spent nearly four years on the work and it had taken a toll on him. He thought he would not be able to complete the work. He writes that it took him nearly two-years to write the twenty-five concluding measures.

Two years of groping in the darkness it took to deliver the message to the people, the conquering of death, life, suffering with the highest sense and in the highest proportion. 'Judge not that ye be judged.' If I were a judge and had to condemn a man, I would ask for his forgiveness for condemning him, as the social law so commanded me to do.⁷⁹

Avodath Hakodesh ends with the orchestra and choir sending the message of faith, hope and courage. It culminates in a lively and powerful set of "Amen" and then it is over.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE OF AVODATH HAKODESH

In looking at the universal message of Avodath Hakodesh, Ernest Bloch uses many different words and philosophical phrases to express his ideas. Yet, what is not clear is whether or not that

message was and is received by the audience that hears it and by the people who perform it. In order for a message to be effective, there must be both a transmitter and a receiver. If Ernest Bloch wants to get his message across, he must use words and music. Avodath Hakodesh is distinguished by a profound philosophic conception of the text, with all of its different connotations, mystical and philosophical. Bloch made it known that these philosophies were not exclusively for a race, dogma, or creed, but for all of mankind. Many biographers and reviewers have commented on the message of Avodath Hakodesh. Some acknowledge the universal appeal of the work while others state that no matter what Bloch's attempts were, the work is still predominately for Jews. For the purpose of this paper, I have gleaned many different musical reviews from newspapers and magazines. Two of the writers who wrote extensively on Avodath Hakodesh were Ernest Newman, and W.J. Henderson, both newspaper writers. They focused their comments on the universal message of the work.

In Newman's opinion, in order for one to hear Bloch's message, one needs to listen with thoughts from which all associations with

⁷⁹Quote by Ernest Bloch, found in Strassburg, 142.

Christian structures such as the mass have been temporarily banished. According to Newman:

The Catholic mass is a skillful piece of dramatic construction providing liberal contrasts and telling climaxes. There is nothing 'dramatic' about the Sacred Service; this is mainly contemplative and philosophical, though of course there are highlights as well as low.⁸⁰

I disagree with the above comment by Ernest Newman. There are many dramatic moments in Avodath Hakodesh. However, in order to gain a full understanding of the drama in this work, one needs to look deeper into the text as well as the music. Only then can one find the deep meaning which Bloch is providing.

W.J. Henderson adds an important insight into the universal appeal and message of Avodath Hakodesh. He writes that music is the only form of art which can tie together the expression of man and the desire for worship. Henderson states:

The point is that when Bloch tells us that his service is not to be regarded as strictly Jewish, but as addressed to all mankind, he is saying something quite unnecessary. Neither Mr. Bloch nor any sect, creed, or commentator can keep his music from universal appeal if it adequately expresses the human desire for worship. If it can do that, it is certain of an appeal to something elemental in human nature.⁸¹

⁸⁰Ernest Newman, "Bloch's Sacred Service: A Work Jewish at Heart," The Sunday London Times, April 3, 1939, 7.

In my opinion, non-Jews can have a far easier time hearing this message than Jews. Jews can relate directly to the text, the language, and at certain times, the music which contains elements specifically Jewish. It will therefore seem odd to hear these texts performed out of the sacred space to which they are accustomed. These musical elements will be specified in more detail in the next chapter. To the non-Jewish listener, the impact of Bloch's message resides mainly in the intensity of his personal expression--both musically as well as philosophically.

Anytime someone attends a concert of an oratorio society, or a symphony concert at which a mass is performed, he or she can be satisfied that not race, nor creed, but humanity itself is concerned with the music.

Thousands of devout Jews listen with joy to Handel's Messiah, Bach's Christmas Oratorio, the St. Matthew's Passion, or the B-Minor Mass. If Mr. Bloch has succeeded in musically voicing the lofty thoughts conveyed by the Hebrew ritual, he will have thousands of devout Christians listening with uplifted spirits.⁸²

⁸¹W. J. Henderson, "Music and Musicians," The New York Times Sunday, April 6, 1934.

⁸²*Ibid.*

Johannes Brahms is one composer who Bloch can be compared to as one who attempts to express a universal message through liturgically based music in a concert setting. In writing his German Requiem, completed in 1868, Brahms makes a conscious effort to remove all of the direct references to Christ in favor of a more pious orientation to the world. Brahms, like Bloch, was not 'religious' in the strict sense of the word, but was concerned with advancing the message of compassion and hope. He was obsessed by human mortality and wanted to compose music associated with death and mourning throughout his life. The text chosen for the Requiem was not the standard text used in a mass. Rather, he chose the text himself from reading the Bible and it is non-denominational, centering on the idea of the resurrection of the dead, rather than the fear of the day of judgment. Additionally, he wrote it in the German vernacular rather than in Latin. When challenged on his avoidance of references to Christ in the text, Brahms declined to change it, indicating that he would not be held down to doctrine and standards. As Brahms put it, "I could easily dispense with the word 'German' and replace it with 'Human.'"⁸³

Here we see another composer trying to give a message similar to Ernest Bloch's. Both tried to deliver a universal message of hope for all humanity and compassion for all people, not just Jews or Christians. Both of these men expressed a philosophy that is inherent in the Romantic style of music composition. In the book Thinking About Music, by Lewis Rowell, we find the use of words and phrases that are almost verbatim to the expressions of Bloch and Brahms. Descriptions such as cosmic, introspection, emotion, exotic, and unique are words that are used to convey this style of music. If we look at the writings of Ernest Bloch, we can see the use of similar words and phrases to express his message. Describing how romantic composers expressed their feelings and emotions, Rowell states:

By the early nineteenth century, it was generally agreed that of all the arts, music was the best able to express the depths of human feelings, not in conventionalized language of the accents but in deeper yet less definitive accents. The type of communication underwent a subtle change: Instead of the objective presentation of the symbol of emotion, the Romantic composer sought to purge himself of the symbol of emotion through the production of his work, a kind of catharsis.⁸⁴

⁸³Martin Ennis, Ein Deutsches Requiem, OP. 45, taken from Booklet accompanying recording of Ein Deutsches Requiem, Philips, 1990. Catalog #D115329 Produced by Wouter Hoekstra. One compact disc (1.05'48" Duration). Booklet (11 pages).

Ernest Bloch, fits into this mold of expression. Both in his composition of Avodath Hakodesh, as well as in his writings, Bloch gives all of his innermost emotions, and purges himself through music.

Another way of determining Bloch's message is how he treated the sacred texts as compared with other composers. Ernest Newman compares Bloch's musical interpretation of the text "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord strong and mighty" from Part III, with Handel's treatment of it in his oratorio, Messiah. The two composers treat the text very differently, reflecting their respective messages. Handel expresses the message of the text with a great deal of pageantry and triumph while Bloch begins with a grand statement by the cantor and then an immediate mood change. There is a change from exaltation to contemplation. One composer uses the text to express great joy, and one uses it to convey the inner struggle, but ultimate commitment to God. This sudden mood change in Avodath Hakodesh expresses Ernest Bloch's view of the text--that of justice, order, and hope.

⁸⁴Lewis Rowell, Thinking About Music (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 118.

Though some writers regarded Avodath Hakodesh to be a work with a universal appeal and message, others look at the message to Jews and the particularity of the work. They feel that though the service has universal appeal, the service is clearly Jewish at heart; Bloch may mourn the sufferings that the modern world has brought on itself by its blindness and cruelty, but he suffers in the first place as a Jew.

His aspirations for a better world in which hatred and division shall have made way for human brotherhood is universal in its scope, but even for the non-Jewish listener, what gives this music its particularly moving quality is the cry throughout it all of a sorely persecuted race.⁸⁵

Ernest Newman is very critical of Bloch's message. To Newman, there is an inner clash between what is in Bloch's mind and what is in his heart. He accuses Bloch of saying one thing in his writings and another thing in his music. Using the text "Hear O'Israel; The Lord our God is One," from part I and III, Newman attempts to prove his point. He complains that if this indeed is the Jewish creed, why is it that each of the two times it appears in Avodath Hakodesh, it ends with a wild orchestral dissonance, and a heartrending orchestral cry? He writes:

⁸⁵Newman, 7.

It is as if the composer, in his heart had little belief in his own words of faith and hope. I know no other religious music that presents us with an intellectual and emotional dilemma of this strange kind.⁸⁶

I disagree with Newman's interpretation of the music. It is precisely because of Ernest Bloch's deep understanding of the text that he gives this musical message. One can not look at Bloch's treatment of the text in the same way that one would look at Christian composers. Nowhere in this work is there a great feeling of exaltation and religious superiority that can be found in other religious works such as Messiah. Ernest Bloch is giving a message that though he believes in the text as Israel's creed, it is not the only creed. Bloch is showing his openness to other religions and other expressions of faith.

SYNOPSIS

The universal versus particular question is not one that is simple to answer. The Avodath Hakodesh shows Ernest Bloch's profound religious belief, seeking an outlet through music. It proclaims Bloch not only as a composer of great musical genius, but as the living voice of the Jewish people of his time.

⁸⁶ibid.

I feel that merely listening to a performance of Avodath Hakodesh is not enough to hear and understand Ernest Bloch's universal message. Listeners to the work must let the music and the text sink in. They need to live with it and make it a part of them in order to understand the deeper universal message. Additionally, it is important to read the notes written by Bloch on the work. It is only through a combination of internalization and study that Avodath Hakodesh will receive universal appeal and acknowledgment--not as a great Jewish work, but one that will be received by music lovers of all races and creeds as one of the great choral works of our time. Ernest Bloch communicated this message in a letter to Cantor Rinder in 1931. In the letter, Bloch expressed his desire to give the work a title other than the "Sacred Service" because it embodied much more than just a Jewish work. He desired a title that would reflect "the eternal ideal of the Prophets--the unity of man, in God--of the fulfillment of peace on earth."⁸⁷ He suggested titles such as "May Thy Kingdom Come" or "May Thy Kingdom Be Established on Earth" as a title more reflective of his message.

⁸⁷Letter to Ernest Bloch to Cantor Reuben Rinder, dated March 5, 1931, found in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 5.

Perhaps, Ernest Bloch best communicates his message better than anyone else could attempt to do. In describing his Avodath Hakodesh he said:

I really think this music--of the whole service--is the simplest and most moving--and deep [sic.]--I ever wrote--It is out of the time we live in. It is more than 'Jewish'--it is human and universal--I hope so at least--it is the deepest truths and hopes of humanity, expressed according to a Jewish heart--and that is all that I can say.⁸⁸

⁸⁸*ibid.*, 5.

CHART 1

LITURGICAL PASSAGES IN AVODATH HAKODESH

<u>PART</u>	<u>LITURGICAL PASSAGES</u>
I	OPENING MEDITATION MA TOVU BARCHU SHEMA V'AHAVTA MI CHAMOCHA TZUR YISRAEL
II	KEDUSHA ECHAD HU ELOHEINU YIMLOCH
III	Y'HIU L'RATZON SU SHAARIM TORAH TZIVAH SHEMA/ECHAD L'CHA ADONAI
IV	HODO AL ERETZ TORAT ADONAI ETZ CHAYIM
V	VAANACHNU BAYOM HAHU ALEYNU TZUR YISRAEL ADON OLAM
BENEDICTION	YEVORECECHA

CHART 2

INTERPRETATIONS OF PRAYERS IN AVODATH HAKODESH AS DESCRIBED

BY ERNEST BLOCH

<u>INTERPRETATIONS</u>	<u>PRAYER</u>
• FEELINGS OF NATURE	OPENING MEDITATION MA TOVU
• COSMIC ELEMENTS	SHEMA ECHAD HU ELOHEINU ADON OLAM
• NECESSITY OF ORDER, DISCIPLINE & ORGANIZATION	V'AHAVTA TORAH SERVICE
• EXALTATION OF MEN	MI CHAMOCHA ECHAD HU ELOHEINU YIMLOCH L'CHA ADONAI HODO AL ERETZ ETZ CHAYIM
• DRAMATIC TRAGICAL SIDE	TZUR YISRAEL
• MYSTICAL AND ETHEREAL ELEMENT	KEDUSHA
• PHILOSOPHICAL	ADON OLAM

CHAPTER 3

SACRED VERSUS SECULAR DRAMA

Ernest Bloch, in composing Avodath Hakodesh utilized both Jewish and non-Jewish musical elements to express his universal message. In looking at the music and the text, we are presented with an important question. Is Avodath Hakodesh a sacred work, written specifically for the synagogue and utilizing a sacred text, or is it a secular work, utilizing sacred text, but meant for use in a secular, 'oratorio' fashion?

As with the issues presented in the previous chapter, it is important to look at some general definitions of how sacred and secular music are defined, as well as what an oratorio is, and how Avodath Hakodesh fits into these definitions.

Dr. Lawrence Hoffman discusses the qualities that makes music sacred. Many people identify a particular sound as belonging to a church or a synagogue as opposed to the sound one might hear on a stage or in a concert hall.

It seems hard to imagine that sacrality inheres in certain musical styles, but not others, since, for example, Black spirituals sound nothing like Bach chorales; the traditional chanting of Moroccan Jewry is a far cry from measured Gregorian chant, and both have little in common with Verdi,

Brahms, and Mozart, who have, in turn, not much in common with each other.⁸⁹

Hoffman uses "Hatikvah" as an example of a piece of music whose sacrality depends largely on something other than purely musical considerations. Here we have music whose text is not sacred, yet takes on that image based on the setting that it is presented in. National anthems of countries are examples of songs that have no religious content to them, but are looked at both by performers and those that hear them as if they are sacred pieces, because they symbolize or represent a countries ideals. One can see that music becomes sacred based on how it is used, not how it is written.

Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service and Verdi's Four Seasons are used by Hoffman as examples of works that have always been considered sacred. However, "it seems hard to imagine that what prompted their titles is the sacrality of the musical compositions themselves."⁹⁰ Can we then simply define a work as sacred because of the lyrics. Hoffman, says no. "It can hardly serve as a defining

⁸⁹Lawrence Hoffman, The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only (Washington D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1988), 246.

⁹⁰*ibid.*, 247.

quality of sacred music, since, in that case, any music at all would be sacred as long as the words are sacred."⁹¹

How then do we define a work as being sacred or secular? In Hoffman's opinion, music is sacred not by what it is--either musically or lyrically, but by what it does.

Worship is just one of the goals that Judaism and Christianity define among their favored religious activities. To the extent that music performs 'felicitously' in a sacred cause, it is sacred music; to the extent that the cause is worship, it is liturgical sacred music. And the type of worship act that the music is intended to facilitate depends entirely on the theological presumptions of the tradition in question.⁹²

In my opinion, Sacred music should be able to take the listener on a spiritual journey and leave them in a state of being for the better by hearing and becoming a part of the liturgical experience. However, we still have the question of how Ernest Bloch looked at the work. Did he consider it a sacred work, for the synagogue, or did he conceive of it as a Jewish oratorio, a drama, expousing the composers ideals and hopes. An Oratorio is defined as:

An extended musical setting of a sacred text made up of dramatic, narrative, and contemplative elements. Except for the greater emphasis on the chorus throughout much of its history, the musical forms and styles of the oratorio

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid., 252.

approximate to those of opera in any given period, and the normal manner of performance is that of a concerto.⁹³

There is much evidence to suggest that Bloch, though using sacred text, was composing a work far greater than what was originally commissioned and was intended not for performance or presentation in the synagogue, but for the concert stage. Avodath Hakodesh fits well with the above definition. Bloch's work is an extended setting, and has a great emphasis on the choral parts, and has been performed in a concert manner.

There is evidence to show that Bloch never intended Avodath Hakodesh for the synagogue but rather, for the concert stage. To begin, if one looks at the sheer scale of Avodath Hakodesh, it becomes evident that a synagogue does not have the capacity to do a full performance unless the congregation has tremendous financial resources at their disposal. The orchestral and choral requirements alone are such that most synagogues do not even have the space to put on such a work. The instrumentation calls for thirty-five strings, full woodwinds, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, two harps, celeste, and considerable percussion.

⁹³Howard Smither, "Oratorio," New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians. 5th Edition (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1980), 656.

The choral score lends itself to a large choir with many voices to cover the different vocal parts. Bloch admits to Cantor Rinder shortly after accepting the commission, that it had already become much more than a service for the synagogue. He writes:

Of course, I will write a service, as I said, for a Reform synagogue service, that is, in simple for, as you saw some of the sketches, but, besides and more and more, it became imperious for me to give such a poem a larger and still more elaborate form--and it will become a huge cosmic poem for orchestra, cantor and chorus, containing naturally the whole service as it will exist for the synagogue, but with orchestral interludes which will replace the 'words' spoken--even for the synagogue. I hope to replace often the prayer by words, by a prayer from the heart.⁹⁴

Bloch looked at Avodath Hakodesh as a Jewish oratorio, made up of five parts, plus a sixth (Benediction), serving as a conclusion. It is interesting to note the similarity of the structure of this work to the structure of the Catholic mass. It too is made up of five parts. Clearly, Bloch is cognizant of the similarities when composing Avodath Hakodesh.

The venues where Avodath Hakodesh was presented shows what Bloch intended for the piece. As I indicated earlier in this paper, though it was commissioned by a synagogue, Cantor Rinder

⁹⁴Letter by Ernest Bloch to Cantor Reuben Rinder, dated September 8, 1930, found in the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1.

and his California congregation had to wait nearly five years after Avodath Hakodesh's completion before they had the opportunity to hear it. For five years, the performances of this work all took place in major concert halls throughout the world. Some of the concert halls were Turin, La Scala, and Carnegie Hall. It was presented by major, well-known orchestras such as the London Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and the Boston Symphony. Clearly, to Ernest Bloch, this work was not just a Jewish service but a major oratorio work, growing out of the outline of the Jewish service. It was very important for him to keep the work out of the synagogue in order that his universal message could be expressed to the world at large, not merely for Jews. He even goes as far as trying to change the title of the work to one that de-emphasizes the Jewish service element, in favor of a more dramatic, universal title.

Though there are certain musical ideas in Avodath Hakodesh which can be identified as being particularly Jewish, the majority of it is written in a western secular musical style, showing and incorporating all of the musical influences that Bloch had throughout his life. These major influences again recall the romantic style of composition to which Bloch has been exposed. Composers such as

Brahms, Puccini, and Johann Strauss, all were romantic composers whose main concern was to convey a deep emotion. If the music moved the listener, then the demands of the composer has been met. Bloch too fits this mold. He attempts to synthesize all of the influences and channeled it into his music in order to move the listener and express his message.

Ernest Bloch attempts to use musical elements in order to synthesize the work into one main piece. He accomplishes this through the use of themes which dominate the music. These themes serve to bind the work together and aid Bloch in expressing his universal message.

The central theme of Avodath Hakodesh is based on a mixolydian scale from which the first theme develops. I shall call this theme, Theme A. This theme unifies the work, since it appears in almost every section. This opening theme is like the cantus firmus found in the Catholic mass. The cantus firmus is defined as "any pre-existing melody which is used as the basis of a new composition."⁹⁵ It originated in the Notre Dame school of Paris in the 12th century and continued to appear in motets and Masses of

the renaissance. In the early years, the cantus firmus was often found in the tenor line, and consisted of long notes of even values. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the cantus firmus was often placed in the bass line and was often played by the pedals on organ to clearly show the main theme. The cantus firmus is treated in one of two ways: "An original melody used essentially unchanged, as the foundation of a new work, or a cantus firmus, used as the basis for a new melodic part, which remodels or elaborates it's original content."⁹⁶

By looking at the compositional style of Ernest Bloch, one can see the influences that the 18th century style of cantus firmus composition had upon his writing. Bloch uses the bass line to present the theme A for the first time. Theme A contains many of the attributes which define a cantus firmus. First, it is a melody which serves as the foundation of the work. Avodath Hakodesh opens with the low strings playing this theme in a very slow, methodical way, with other instruments joining in as the theme develops.

⁹⁵Lewis Lockwood, "Cantus Firmus," New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians, 5th Edition (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1980), 739.

⁹⁶*ibid.*

Second, theme A develops throughout the work, as well as spurning off other themes and melodies.

When looking at the musical elements in Avodath Hakodesh, we see the musical influences on Bloch, other than his Jewish upbringing and education. This musical style comes out of a lifetime of living and working in the secular world. Though Bloch is a Jew, and is using a Jewish text, he is using music to lend a universal expression to the text, in addition to the use of a cantus firmus. Furthermore, the mere aspect that he is using the term "cantus firmus" is significant because it is typically used in reference to the mass. His inspiration is not only simply something non-Jewish but it is also rooted in religious music of the Catholic church. Bloch could have chosen a theme without labeling it a cantus firmus. This ancient tie to Gregorian chant is significant.

One composer who bases his work on Gregorian chant is Maurice Durufle. Born in 1902, Durufle's music shows the ability to maintain the Gregorian chant as a cantus firmus, while at the same time, adding modern harmonies, or surrounding it with polyphony.⁹⁷ In many ways, Ernest Bloch has done the same thing. He took a

melody, and built an entire work on it. He embellishes it as the work continues, while assuring that the basic flavor of the melody is not lost.

This cantus firmus appears throughout the work, both in the orchestration as well as within the vocal part. To demonstrate how this theme runs through the work, I shall now go through some of the sections, to show how this theme combines together to show Bloch's universal message.

PART I

Avodath Hakodesh begins with theme A being introduced by the low strings. They play the theme (G-A-C-B-A-G) in a slow half-note style, giving an indication of what is yet to come.⁹⁸ As the introductory meditation comes to an end, we see another theme, theme B, beginning. This second theme is an inversion of theme A, with a slight rhythmic variation. Both of these themes are carried through part 1. It is important to note that the use of an inversion is also a church-like musical compositional technique. When the cantor begins "Ma Tovv," he begins on the note D, which serves as

⁹⁷Xavier Darasse, "Maurice Durufle," New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians 5th Edition (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1980), 752.

⁹⁸See the opening to musical example 1A (measures 1-9), found in Appendix 1.

the dominant of G. When the choir enters, they restate the theme. Bloch carries both of these themes through part 1, reappearing in "Barchu, Shema," and "Tzur Yisrael." If it does not appear in the vocal part, it can be found in the orchestra part such as in the interlude between "Barchu" and "Shema."

Mixolydian Mode



Theme A



Theme B



PART II

The sanctification is written in a form which is suitable for use in the synagogue service. It is one of but only two pieces which can be lifted out of the full service to be used on its own as a piece within a service setting. The other part which can be removed is the "Y'hiu L'Ratzon" from part III. Though this part introduces a new theme, given in the opening, we can still find theme A, reappearing throughout this part, particularly in the flute, as well as the low string parts, and in the choral "Yimloch" which ends this part.

PART III

The silent meditation begins with a new theme.⁹⁹ However, as the choral part begins, we again see the reappearance of theme A. It comes back when the choir sings "Vehegyon Libi," as well as in a flute solo. As the meditation ends, and "Su Shearim" begins, we see theme A appearing, alternating between the cantor and the choir. The instrumental interlude before taking the scroll from the ark is marked by theme A as well as theme B.

⁹⁹See musical example IB (measures 1-7), found in Appendix 1.

PART IV

Theme A is prevalent in "Gadlu" as well as "Hodo Al Eretz." As in the previous parts, Bloch places the theme in the low string part, giving it a foundation to build the rest of the music upon.¹⁰⁰ The choral vocal line also splits into to seven parts, for the first time in the work. The theme continues through both "Torah Adonai," and "Etz Chayim."

PART V

As Avodath Hakodesh nears its completion, Ernest Bloch goes back to the beginning as he restates theme A.¹⁰¹ It again begins with the low strings and then builds as the other instruments join in. As the recitative "May the Time Not be Distant" goes on, we see extensive use of theme A in the accompaniment. It is interesting to note that when the cantor gets to the text which speaks about the brotherhood of all men, the orchestra part fills in and becomes much more dramatic. Here again, we see Bloch using music to give his message.

¹⁰⁰See musical example IC (rehearsal #44), found in Appendix 1.

¹⁰¹See musical example ID (measures 1-6), found in Appendix 1.

BENEDICTION

It is fitting that as the work comes to a conclusion, Bloch again returns to theme A, using it in the orchestra part as a buildup to the final set of Amens. It is also duplicated by the low basses, who sing theme A, as the conclusion to the work.¹⁰²

As I have shown, Ernest Bloch's cantus firmus does run through the entire work, serving as the glue which binds the work together and allows him to get his universal message through to those who hear it.

Though the work is dominated by a secular music style, there are a few places in Avodath Hakodesh where the music is of specific Jewish flavor. Some writers have attempted to identify these Jewish elements throughout the work. Alexander Knapp writes that "the cantorial recitatives of Avodath Hakodesh, as exemplified by 'Ma Tovv' at the beginning of the work resemble many of the traditional passages in the Adonay Malach mode."¹⁰³

¹⁰²See musical example 1E (rehearsal #96), found in Appendix 1.

¹⁰³Knapp, 104. The musical example is taken from Knapp, 104.



I do not agree with Knapp's conclusion. The above example does not represent the Adonai Malach mode. Rather, it is the cantus firmus, built on the mixolydian scale, starting on D. Ernest Bloch knew the text and the musical elements too well to insert a mode which is more representative of the Friday night and not the Saturday morning liturgy.

One direct example of a specifically Jewish musical example is "Tzur Yisrael." Cantor Reuben Rinder gave Bloch the melodic outline which was eventually placed into the work. "Tzur Yisrael" is written in the Ahavah Rabah mode. This mode is the prevalent mode in a traditional Jewish Shabbat morning service. Bloch uses themes A and B in the accompaniment in order to keep the cantus firmus line running through while still using some Jewish elements.

A third example of the Jewish elements is how Bloch presents the "V'Ahavta" prayer. Bloch uses a quasi recitative style, much like the traditional cantillation of the bible. Bloch gives a hint of cantillation, the oldest musical type found in synagogue music, while at the same time, incorporating the structured choral

responses. Bloch shows his knowledge of cantillation, but does not commit to it enough to look for specifically Jewish trope relationships.

Through the use of a cantus firmus, as well as Jewish themes, Ernest Bloch has created a Jewish oratorio work of immense dimensions. It reflects all of his musical education, as well as his deep interpretation of the text. However, what is his greatest achievement is the expression of his universal message of hope for all humanity, presented to us through music. By using the cantus firmus to bind the work together, and interpretation to express his message, Bloch fulfilled his wish to deliver a great work to the world.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the course of this paper, I have set out to analyze important questions relating to Ernest Bloch's Avodath Hakodesh. Is the work one that has a universal message and if it does, is that message conveyed to the listeners and performers. Ernest Bloch had far reaching goals for his work. It was not a message of hope for Jews, but a message for the entire world. Through music which bound each individual part together, and through his writings, which exemplified all of his goals and aspirations, Ernest Bloch clearly states what he sees as the message of Avodath Hakodesh. The message was a genuine hope for humanity and for all people, Jews and non-Jews.

Though it has been written about extensively, both by Bloch as well as by biographers and reviewers, I am not convinced that the universal message of Avodath Hakodesh gets through to the listener without further reading and understanding of the piece. As shown in the letters written by Bloch to Rinder while composing the work, Ernest Bloch had a deep sense of understanding of the words and a very broad and revolutionary interpretation of the text. It is not an interpretation which can come across by hearing the music. It must

be studied in more detail and internalized by both the performers as well as the listener if his universal message is to be received by the public.

The particularistic aspect of the text is one that cannot be overlooked when evaluating this work. Though Bloch is writing a universal work, he is doing so using a text which is intrinsically particularistic and is of great importance to the Jewish people. In my opinion, because of this connection to the Jewish people, it is far easier for a non-Jew to hear and read into Bloch's universal message than it is for Jews. Any devout Jew who attends a synagogue with a musical tradition will relate to the text being sung. In the first place, it seems odd to hear this text being performed outside the synagogue. In a recent performance that I participated in, a Rabbi approached me following the performance. He described the strange feelings that he experienced upon hearing "Shema" being sung in a concert at a church. One explanation for this reaction is that very rarely has a Jewish service been presented in this forum. It is not unusual to hear a mass presented in this format, even more so a Jewish service. Many Jews look at the liturgy of prayer as the binding element of the religion. When it is taken out of that sacred

context and put into a foreign space, it becomes difficult to understand.

Along with the juxtaposition of text from the synagogue space to the concert space, many Jews will have a problem hearing the text presented in such a contemplative and introspective way. For example, most American Reform Jewish synagogues conclude their evening or morning Shabbat services with the singing of "Adon Olam" by Elieser Gerovitch. His version of the music is not based on the meaning of the text. Rather, it is based on the metrical elements of the poetry. Ernest Bloch composes a version of "Adon Olam" that is in stark contrast to Gerovitch. He wrote based on the meaning and interpretation of the text. To Ernest Bloch, this prayer held all of the elements of his universal message. It was not a mere metrical poem but a dramatic and poignant drama that had to be expressed in its proper format. The version which he writes in Avodath Hakodesh is deeply contemplative, personal and shows the extent to which Bloch learned and internalized the text. Yet, to the Jewish ear, it sounds strange to hear this slow, methodical version. It would be like taking the national anthem of a country and composing a new melody for it. However, to the non-Jew the

message of "Adon Olam" may come across easier. There is no reinterpretation of the music because the majority of the listeners will not have heard this text sung before.

In order to compensate for these differences, it is important that the program notes accompanying a performance of Avodath Hakodesh have an extensive explanation of Bloch's interpretation of the text. With the vast amount of writings by Bloch, such as his letters and speeches, it is imperative that his words appear in the body of these program notes so that the message can be explained right from the composers mouth.

A second issue that I raised was whether or not Avodath Hakodesh was ever intended for performance in the synagogue. After looking at all of the facts presented, it is clear to me that though the work was commissioned by Cantor Reuben Rinder, and a Reform synagogue, to Bloch, it was much more than a service and was never intended for performance there. As I showed earlier, the sheer magnitude of the work indicates that it could not be performed in a synagogue. With the large choir, and huge orchestra, Avodath Hakodesh is a great Jewish oratorio, but not a great service for the synagogue.

Though heavily influenced by his Jewish upbringing in his earlier works, Bloch writes this work incorporating all of his musical talents, showing the influences, both Jewish and non-Jewish that he had in his life. This work, though utilizing a sacred text is heavily influenced by secular as well as non-Jewish elements such as the cantus firmus. Bloch uses re-occurring themes to bind his work together and helps him to express his message through music. It is this binding of the musical elements which makes it difficult for any part of this work to be performed on its own. It is possible to perform the "Ma Tov" or "Y'hiu L'Ratzon", on their own, but without the parts before or after them, they lose some of their dramatic impact.

Though Avodath Hakodesh has a much better fit on the concert stage than in the synagogue, this composition did have a profound impact on synagogue music. It elevated the music of the synagogue to new heights. Though Bloch has composed many other compositions, Avodath Hakodesh has become known as one of his greatest works and is the standard to which other synagogue compositions are compared. Mark Slobin states:

His impressive, demanding work demonstrated the possibility of creating an entire service couched completely in the

contemporary compositional idiom, and it cast a long shadow. Hazzanim mention only Darius Milhaud's Service Sacre in the same breath as the Bloch, due to the composers comparable renown.¹⁰⁴

As I showed earlier in this paper, Ernest Bloch influenced many other composers during his tenure both as a teacher and as a composer. One synagogue composer who was influenced by Ernest Bloch was Isadore Freed. Though Freed was a contemporary of Bloch's living during the same time and dying only five years after him, Freed chose to study composition with Bloch in order to gain insights into how he wrote his Sacred Service. From hearing Freed's services, one can see and hear specific influences which Bloch's composition had on him. One specific example is the Sacred Service for Sabbath Morning, written in 1951. As with Bloch, the service follows the text of the Union Prayer Book. It is written for baritone cantor and choir. The Kedusha's of both Bloch and Freed are probably the most dramatic moments in the service. Both utilize an antiphonal, give and take conversation between the cantor and choir culminating in very large dramatic choral versions of "Yimloch Adonai." Both Bloch and Freed used the Priestly benediction as the

¹⁰⁴Mark Slobin, Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 244.

closing benediction of their respective works. The cantor sings the text and the choir sings the congregational response. As we can see, there are many similarities between the two works.

Though Freed was influenced by Bloch, not many other synagogue compositions were. Clearly, the sheer magnitude of Avodath Hakodesh was impossible to replicate by other synagogue composers. Whether they realized the secular elements of this work, or not, Avodath Hakodesh can be looked at as a great work, but not as a great work for the synagogue. Without a doubt, it is the most dramatic, and influential Jewish oratorio ever written and there have been no other works written that compare to it.

Ernest Bloch put a lifetime of learning and experience into his composition. He had a deep felt belief that the message of the text had to be communicated to the outside world. I do not believe that Bloch would be concerned with defining the work as Jewish or not.

Avodath Hakodesh can be translated as "The Service of the Sacred." This translation reflects Bloch's universal message. It implies the sacred message, while at the same time making it acceptable to all religions. Bloch summed it up best saying "to what extent such music is Jewish or to what extent it is just Ernest

Bloch, of that I know nothing--the future alone will decide."¹⁰⁵ No matter how it is looked at, Avodath Hakodesh is a great work, with an important message for the world. Whether or not it is easy to hear and internalize this message, it is imperative that this work continue to be performed on a regular basis by a high quality orchestra, choir and cantor. Only then, will Bloch's universal message of hope continue to be transmitted to the world.

¹⁰⁵Ernest Bloch, "Program Notes" found in The Music of Ernest Bloch. A Program Manual prepared by the National Jewish Music Council, sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board (New York: The National Jewish Music Council, 1956), 17.

APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTION OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

- IA: In the introduction to Avodath Hakodesh, we see the introduction of theme A by the low strings, as well as by the clarinets.
- IB: With the introductory flute solo to Part III, we again see the use of theme A in conjunction with the introduction of a new theme.
- IC: This instrumental interlude leading to the taking of the scroll from the ark offers both theme A, as well as theme B, again being played by the low strings.
- ID: This last full section begins by returning to theme A, just like the work began. There is more development of the theme. It is an almost exact duplication of the opening motif.
- IE: Theme A is used in the last small interlude, prior to the final exclamation of "Amen."

All of these musical examples come from the orchestral score to Avodath Hakodesh (Sacred Service), New York: Broude Brothers, 1972.

To Gerald Warburg
AVODATH HAKODESH
 (Sacred Service)

Part I

ERNEST BLOCH

English text by DAVID STEVENS

Meditation

Moderato $\text{♩} = 84$

FLAUTI I. II.

FLAUTO (alt Picc.) III.

OBOI I. II.

CORNO INGLESE

CLARINETTI I. in LA II.

CLARINETTO BASSO in SI^b

FAGOTTI I. II.

CONTRAFAGOTTO

CORNI in FA I. II. III. IV.

TROMBE in DO I. II. III.

TROMBONI I. II. III.

TUBA

TIMPANI

TRIANGOLO

TAMBURO, TAM TAM

GRAN CASSA

PIATTI

PERCUSSIONE (a discrezione)

CELESTA

ARPA I. II.

CANTOR (Barytone Solo)

SOPRANI

ALTI

TENORI

BASSI

VIOLINI (al meno 10) I. II.

VIOLINI (al meno 8)

VIOLE (al meno 6)

VIOLONCELLI (al meno 6)

CONTRABASSI (al meno 5)

Musical score for Part I, featuring various instruments and voices. The score includes a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a tempo of Moderato (♩ = 84). The instrumentation includes Flutes, Oboes, English Horn, Clarinets, Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba, Timpani, Triangle, Tambourine, Gran Cassa, Plates, Celesta, Harp, Cantor, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Violins, Violas, Violoncellos, and Contrabasses. The score is divided into sections for the woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings/voices. The first section is marked with a '1' in a box.

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 New York

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Part III

Silent devotion (and response)

Andante moderato ♩ = 68
semplice espressivo

I. Solo

FLAUTI I. II. *mp* *espr.*

FLAUTO (alt. Picc.) III. *mp*

OBOI I. II. *mp*

CORNO INGLESE *mp*

CLARINETTI I. II. *mp*

CLARINETTO BASSO in Si^b *I. Solo* *mp* *espr.*

FAGOTTI I. II. *mp*

CONTRAFAGOTTO *mp*

CORNI in FA I. II. III. IV. *mp*

TRONBE in DO I. II. III. *mp*

TRONDONI I. II. *mp*

TUBA III. *mp*

PERCUSSIONE (tra tamburi)

TIMPANI *mp*

PIATTI *mp*

CELESTA *mp*

ARPA I. II. *mp*

CANTOR (Barytone Solo) *Andante moderato ♩ = 68*

CORO

SOPRANI *mp*

ALTI *mp*

TENORI *mp*

BASSI *mp*

Andante moderato ♩ = 68

VIOLINI (al meno 10) I. *mp*

VIOLINI (al meno 8) II. *mp*

VIOLE (al meno 6) *mp*

VIOLONCELLI (al meno 6) *mp*

CONTRABASSI (al meno 6) *mp*

Tutti Solo *mp* *espr.*

Taking the Scroll from the Ark

44 *Quieto* $\text{♩} = 80-84$ *Solo* *poco a poco più intenso*

Fl. I, II, III

Ob. I

C. Ingl.

Cl. La I, II

Cl. B. S. I

Fg. I

Cfg.

Cor. Fa I, II

Trb. Do I, II

Tbn. I, II, III

Tu.

Timp.

Perc.

Arpa I, II

Quieto $\text{♩} = 80-84$ *poco a poco più intenso*

Cantor

S.

A.

T.

B.

44 *Quieto* $\text{♩} = 80-84$ *poco a poco più intenso*

Vn. I, II

Va.

Vcl.

Cb.

espr. *cresc.*

B. B. 4077

Vaanachnu (Adoration)

Andante moderato $\text{♩} = 80-84$

B. B. 4077

APPENDIX II

Over the course of my research, I discovered that some of the letters written by Ernest Bloch to Cantor Reuben R. Rinder during the period of 1930-1931, were donated to the American Jewish Archives, located in Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio. The originals of the letters are on file in the Bancroft Library, located at the University of California at Berkeley. The majority of the Ernest Bloch manuscripts and documents are on file there.

Because Ernest Bloch had bad handwriting, Cantor Rinder transcribed the letters for submission to a historical collection. Three of the letters are included in this appendix.

- II A Letter to Cantor Rinder, dated September 8, 1930 written shortly after he had received the commission to compose Avodath Hakodesh.
- II B Letter to Cantor Rinder, dated November 26, 1930. In the letter Bloch outlines how he sees the service forming as well as how he interprets the texts. We see in this letter the depth

to which Bloch has immersed himself in the liturgical text as well as the philosophical attributes that he assigns to it.

- 11C Letter to Cantor Rinder, dated March 5, 1931. Ernest Bloch writes that he already had completed four of the five parts of the work. Additionally, he lays out his universal message, inherent in the text and the music.

Griesalp Ctm Bern
September 8, 1930.

My dear friend:

There is a long time I wanted to thank you for sending me the Veshafes, the Bar Jarool, the Yipjn Lerozown, and the splendid Adon Olum)... but I had a phobia for correspondence. I was for months in a terrible mental and physical state - N. York was hectic, hot, and I had "business" to attend to - the crossing was atrocious too, as I suffered from neuralgia which paralyzed my whole body and caused constant pain. In Paris, I felt somewhat better, but walked like a ghost, as an alien - in a place which, once, was mine. Well, I did not feel at home anywhere - and the feeling of having no home any more was torturing me - In Geneva, more "business" and sadness - A dead city - No more friends there (save an old good man of 77) No more my parents... all dead - In Zurich, we were immobilized for about 3 weeks, as a friend of mine was there to consult a Doctor, and we could not leave her alone - Since a week, we are here in the mountains. Mrs. Bloch and my daughter Lucienne, with us for a few days - and though I do not know where we will go after that - the season is already late; cold, rain, loneliness... nor where we shall find a shelter, and feel very uneasy and anxious about a possible "settlement" at least the Beauty and freshness of these majestic mountains have helped me - I bathe in the cold rivers, which helps too - But what has helped me the most, and is slowly giving me my balance, and may help my problems and bring me peace, and restore my soul () is....the Jewish Service...

Slowly, I have absorbed it, in studying patiently the text. It has impregnated me - It is becoming mine. I have memorized it slowly, and now I know it all by heart (save the two last stanzas of the Adon Olum) I declare it, aloud, amidst the rocks and the forests... and when I cannot sleep at night, I recite it! Evenings and mornings, I go over it - or write it from memory---

At the same time, the music is slowly elaborating itself within me... The plan has taken shape, by divisions, forms, synthetals... and the more I go, the more I become fascinated and enthusiastic by this Text and its Grandness, its ruggedness, its deep philosophic - cosmic significance - The Adon Olum is really the Summit () of all philosophy. It puts man at its right place - It can be accepted by all believers or not - It contains a thought which will survive all doctrines!

And strange to say, this whole Text embodies in the simplest and most direct way, what I always wanted to express, since my youth... Of course, I will write a service, as I said, for a Reform Synagogue Service, that is, in simple form, as you saw some sketches - But, besides, and more and more, it becomes imperative for me to give such Poem a larger and still more elaborate Form - And it will become a huge Cosmic Poem for Orchestra Cantor and chorus (containing naturally the whole Service as it will exist for the Synagogue, but with orchestral interludes which will replace the "words" spoken - Even for the synagogue, I hope

to replace often the prayer by words, by a prayer from the heart! I am sure, my dear friend, that this will become a great work - and I do not care whether the critics, or even the Jews will care for it! It seems now a matter between God and me...and without forcing it, humbly studying (the text assimilating) the sound, accents, significance of it I am waiting for the music to come - and it will come - this I know - But in the meantime I feel that such text is too big for one conception - I certainly will write other services and when I know Hebrew, I will use texts from the Prophets... I have been waiting some 30 years and more for that! Strange, at 50, to start what my father did at 15! An old friend of 90, in Zurich, was amazed by it, and delighted. Thus Hebrew will some day be sung, in Cathedrals too, like Latin, and I do not see why a whole literature could not be created! What a task it would be! And what an aim - I realize now that no translation can give so terribly, so beautifully, so laconically things like

now replace the magnificent sound of the
with its melancholy and "Sehnsucht"

Well, I hope the next time I write to tell you more. In N. York I had great pleasure to see Gerald Warburg. It made me happy and confident morally, that he and his father took personal and tangible interest in a great idea. I feel that I am but a humble servant of a great idea and my next fervent wish is that God may give me the force and the inspiration to create a work that may go to the heart of people, help them, make them better, more responsible, more human.....

You would give me great pleasure in writing me when you can and telling me how you and your dear ones are, how was your summer and how you are recuperating from your accident. I hope everything has gone for the best - I shall never forget - nor shall Mrs. Bloch the evening we spent at your home - the prayer before the meal... All that was so true, so sincere, so simple, so moving that it is in our hearts.

God bless you all - and our affectionate greetings to you
all

Your friend

Ernest Bloch

C/o Bordier y Cie
16 Rue de Hollande
Geneva
Switzerland

Rev. Reuben R. Rinder
Anguella Boulevard and Lake Street
San Francisco

Nov 8, 1930
B. C. B.

Nov. 26, 1930

Roveredo Capriasca
Tessin (Switzerland)
Planet:

(Very infinitesimal and
backward regions, in the)

My dear Cantor and Friend,

What is the matter with you? Are you lazy? -
This, I could forgive - Are you sick? This I would deplore -
Or have you forgotten me? This ... this I wrote
✓ you a long, burning letter of love, in , from my mountains
on Sept. 8th - and I do not even know if you have received
it. If you had, I am almost sure you would have replied,
for outside of details about my miserable existence, as an
unhappy man and artist, there were other things, more real
and important, about the Jewish Service, which has been my
salvation, my *חיים ומוות* (life and death) etc. - more than I can
say! Since that time, we had to go down and to wander
miserably, from one place to another, trying vainly to get
a *נוח* pour nous. *אנחנו* to find a refuge, (against the
tourism,) the noise, the horrid hotels, which have spoiled
this country..... Finally, away from all that, we dis-
covered a kind of a house - in the mountains, amidst forests
of chestnuts - a superb place - and quiet - but very, very
primitive. We had to put ovens to get warm, to buy utensils,
to cook and eat, beddings, to slepp. It is rather a camping
affair, but it is quite sufficient. We are here, since 4
or 5 weeks. I am not happy, and rather tormented - as
usual! - and not in altogether good health, with terrible
nights of sleeplessness- But I can work - I played some

(over)

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of my sketches, in early October, to G. Warburg -
He liked them - Since I have sketched almost the whole
Service - I am battling against notes, sounds, rhythmus,
to extirpate out of my soul, all the unexpressed music which
is latent - since centuries - which was awaiting this marvel-
lous text, greater, deeper, every day! Sometimes it is a
terrible fight - I had, literally, to fight for each note,
lately (for the "Waabachum") to be simple, strong, direct -
true, before all - And when this is done, I will have to go
over all that, implacably severe for myself, questioning each
note, each chord, each word, to see whether I cannot find a
better, stronger one! Then I will clear it, really give it
shape - still a few months of hard work ahead - - But,
without that, I could not have lived - I was too lonely,
too miserable -

I have not even written to my friends in Europe,
in Italy, France, Switzerland - I could not have seen people,
not let them see me - Once more, the Service has saved me -

It will be a great work, I know -

Some of it seems to me marvellous and what is
not, must become marvellous too - I do not want any weak spots
Already, I am changing, improving, details, here and there,
untiredly - And it is at least a satisfaction when I succeed
and can realize my complete conception.

As I think I told you, I had to give great
shapes, to organize all these scattered fragments of text -
I cannot compose in another way. "Die Musik muss Gestalt
werden", said Schiller. And the defect of all the services
you showed me was that they were very small fragments, un-
related, arias, recitations, choirs, with no connection, no
nervous system, no circulatory system, no directing brains

*Nothing in Symbolical musical literature to be compared
with the Sacred Service - without unity, no general
composition, of separate, numerous parts*

Rev. Reuben H. Kinder
Anguillo Boulevard and Lake Street
San Francisco

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in them. In spite of all necessities of the liturgy, I felt one could, - one had to give Unity to all that, for Unity is the basis of our Religion. (I have) *Contra Altus*
Thus I could, in studying closely the text and the whole Service, discover five great parts in this Jewish Oratorio!

Then I had to penetrate myself with the Unity and meaning of each part. Then I saw the color to give to each one of them. For one needs variety, to justify the Unity - God is infinite - but He permeates the All, under under infinite forms too - and one can find Him in the big rocks, in the clouds, in the sea, as well as in the little herb, the little fly, all animated by Eternal Life!

Then I had to plan each part - instrumentally, vocally - and finally the mere "musical" question arose - tempi, keys, etc.....-

It is as if I had been working at a huge Drama - and the whole thing will be very dramatic too - at times -

(I hear that my daughter already interested people in Amsterdam about it! (I wish it were ready now - that I could go to London, and give it there, the chorus singing in Hebrew, as a reply to the Palestine scandal, and show what the Jews can do, and give - But, it will come -

I think and hope that my *writing* work, and my instinct have not misled me in the *visions* I gave to this service -

The first part starts with a short instrumental Prélude, which expresses this motif of 6 notes (Cult)



which permeates the whole work, and appears often, always taking different shapes - and giving it a musical and spiritual Unity -

Then comes the *1st symphonic interlude* *1216715* then a short instrumental part leaves to the *1216715* again a short instrumental interlude to the *1216715*. Then to the *1216715* which I think, you will adore. Then the *1216715* and, after the *1216715* a dramatic short symphonic part, as if suddenly all the misery, persecutions, injustices done to Israel were symbolized and coming to ask for Justice: the *1216715* for which I used the traditional, beautiful song you gave me. Thus, this first part ends as a -? - very softly, mysteriously, as a Hope towards the Future -

2nd Part Page 2-3
Strikingly different the second part - another world, really - different in substance, in music, in keys - but, however related to the whole - The Kedusha - which has naturally more unity, compactness - and goes on, uninterrupted -

3rd Part Page 3
The third part, for me, turns all around the central point - The Taking of the Scroll from the Ark - the greatest symbol of all the Service, and, for me, of all our philosophy of Life - Jewish or non Jewish - the need of Justice, of order, on this poor little planet! I could there see the significance of the Silent prayer and its utterance *1216715* as a preparation of the soul for the great symbol to come - *1216715* An instrumental interlude, first, and coming into it, the *1216715* Then, as if materialized by words, this need of Light, of cleanliness, of all clouds (off,) all prejudices off, all smallness of mind off, to let God come in! The *1216715* comes like a Cosmic affair! For these "Doors" to be lifted up, are the clouds

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Anguillo Boulevard and Lake Street
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~~the clouds~~ which prevent our eyes to see, our hearts to feel - an interlude leads the ministers up to the ark, and then comes, mysteriously, like a rite from the Desert, the הנה לך and still more mysteriously, like a shiver the עליו. But, immediately after that, as if every one had been purified, sanctified, regenerated, as an outburst of joy, gratitude and veneration, in C major, FF, majestic and strong, the final chorus הנה לך which ends FF too (in the Lydian mode!) FEABCEDEF

4th Part 4th Part The forth part was difficult - the beginning at least - for it starts too on a glorification - But this time it is the "Returning the Scroll to the Ark" which is of a completely different sense - Man has been washed of all his miseries. He has absorbed an Idea, a Faith, he is no more alone - and the whole color is changed. A direct call from the Cantor starts it הנה לך and a very "Eay" chorus הנה לך. The הנה לך leads to the mysterious, ritual הנה לך which I think is of great style, and immediately after it, but in a distinct new key and most peaceful, tender, quiet character - all inspired by the beautiful, beautiful word SCHALOM the "הנה לך" which ends this 4th part in perfect peace and tenderness - You can perhaps always see that, with the tremendous Unity I tried to give, I have - from the sense of the words and the form and significance of the Liturgy - constantly thought of giving varied starts and ends to each of the 5 parts.

Illustration (over)
4th Part

The last one (5), to which I am working now, made me a little ^{scared} scared! It was hard to work out still a progression in character, in emotion, after already so much tension - But it had to be, and I feel it still grows and grows. For, this last Poem, is perhaps even the greatest philosophy of all! An atheist can even subscribe to it, if he changes the name of God into the "Laws of the Universe". This ^{ASIS 17N} seems to me the last word of all metaphysics! This Lord of Eternity who did reign "before all forms were created!" and who will after the "entire annihilation of all these formes", when the worlds have disappeared, vanished, still rule, alone! I find that gigantic! and terrible, too. Like the desert, or better, like our dreams, when we lose ourselves in the stars, into the Idea of the Infinite. Then the 3rd strophe about this "Unity!" (When they have, poor bugs, discovered the Laws of the Atom, they will come to that!).

The two last strophes are quite different - no more Cosmos, but Earth, and Man - The microcosm, after the macrocosm - It is God leaning towards man - as the Jehovah of the Cosmos. (This is our Christianity, the God near man, and not in need of taking a human shape, of being crucified) but without shape, without beginning and no end, ever present - And in the last strophe, it is man towards God -

The great difficulty lies in the fact that this extraordinary poem (^{ASIS 17N}) has 5 parts, each of them being a world in itself. However, all closely related in form, measure, rhyme, (anagrams)! And such regular form must naturally be followed by a music which adapts itself to it. It cannot be a "dramatic" interpretation of the 5 parts, but unite again the whole in a certain, corresponding,

Rev. Reuben R. Rinder
Arguello Boulevard and Lake Street
San Francisco

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symmetry. And, however, it cannot be made on one pattern! like a song with 5 couplets!! (For the significance of each one of them is too different and contrasting) On the other hand, this is, as you told me, a Poem of the Middle Ages. And this idea saved me. Like an old ballade, it must have a regular form, as if it were an old, well known song, from the Folklore. It must be simple, clear, so that, some day, I wish the entire Congregation may join and sing it! And, however, it must express, dramatically, faithfully, the sense of the words, and illustrate, musically, in absolute truthfulness the philosophic sense (of them!)

This is the dilemma which I hope to solve!
I start the 5th part with the "Adoration" (waanachnu koreim) (which, after all, is the motto of the whole part, the Finale to the Service)

^(beginning) The key is the same minor G mode (in G) as the beginning of the 1st part. The motif is the same. The character, however, after all what has happened, seems completely different! Thus comes after a few bars of introduction, very reverently the "Waanachnu" - for the Cantor and Chori alternate -

Now, I felt the need here (after "Hakodosh Boruch Huh" which is repeated - and before leading to the Adon Olom -) for the Concert at least, but I hope for the Synagogue too, even if one has to read during the music, to follow it by a natural and normal development, which will

0
lead into the Final Adoun Olom - as a necessity!

First the orchestral glorification and adoration (Short). Then a music which is not quite made, but must be perhaps the most mysterious and moving (and shivering) of all the Service, the music accompanying and symbolizing this part of the Service - for the departed ones - a shadow casts itself over the earth... the idea of Death - the beloved ones, gone, (gone).... and my initial motive comes, as from the "sheol", colorless, ashy, in an unearthly light and from it, from that Idea, the Light emerges slowly again, for, what do we know about Life and Death (?) and then, we give our souls in confidence, (אמן אלהים) and the "Adoun Olom" is fully justified and comes as a coronation of the whole, ending in great emotion of peace and faith.

אמן אלהים I may need, to illustrate the final chords, to repeat either the last paragraph, if you think it goes:

(unless some word like: Scholom - would seem
Allelujah
Amen preferable to you -
Scholom or Amen seem to me better)

unless I use the the disadvantage being
here, that iro, which will have to be sung rather high, is
difficult on the vocal "i")

notes

Benediction added later

Rev. Reuben R. Rinder
Angelito Boulevard and Lake Point
San Francisco

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Tell me what you feel about it - Please, this is my first question, i.e. which word can be used here, to end - (Amen? Scholom? or, after all, though more difficult, repeating the "Velo Iro" - which, as sense, is the most beautiful - But, as one has already repeated it twice or three times, a conclusive "Amen" or "Schöblöm" could perhaps do.)

Questions *Ans* I have a few other questions to ask you, and I would be very grateful if you could answer them as early as possible, as I need them urgently - to go ahead -
Second question: During this last symphonic part leading from (Hakodosh Borch Huh) to the (Adoun Oloun) I have about three different colors in my music - First, the necessary climax which follows the "Boruch Huh" - a kind of Jewish Magnificat which, though using my initial motif, is curiously related to the Magnificat of the Gregorian Chant - very, most probably, originating from our old Synagogue in Jerusalem - and which I will restore to Us!! - This lasts only for a few measures). Then, the color changes - according to the text "And now, ere we part" - and comes slowly this greyish, ashy music of mystery - *Dec 21/87* *The Kaddish* which is only sketched yet and not yet ready - On my sketches I have here almost a need of voices (the choir, or only a few voices) repeating, rather muttering a kind of supplication, very cloudy, misty, distant - pianissimo - almost not to be heard (as a few passages in "Israel" after the "Adonoy, my Elohim") If, in the Temple, there be need of silence, or any music, distant music, these voices could be

suppressed, though I am not sure it would be necessary, as they would be so faint as not to disturb the liturgy - they would be, as the music itself, a background, a "toile de fond", upon which the whole liturgy (Minister and "Amen" of the Congregation) could go on - all this musical part - and, eventually "vocal distant part" would serve merely here to create the proper atmosphere of mystery, of awe, of emotional background. At the concert, naturally, it would be essential. Thus, if I were to use here these voices, what words could be used? - It ought to be something very "indefinite" of course, and outside of the liturgy itself, as it is not a part of it - the musical motive is about this

May be the word "Adonaj" only? and a muttering on "Ah" or "oh" Or a word like "have pity of us" or leaning towards: "misericorde, grace" *Adonaj* ? (Horachamon?)

I hope you understand what I mean ... It must be as if from a distant crowd - humanity - a kind of lamentation of supplication, were rising, all with the idea of our smallness, hopelessness, in face of Death, Dust - the nothingness of man! - The music here is almost stagnant, slow, veiled, stopped - a very dramatic moment, to remind to all, what we are, how small we are, how stupid our pride, our possessions, our vanity, our hardness of heart, our wars, our cruelties, etc... and then, light will come again - and then, "Adonaj" *Adonaj* May be voices will be unnecessary But in case, I decidedly need them, it will help me greatly

Rev. Reuben R. Rinder
Soguello Boulevard and Lake Road
San Francisco

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to know what word or words (two or three at the utmost)
could be used, in harmony with the liturgy and the feelings
I want to express -

and My third question is a merely technical one!
It refers to the accentuation of some words in the Veohafto
In the text you gave me, before I left, you have here and
there underlined certain "e" (which, being not the ; (metheg)
is, of course, not an accent) I *inferred* from it, after
thorough analysis of the words that you probably meant that
these "e" were not to be obliterated, but pronounced as a
real - tho probably short - syllable. They usually refer
to a conjunction () or a preposition () or ()

I realize that there might be many reasons for
it, some of them, may be, purely "euphonic" - There is no
difficulty to understand that you pronounce ve shinanton
and not v'shinanton! and le vonecho and not l'vonecho, and
be veisecho and not b'veisecho! But, later, you underlined
the "e" in uvelechtecho, uveshochbecho, uvekumecho
X X X

ukephashomas euphonically it could as well be "uv'lechtecho,
uv'shochbecho, uv'kumecho, uk'shartom .

In the case of uvlechtecho, for instance, I find
that the root is *777* to go, to walk, the
is the conjunction "and" - the *777* stands probably for when
and the end of the word indicates the conjugation of the
verb. Same for *777* and to arise, to get up,
and *777* tobind. Thus, here, I was a little in the
dark, as, euphonically, it could as well be uv'lechtecho *Guly*

out
(4 syllables) uvalechtecho (5 syllables!)

uv'kumecho (4 syllables) uvekumecho (5 syllables) and I did not get the reason why apparently less important syllables () was to be counted. However, it went very well, musically, as you will see. The question is to know whether I was right in interpreting your underlining the letter, in the sens of counting it or not. Please tell me, if it is so or not. According to your reply I may leave - or have to change - my musical interpretation (of syllables). I transcribe to you what I did, and it will be clearer to you to understand what I mean (see the musical page included)

notes

uv'veschothbecho

uv' ku me cho

Now, if the places marked in red have to be changed, it is 'easy' and can be made in that way.

notes

(3 notes, instead of four - the last one has to remain as it is - Same for uk'shartom - instead of u ka shar'tom - What is best ? ?

Another, and last, little question: In the 5th Strohphe of the Adon Olom, you write: Be yo do afkid ruchi which makes 7 syllables, when everywhere there are 8 syllables in this quite regular poem. I thought that I had to keep the rythm quite regular and complete here too, and count 8 Be yo do a fe kid ru chi, especially since the root seems to be the verb 7p3 or better 7p3n and the apparently means the first person! Is this correct? (Naturally the

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accent comes on the last syllable) By the way, how magnificent, this conception of geviyo (=body or corpse!) how deep too ----- How, "scientific" to talk in a modern and "American" way! This transitory, relative, equilibrium of chemical substances forming our "body" - As the great physiologist Bichat said, more than a century ago: "Life is the ensemble of forces resisting death" this mere word explains it! a body - a corpse - not very much! Nothing to be proud of! Again, it makes us very small - puts us in our right place! - But here comes the 17 for which I find all these translations: wind, breath, breathing, soul, life, spirit, heart, character, courage! And, indeed, without air and breath, we are only a "geviyoh" - nothing! The smallness and the greatness of our Destiny, of our being! And one accuses the Jewish Race of Materialism! This single Poem is a reply - The whole problem lies in it; I do not know anything which unites more closely Science, the real, great, eternal Science - not fads' - and Religion than this Adon Olom!

Well, I must stop!!

Some "megillah!" I just received a cable from the management of the Boston Symphony Orchestra asking me if I were free to come and conduct the concerts in the week of January 12th - probably to direct the 1st performance of my "Helvetia" - But, though it would appeal immensely to me, I must renounce it, for I cannot now interrupt my Jewish Service. It would mean a month and a half interruption, to go, stay and return, and I think the Service comes first! You can see from that how deep it lies in me and I lie in it! Let us hope, it will not be "preaching in the desert".....

(Over)

best
 I sent you and Mrs. Rinder, the other day, a little package of Swiss chocolates, which will bring our good wishes - including a card, which is the work of my daughter - for a Jewish Christmas !!! I hope it will get there with no trouble, as they told me -

And now - please reciprocate! - and tell me all about you and your family, and my friends, and San Francisco, and the new rabbi, and the incorrigible Jews - not so bad, after all!

I miss you - I miss all my friends - We have never forgotten, my wife and I, the evening at your home. The moving prayer, the *wine* and *bread* How beautiful this was.... I feel a great "Sehnsucht" for such a life - Naturally we hope that you all are well, and that your silence does not mean anything - but, please, we need to be reassured and comforted -

Affectionate regards to you, to your dear ones,

Yours faithfully

(signed) Ernest Bloch

You can write at the address I gave though the Hebrew word could not be read in this rather anti-Jewish country -

Best
 After all, I could not resist copying for you the whole "Vehafto"!!
 Tell me what you think of it!
 If this is not a deep prayer, from the bottom of my soul, then

Roveredo Capriasca

Ticino
Switzerland
March 5, 1931

11C

My dear Cantor and Friend,

Excuse me for having left your beautiful, encouraging and affectionate letter of Dec. 31st so long without reply.... It would be too long and too sad to tell you why..... My life has been since a life of utter misery, of wretched health, of almost constant despair - conflicts, at the outside and at the inside - physical troubles of all kind - sleeplessness - in spite of the most powerful narcotics, like Chloral. For 3 weeks, my work was even interrupted; I fell in the garden, 4 weeks ago, running madly to eradicate my thoughts, and since, I have terrible pains in my thumb and shoulder (left) and can hardly use them. I was even near death. My last hopes and illusions vanished and I have to live - if this can be called a life! - with no hopes and no faith left.... And the force I need to finish this Service - for I try desperately to finish, at least this task - I found in the deep and luminous philosophy (page 125 of the Prayer book) some consolation:

"...though no man can comprehend His ways.....

"...and in the fulness of time, we shall know why we are tried and why our love brings us sorrow as well as happiness"

I am so sorry that you too had to go through such ordeal - physically and mentally - And I can understand it so well.... But we do not know why We do not know anything.... about Life, Death, Time, Space, Matter about all what is important -

And thus, we have to bow humbly and accept ... and go on and do our best or what we think deeply, in our conscience, is the best.....but how lost we are, in face of that ultimate Truth!

In spite of all, I worked hard, in December and January. I started to "realize" (piano and vocal score, not yet organ, nor orchestra!) the Service and was able to achieve the four first parts (I. II. III. IV.) The Vaanachnu (V) was started when I had this terrible collapse and after the interruption, I restarted again. First I rebelled a little about the new text you asked me to add:

וְנִיבְּ אֵלֶיךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה לְךָ
leading to the Final Adon Olom. But it seems that the tragedy which had occurred, and may be the fact of having been nearer to the supreme reality Death - were not in vain..
... Strange are the ways of Destiny - or of Providence! -

There was my will - and greater - the will of God! After the rather elaborate Vaanachnu and the few measures of symphonic "magnificat", I suddenly saw my way! (And strange to say, this way was the One I expected to follow in the last part of "Israel", which was never written....) I saw that the = וְנִיבְּ alone, by the CORO, on a symphonic music, was senseless! And that the inclusion of the text (p.124 - 125) of the Minister was of supreme importance! More than that: a necessity for explaining the וְנִיבְּ and a proclamation in the deepest, clearest, most universal way of the true ideals of Israel, of our great Prophets... the Key of the whole Service! (and besides, the deepest part of my own philosophy of Life, and which permeates all my works, whether Jewish or not! a Human Credo! The Faith that "it can be done" on Earth - as opposed to Christianity "in the other world" (!!!))

Thus I decided to do what I wanted to do at the End of Israel (the part never written). A preacher was to come, and before the final chorus, proclaim to the world

these same hopes, and truth, about the Unity (again! again!)
7/7X ") of man, of the Universe! Thus, after the
Hakodosh Boruch Hu, almost immediately, and during the
symphonic music, the Minister (and, on the Concert Stage,
a Recitant) talks "May the time not be distant" in a
measured way (This gave me much trouble! for I had to
declame it many and many times, as if I were preaching my-
self - and only after I had found all the accents, inflexions
could I write the real rhythm and make it concord with the
Music!!

Of course, this will be in English (or in
French, German, Italian, etc. - in the language of the
country, when performed- which will be very striking and
symbolic!

I had to condense and modify a little the text
- but very little, in fact - I changed "idolatry" in
"fetishism" which is much stronger and more general - and
truer - for it contains all forms of false gods men adore
(Law! Money! beliefs in alls, isms of all kind!)
I divided this text in several parts. When "O may all men
recognize that they are brethren..... till "for ever united"
- which I repeat - "for ever united before Thee" comes,
I used, in the instrumental part, one of the most beautiful
motifs of Schelomo and at "Then, shall Thine Kingdom"
a new motif which is from my never finished "Jeremiah"!!
and a coronation of it! Then, the Chorus says the
"Dayon hahay and 2 measures of terrific climax..... then
a sudden change and total change of color..... The music
goes on, subdued (motif of the Jewish Poems (Hope after
Death) and on that music, again, measured, the Minister
goes on with the full text "And now ere we part....."

it leads to the most mysterious "In the divince order of nature" when my initial motiv *Handwritten musical notation* comes "misterioso" and in a completely different/key and "oriental mode" in the basses..... Then comes this strange, shadowy music, I told you..... And then (perhaps against the usual liturgy, and the rules! but it had to be - and people will actually cry and look deeply into their souls -) in a muttering way, the words almost not to be heard (or on a "ah" at the Temple, if necessary). The coro sings again the "Tzur Yisroel", somewhat modified, on one single, distant, misterious, *Handwritten musical notation* harmony..... (The Kaddish Service can go on, during that Time - But what more beautiful than to have it go with such a background! like a supplication! The smallness of man - and his humility before God? - It dies out..... and out of that Mystery will arise as an "Erlösung" the Final "Adom Olom" - which is not made yet! I am scared! - It ought to be a supreme end, a climax, such a moving music, that people must fall in each others arms - and leave the Temple better men, more human, with more compassion, love, generosity, indulgence for each other It it could only be!

I assure you, my dear friend, that these pages I just talked about, are stupendously moving. I cannot play them to my daughter Lucienne without seeing her cry -- It is so simple, yet - But I think I found the right, the real, accents..... The "talking voice" too, on a strictly rhythmic way is most impressive - and makes an extraordinary contrast with the sung chorus. And the Adon Olom will really come as a Liberation ("in aller Beziehung") musically and humanly. IfI only could make it as beautiful as I hope.

- 6 -
Will you think it over? .

✓ The more I dwell on this Text - of the Service -
the more symbolic it becomes to me, of a philosophy which
starts from Israel, but radiates towards the whole world,
addresses itself to all mankind (as in America!) a broader
"Zionism", a bigger "Fatherland" justified by Science and
the latest Philosophy, this little and biggest Truth that
Israel proclaimed first to the World.

I don't see yet how I could add the 3fold
Benediction and Amen after the velo iro.....? But, if
necessary, for the Temple, an additional short liturgy -
a kind of "supplement" - could be made and added.....
This, I will see.

My affectionate regards to you, to your dear
ones, and I hope that now you are in better shape.

Please let me hear from you -

Yours faithfully

(signed) Ernest Bloch

✓ I wrote a long letter to G. Warburg,
about my work, on Dec. 8th, but did
not receive any reply. So far.....

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