

LANGUAGE AND LAUGHTER
IN THE TREATISE OF PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA
“THE WORSE ATTACKS THE BETTER”

Maksim Prikhodko
Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities (St. Petersburg)
prikhodkomaxim@yandex.ru

ABSTRACT. The present paper investigates the interaction between Logos and language in the treatise of Philo of Alexandria "The Worse attacks the Better". Language is regarded by Philo as the actualization of thought in its articulated expression, as the initial moment of creativity. The source of such action is the divine Logos, but the development of thought in the word happens in two opposite directions: one leads to joy, while the other, to suffering. The starting point of this separation is the initial orientation (love) of the mind to God or to self. In the first case, the mind in the act of utterance (expression) overcomes its own isolation. It comes into contact with the divine Logos and achieves *joy*. The crucial moment of this "leaving the brackets" of self individual thinking towards the light of the divine Logos is *laughter*. In another case, when the mind does not link words with their source, false creativity is produced, leading to suffering. Applying the concept of laughter to the doctrine of Logos and language, Philo reconciles the ideal plan of conceiving truth and its interpretation with the real functioning of the human mind and speech.

KEYWORDS: Philo of Alexandria, laughter, language, logos, allegory, exegetics, Isaac, logos endiathetos, logos proforikos.

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Philo of Alexandria is known for his investigations not only within the theoretical problems of theology and philosophy, but also for his interest in the existential problems of man. "Language" is one of these problems. Philo considers it according to two intersected perspectives. He relates language to the divine creation and providence of the universe and he deals it with anthropology and psychology. Despite a number of works dedicated to the theme of Philo's teaching on lan-

guage¹, the problems of intersection of the divine and human aspects in language has remained undiscovered. The theme of relationship between language and laughter is the subject of particular attention in the treatise of Philo "The Worse Attacks the Better" (*Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*) belongs to such points too.

The theme of laughter is investigated by Philo in the commentaries of several texts of the Book of Genesis². Mainly, Philo develops this topic from an interpretation of the figure of patriarch Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, whose name in Hebrew means "*he will laugh*". Laughter and the related phenomena (joy, glory, hilarity etc.) are considered by Philo as an important reality relating both to the existence of human being and the ontology of the universe as a whole³. In our article we will trace and investigate the relationship between Logos and laughter in the frame of Philo's treatise "The Worse Attacks the Better", where the doctrine of Logos is presented as a theory of language.

Philo's teaching on language

The main concept, on which Philo builds his teaching on language, is the doctrine of "twofold" logos. According to this doctrine, presented by Philo, human speech and thought are two kinds of the human logos, which are related to the Logos of God, presented in the universe⁴. Philo borrowed this concept from Greek philosophy. By the first century, this theory was attributed to the philosophers of the Stoa, although the premises of this concept were in Plato and Aristotle.⁵ Philo uses the principle of connection between two logoi, as delivering outside the

¹ Among the works specially devoted to the topic of language in Philo, we note: Winston 1985, 1991; Niehoff 1995; Robertson 2006, 2008; Kamesar 2004.

² Philo's thoughts on the theme of laughter we find in: *Praem.* 31–5, *Det.* 124, *Plant.* 168–9, *Leg. alleg.* 3.87, 217–19, *Mut. Nom.* 130–1, 137, 154–69, 175–6; *Vita Mos.* 1.20, 2.211, *Congr. erud.* 61, *Quis rer. div.* 47–8, *Plant.* 165–70, *Somn.* 2.167–8.

³ In the research literature Philo's theme of laughter has not been a separate object of investigation. Erwin Goodenough touches Philo's allegory of Isaac relating to Wisdom concept of Philo and makes a number of important reasoning (Goodenough 1969, 153–166). In the monograph of Stephen Halliwell (Halliwell 2008) Philo is mentioned briefly. In the recent article by Schmidt F. The plain and laughter: the hermeneutical function of the sign in Philo of Alexandria (Schmidt 2014, 188–199) *laughter* is considered within the symbolical terminology of Philo.

⁴ As R.V. Svetlov points out, "universe for Philo is not only our dwelling created by God. It is also the totality of signs that require correct reading." (Svetlov 2020, 70).

⁵ See: M. Pohlenz 1965, 79–86.

product or handiwork of internal reason by spoken word and he elaborates it according to his theological and philosophical views. Whereas the Stoics focused on spoken language, Philo takes into consideration the question of language origin in the mind. Philo explains it clearly in the treatise “*De vita Moysis*”:

the Logos is twofold as well in the universe as in human nature. In the universe we find it in one form dealing with the incorporeal and archetypal ideas from which the intelligible world was framed, and in another with the visible objects which are the copies and likenesses of those ideas and out of which this sensible world was produced. With man, in one form it resides within, in the other it passes out from him in utterance (ὁ μὲν ἐστὶν ἐνδιάθετος, ὁ δὲ προφορικός). The former is like a spring, and is the source from which the latter, the spoken, flows (οἷά τις πηγῆ, ὁ δὲ γεγωνὸς ἀπὸ ἐκείνου ῥέων). The inward is located in the dominant mind, the outward in the tongue and mouth and the rest of the vocal organism. (*Mos.* 2.127; Goold t.6, 510).

In the quoted passage we see that two stages in the existence of the Logos⁶ relating to the universe (the incorporeal archetypal idea and its immanent principle in material things) correspond to two kinds of logos in human being: the inner thought, ὁ ἐνδιάθετος and its utterance, ὁ προφορικός. As E. Goodenough points out, concerning this passage, Philo projects a *logos endiathetos* and *proforikos* from the human to the divine realm. Philo does not say that there is a twofold divine *logos* (*endiathetos* and *proforikos*) to correspond to the double human logos, but certainly such a meaning is implied (Goodenough 1965, 100). The comparison of Philo is not explicit which produced much discussion about it⁷. The difficulties of Philo’s concept of the “twofold” logoi in universe and human nature have not been solved yet. The modern scholar D. Robertson summarizes these difficulties as “the problem of relationship of the linguistic intelligibles with the divine intelligibles (the Ideas in the Mind of God) (Robertson 2008, 439). Robertson notes that Philo leaves certain questions unresolved, such as “How to bridge the metaphysical gap between intelligibles and sensibles?” (Ibid., 433); “how can immaterial, intelligible thoughts be transformed into audible utterances?” (Ibid., 434). Robertson notices in Philo the subtle borderline between immaterial thought and material utterance that is hard to grasp.

As it has been noted, in our work we offer one of solution of the problem of Philo’s concept of “twofold” logos. We find the crucial point with all the lines of this concept intersected in Philo’s teaching on laughter. Philo considers it in the framework of his language doctrine in his treatise “The Worse Attacks the Bet-

⁶ Considering Philo’s term “twofold” logos, we take the view of Wolfson on logos of Philo as two modes of existence or two kinds of logos.

⁷ See: Goodenough 1969, 101.

ter”⁸, which addresses the exegesis of the history of the murder of Abel by Cain in Gen. 4, 8-12. According to Philo, Abel and Cain represent two opposing visions of the world: “Abel, referring all things to God, is a God-loving creed; but Cain, referring all to himself – his name means ‘acquisition’—a self-loving creed (ὁ μὲν γὰρ Ἄβελ ἀναφερῶν ἐπὶ θεὸν πάντα φιλόθεον δόγμα, ὁ δὲ Κάιν ἐφ’ ἑαυτὸν—κτῆσις γὰρ ἐρμηνεύεται—φίλαυτον)” (*Det.* 32; Goold t. 2 1929, 223). To Philo, Abel and Cain mean two opposing principles: love of God and love of self. A key subject of the treatise is the language, considered under divine and human aspects. The biblical story of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain is interpreted by Philo as a figure of a sophistic contest where Cain, experienced in the art of eloquence, but notorious, defeats the unskilful but pious Abel. Nevertheless, the victory of Cain was not a victory indeed and the murder of Abel was not a death as such. Interpreting it, Philo raises the problem of “twofold logos”, which in this treatise is presented as the problem of relationship between the thinking of mind and its expression in the spoken word.

The problem of the *Plain*

Philo begins the treatise with the reasoning about the allegorical meaning of the *plain* (τὸ πεδῖον), the place to where Cain challenges Abel to come (Gen. 4, 8)⁹. Philo considers the *plain* as “a figure of a contest to be fought out” (*Det.* 32; Goold t. 2 1929, 222) and also, as “a suitable place for those, who exercise the soul’s irrational impulses in a better way” (*Det.* 5; Goold t. 2 1929, 205). On the examples of the biblical stories about James and Joseph, occurring in the plain (Gen. 31, 4-5; 37, 13-17), Philo interprets the *plain* as a problematic field, where “the flocks”- the irrational powers – are found, and where the Law of God or the Law of Nature are not evident and it is necessary to discuss from different points of view to arrive at a true understanding of the order of things. Thus, the *plain* is nothing more than the human articulate language or the field of the *logos proforikos*, where the “higher” internal thinking has to express according the “lower” rules of articulate speech. So, Philo’s figure of the *plain* shows the problem of the relationship between the *logos endiathetos* and the *logos proforikos* in human speech. The problem is presented as a conflict between the rational and the passionate parts of the soul. Philo shows, that the internal intelligible logos entering in the field of feeling has at risk of losing its meaning in the multifold sensible reality. But, other-

⁸ Greek text of Philo’s works is quoted from: Goold 1929 - 1935, and English translation of Colson, F.H. and Whitaker, G.H. from the same edition (Goold 1929 - 1935).

⁹ The biblical text upon which Philo bases is Septuagint.

wise it is the task of the *logos endiathetos* to reveal the unity of the intelligible world (or of the divine Logos) in the multiplicity of sensible world. It is in this way, to Philo, the true happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is achieved. As he argues:

“... happiness is found to be neither a peculiar property of the things of the outside world, nor of the things pertaining to the body, nor of those pertaining to the soul, taken by themselves. He argues that each of the three classes mentioned has the character of a part or element and that it is only when they are all taken together in the aggregate that they produce happiness (*Det.* 8; Goold t. 2 1929, 206-207).

So, according to Philo, anyone who wants to reach happiness has to pass throughout difficulties and dangers of the sensible world that are mainly presented in human speech.

However, considering “the problem of the *plain*”, Philo shows an extraordinary figure, in which the intelligible and the sensible are embraced without opposition to each other. It is Isaac, who, according to the meaning of his name, embodies *laughter*. In contrast with Jacob and Joseph, who come to the *plain* to train and to study “amid a contest of words”¹⁰, Philo points to Isaac, as a mighty champion, who finds the field emptied by the retirement of all his possible opponents. He comes into the *plain* not to engage to dispute with anybody, but to talk with God:

Endowed in mind, the divinest part of us, with a strength such as that of these athletes, Isaac “goeth out into the plain” (Gen. 24, 63), not to contend with anyone, for those who would oppose him have cowered before the greatness of his nature, so far beyond them in all ways. No, he goes forth desiring only to be alone with God, the Guide and Fellow-traveller of his path and of his soul, and to have converse with Him <...> it was no mortal talking to Isaac (*Det.* 29-30 Goold t. 2 1929, 221-223).

So, the superiority of Isaac in the *plain* is his guidance by God alone, therefore Isaac is able to talk with God Himself. According to the fact, that the “problem of the *plain*”, presented by Philo, affects both the irrational part of the soul and articulate speech, we can understand the perfectness of Isaac as a complete freedom of the soul from low impulses and as a purity of language (the *logos proforikos*) from the obscurity of the sensual sphere. It is obvious that Isaac-Laughter represents for Philo the image of a perfect relationship of internal thought and external speech, or the twofold *logos* (the *endiathetos* and the *proforikos*) in its unity.

This ideal is not unattainable for other “athletes” of the *plain*. Philo continues, that those who are midway on the road to perfection, characterized chiefly by

¹⁰ *Det.* 4-7; 28 Goold t. 2 1929, 205-207; 221.

their perseverance (ὑπομονή)¹¹, cannot yet see God as the Guide and Fellow-traveller of their souls, but can apprehend Isaac as the “self-taught wisdom (ἡ αὐτομαθῆς σοφία)” (*Det.* 30; Goold t. 2 1929, 223). Here we see an important definition of Isaac. In *De Fuga* Philo reasons about the αὐτομαθῆς as the spontaneously developing (wisdom) which is characterized as “that which is by nature” (τὰ φύσει). Philo compares “self-taught wisdom” with a seed, which is self-grown. It means that a seed contains both its beginning and its end. (*De fuga.* 171-172; Goold t. 5, 1935, 103-105). In other words, Philo’s concept of the αὐτομαθῆς σοφία is an elaboration of the stoic concept of the “seeds of logos”. As for the development of this concept in *Det.* we will see later. In general, Isaac as “self-taught wisdom” is described by Philo as a completeness of the mind which conceives the deeds of God¹².

God’s question to man

Cain and Abel, according to Philo, symbolize two principles of life: love to God and love to self (*Det.* 48; Goold t. 2 1929, 234-235). At the same time, these principles determine the attitude of a human logos to the Logos of God. At the same time, concerning to these general principles, Philo explains the forms of relationship between two kind of logos (mind-διάνοια, where we recognize the *logos endiathetos*, and word of utterance, the *logos proforikos*) in human nature. The starting point of the actualization of this double attitude of human logos is “a question of God” to man. Commenting on God’s question to Cain: “Where is Abel thy brother?” and the reply: “I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4. 9), Philo finds the manifestation of the wrong relationship between mind and utterance.

Exposing this problem, Philo takes in consideration the rule of the Book of Numbers about the Levites: “From twenty and five years old shall he go in to do active service in the Tabernacle of witness; and from (the age of) fifty years shall he cease from the ministry, and shall work no more, but his brother shall minister. He shall keep watch, but shall not work” (Numb. 8, 24-26). Philo transposes this rule into relationships between mind (διάνοια) and word of utterance (προφορικόν λόγον), as “old-guardian and young-minister brothers” (*Det.* 66; Goold t. 2 1929, 246-247). Philo states, that “the mind of the truly noble man will be guardian and steward of the teachings of virtue, while his brother, utterance, will minister to those who are seeking education, going over with them the doctrines and principles of wisdom” (*Det.* 66; Goold t. 2 1929, 246-247). This statement indi-

¹¹ The name of the wife of Isaac, Rebecca means “patience”, “perseverance” (ὑπομονή).

¹² See: *Quaest. Ex.* 4; Marcus t.2 1908, 386; *De praem.* 31-32; Goold t. 8 1939, 331. More about “self-taught wisdom” of Isaac: Goodenough 1969, 156-157; Kamesar 2004, 168-169.

cates a mental operation:

utterance is an operation of the organ of speech which is akin to it and watchful guardianship is found to be the function of the mind, which was created by nature to be a vast storehouse, and has ample room for the conceptions of all substances and all circumstances (τῆς μὲν ἐρμηνείας διὰ συγγενικοῦ οργάνου, τοῦ φωνητηρίου δῆπου, συνιστάμενης, τῆς δὲ φυλακῆς περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἐξεταζόμενης, ὅς μέγα ταμειεῖον ὑπὸ φύσεως δημιουργηθεῖς τὰς ἀπάντων καὶ σωμάτων καὶ πραγμάτων ἐννοίας εὐμαρῶς κεχώρηκεν).¹³

Philo compares the figure of relationship between the older and younger levites to the brothers Cain and Abel, which in this case signifies mind and speech:

It would have been to the advantage even of Cain, the lover of self, to have guarded Abel (φυλάξαι τὸν Ἄβελ); for had he carefully preserved him (διετήρησεν αὐτόν), he would have been able to lay claim only to a mixed "half and half" life indeed (κεκραμένου καὶ μέσου βίου μετεποίησατ'), but would not have drained the cup of sheer unmitigated wickedness. (*Det.* 68, Goold t. 2 1929, 248-249)

So, in the "advise" to Cain to guard Abel Philo shows the "duty" of mind to keep the word. Each of them (the mind and the word) has "half of a life" and only in unity do they possess life as such. We see here again Philo's speculation about the "twofold" logos concept. The problem of Cain, according to Philo, is a problem of the mind (of the *logos endiathetos*), resulting from a split with the word of utterance (the *logos proforikos*). Here the *logos proforikos* is presented as a substantial part of human logos (or of human ability of speech) which contents a certain image of the divine Logos. The mind which does not "keep" the word, or does not "watch closely", "observe" it – in the sense of the verb "διατηρέω"¹⁴, used by Philo, it stays closed within itself, or within its "inner room of concepts" and does not realize its ability to comprehend the Logos of God.

Thus, the question of God to Cain about his brother Abel, Philo shows as the testimony of the presence of the divine Logos in human logos. But this presence becomes actual only in the proper relation of the mind to the word. In the position of Cain, as the lover of self, we see a break of the connection of human logos with the divine Logos and, as a result, a breach of the right relationship between two kinds of human logos (the *endiathetos* and the *proforikos*, or the internal thought and the utterance).

To Philo, the loss of the link with the Word of God means the loss of the connection with true life. Because of that, Cain was "accursed from the earth" (Gen.

¹³ *Det.* 68; Goold t. 2 1929 248-249.

¹⁴ Greek-English Lexicon by Henry Liddell & Robert Scott. This word connects with "perseverance" (ὑπομονή), which Philo relates to Rebecca (*Det.* 30; Goold t. 2 1929, 223).

4. 11). Philo compares this state to physical suffering and disease from indulgence in pleasures (*Det.* 99; Goold t. 2 1929, 268-269). The “life for self”, from which Cain expects joy, brings him fear and grief (φόβον τε καί λύπην). Philo notices here the reason why Cain is called “groaning and trembling upon the earth” (Gen. 4, 12)¹⁵. Philo summarizes this “phenome of Cain” in the phrase about the Sophists: “not one of you is really still alive (ἕκαστος ὑμῶν οὐ περιέσστιν)” (*Det.* 74; Goold t. 2 1929, 252-253).

At the same time, Philo gives us an opposite example of the answer of the human mind to the question of God. That is God’s question to Abraham: “Where is thy wife Sarah?” (Gen. 18. 9), Philo says, that this question includes inquiry not for God, but for Abraham, who “should answer, with a view to set in bold relief the praise shown by the speaker’s own words to be due” (*Det.* 59; Goold t. 2 1929, 242-243). Philo notices, that God asks Abraham about his wife, who is in the tent at this moment, so God urges Abraham to bring out his virtue from “a tent” of his soul to attain the true happiness:

For happiness consists in the exercise and enjoyment of virtue, nor in its mere possession. But I could not exercise it (ἀρετῆς τό εὐδαιμον, οὐ ψιλῆ μόνον κτήσις χρῆσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην), shouldest Thou not send down the seeds from heaven (εἰ μὴ σὺ καθεις ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὰ σπέρματα) to cause her to be pregnant, and were she not to give birth to Isaac, i.e. happiness in its totality (ἡ δὲ εὐδαιμονίας γένος ἀποτεκοι τὸν Ἰσαάκ—εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ χρῆσιν ἀρετῆς). (*Det.* 60; Goold t. 2 1929, 243)

Thus, according Philo, the question of God urges the human mind not to be inside, only “possessing” its inner thoughts and conceptions, as we have seen it in the example of Cain. God urges the mind to go beyond itself, receiving and actualizing “the seeds from heaven”. In this way, the true happiness (εὐδαιμονία) is achieved. The figure of the birth of Isaac, noted here, means an initial manifestation of human mind provoked by the Logos of God. The “the seeds from heaven”, relating to Isaac, are nothing more, than the “automathes sophia”, noted above¹⁶, Philo’s elaboration of the stoic concept of “seeds of logos”.

Now we can understand the meaning of the “call of God” relating to the language theory of Philo. This act deals with human language, which is characterized by obscurity and infirmity. These kinds are reflected in “the problem of the *plain*”, as we have noted above. Here we see that “the problem of the *plain*” is solved by the “call of God” to a human mind. Philo uses here the concept of the “seeds of logos”, combining the idea of a life-giving force of Natural Law hidden within

¹⁵ The God’s words to Cain of Gen. 4,12: “you will be groaning and trembling upon the earth” is only in Septuagint.

¹⁶ See the chapter “The Problem of the *Plain*”.

things with a personal act of God relating to a human mind. According to Philo's reasoning about God's question to Cain about Abel as the admonition towards the mind to "keep" the word, we can conclude that the "seeds of heaven", to Philo, are in words, or in the human capacity of speech. So, Philo presents human language not only as the sphere of obscurity and infirmity, but also as a field of the meeting of a human logos with the Logos of God. According to Philo, the crucial point of this unity of human and the divine logoi is the function of laughter.

Laughter and Logos

Philo finds the opposite point to "Cain's mind" and the corresponding sadness of life in *laughter*, which is the testimony to the right order of life where God makes Himself present. It is displayed in the figures of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac:

Yet we may find in the righteous man a safeguard against it, for he has in his righteousness a sovereign remedy. So when he has thus routed evil things, he is filled with joy (*χαράς ἀναπίμπλαται*), as Sarah was; for she says, "the Lord hath made for me laughter", and goes on, "for whosoever shall hear, will rejoice with me" (Gen. 21. 6). For God is the Creator of laughter that is good (*σπουδαίου γέλωτος*), and of joy (*χαράς*), so that we must hold Isaac to be not a product of created beings, but a work of the uncreated One (*οὐ γενέσεως πλάσμα τον Ισαάκ, έργον δέ του ἀγενήτου νομιστέον*). For if "Isaac" means "laughter", and according to Sarah's unerring witness God is the Maker of laughter, God may with perfect truth be said to be Isaac's father. But he gives to Abraham, the wise one, a share in His own title, and by the excision of grief He has bestowed on him gladness, the offspring of wisdom (*μεταδίδωσι δέ και τῷ σοφῷ τῆς ιδίου κλήσεως Ἀβραάμ, ᾧ και τὸ χαίρειν, ἐπιγέννημα σοφίας, ἐκτεμῶν λύπην δεδώρηται*).¹⁷

So, according the reasoning of Philo, we can understand the divine origin of Isaac-Laughter as a revelation of the divine Source or Logos of God into human mind. This action goes beyond the scope of mental activity. At the same time, the human mind (logos) *reflects* this superintelligent action. This is the awareness of the presence of divine Logos in the mind and a reciprocal expressing-activity in an utterance that does not necessarily need to be expressed as an articulate word. That is the *laughter*, which Isaac symbolized as an initial act of the mind's response to God's presence, or to "the call of God". It is remarkable, that the very act of Sarah's laughter, described as a filling with joy (*χαράς ἀναπίμπλαται*), Philo relates to the visit of the Lord (Gen. 21, 1), -- not to the message about the birth of a child in old age (Gen. 21, 7) as, it would seem, is shown in the biblical text¹⁸.

¹⁷ *Det.* 123-124; *Goold t.* 2 1929, 284-285.

¹⁸ C. Conybeare finds in this laughter of Sarah a certain kind of anticipation, as "a joy before joy", which means an entrance into the symbolical reality (Conybear 2013, 33 – 34).

Philo opposes the “good laughter (σπουδαίου γέλωτος)” with “joy (χαράς)” as a work of the uncreated One (έργον δέ του άγενήτου) to “a product of created beings” (γενέσεως πλάσμα). Here we find the further development of two principles of life, which the figures Abel and Cain symbolize. Whereas in *Det.* 68 Philo speaks about the state of the mind *within* itself relating its attitude to God¹⁹, in *Det.* 123-124 the activity of the mind *outside* itself, its creative function, is taken for consideration. God’s gift of offspring to Abraham means the reception of God’s joy-creativity or wisdom (τὸ χαίρειν, ἐπιγέννημα σοφίας) which contrasts with earthly creativity (γενέσεως πλάσμα) and grief (λήπη), to which this creativity is compared.

The essence of the “good creativity” is considered by Philo as a union of mind and speech in *joy*:

If, therefore, a man be capable of hearing the poetry which God makes (ἀκοῦσαι τῆς θεοῦ ποιητικῆς), a he is of necessity glad himself, and he rejoices with those who had an ear for it already. God is an author in whose works you will find no myth or fiction, but truth’s inexorable rules all observed as though graven on stone (ἐν δὲ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ ποιητικῆ μύθου μὲν πλάσμα οὐδὲν εὐρήσεις, τοὺς δὲ ἀληθείας ἀσινεῖς κανόνας ἅπαντας ἐστηλιτευμένους). You will find no metres and rhythms and tuneful verses charming the ear with their music, but nature’s own consummate works, which possess a harmony all their own. And even as the mind, with its ear tuned to the poems of God, is glad, so the speech, being in tune with the conceptions of the understanding, and, if we may so speak, lending its ear to them, cannot but rejoice.²⁰

This passage shows that Philo conceives the speech of God as a divine creative work. The creativity of God is called by Philo *ποίησις*. This word is understood in two senses: as work and as poetry - therefore acoustical analogy is used. A human being is able to imitate the *poesis* of God in his word. The creation of God carries joy to that who is able to *hear* (if he is an *ἀκροατής*) of the *poetry* of God. This moment is equated with the act of word/speech’s singing in harmony (ὁ λόγος συνῶδός) with the conceptions of understanding (τοῖς διανοίας ἐνθυμήμασι). So, these highest acts of *speaking* and *hearing* become equated in the state of *joy*, formulated by Philo in a certain hermeneutic circle: the poetry of God, acting in creation, is expressed in the mind of man as a *word*, bringing him *joy*. And such a man, lending his “ear of mind” through “the conceptions of the understanding” harmonized with a relevant word/speech, perceives the poetry of God with joy.

The speech of Sophists is opposed to the action of God’s poetry. The Sophists are only “charming the ear with their music of metres and rhythms and tuneful

¹⁹ See the chapter “God’s question to man”.

²⁰ *Det.* 125; Goold t. 2 1929, 284-287.

verses". It is stressed here that the speech of sophists operates on the sensual level, whereas the hearing of God's poetry is the enlightening of the mind. As it has been said, Philo names the art of sophists as *μύθος* or *πλάσμα*. These terms are opposed to divine *ποίησις*. The term *πλάσμα* means "anything formed or moulded, image, figure" and "counterfeit, forgery, figment, fiction", that is to say - an earthly false creativity, ongoing in the existence through language.

Using the term *ποίησις*, Philo applies to the biblical figures of Moses and Aaron as a double allegory of the divine Source-mind and Logos-speech:

The Creator (*δημιουργός*) says that He knows that the uttered word (*προφορικὸν λόγον*), brother as it is of the mind (*διανοίας*), can speak; for He has made it, as it were, an instrument (*ὄργανον*) of music, to be an articulate utterance of our whole complex being (*πεποίηκε γὰρ αὐτὸν ὡσπερ ὄργανον τοῦ συγκρίματος ἡμῶν παντὸς ἑναρθρον ἡχῆν*). This "speech" (*λόγος*), both for me and for thee and for all men, sounds and speaks and interprets our thoughts (*ἐρμηνεύει τὰ ἐνθυμήματα*), and more than this, goes out to meet the reasonings of the understanding (*προσεξέρχεται γε ὑπαντησόμενος οἷς ἡ διάνοια λελόγισται*). For when the mind bestirs itself (*ὁ νοῦς ἐξαναστάς πρὸς τι*) and receives an impulse (*ὀρμή*) towards some object belonging to its own sphere, either moved from within itself or experiencing marked impressions from external objects (*ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκτὸς τύπους διαφέροντας*), it becomes pregnant and is in travail with its thoughts (*τὰ νοήματα*). It wishes to be delivered of them and cannot, until the sound produced by the tongue and the other organs of speech takes the thoughts into its hands like a midwife, and brings them forth to the light. And such sound is a most far-shining utterance of our thoughts (*φωνὴ δὲ τηλαυγεστάτη νοημάτων ἐστὶν αὕτη*). For just as things laid up in darkness are hidden, until a light shine on them and show them, in the same way conceptions (*τὰ ἐνθυμήματα*) are stored in the mind (*διανοία*), a place that is out of sight, until the voice (*ἡ φωνή*) illumine them like a light and uncover them all.²¹

So, to Philo, just as the *Demiurge* brings to light His ideas by His *Logos*, so the *mind* enlightens his inner thoughts by the voice or the sound (*ἡ φωνή*). Without the voice, the mind (*νοῦς*) is closed within the inner sphere of its thoughts (*νοήματα*), as we have seen in the allegory of Cain's mind. The mind can operate with his thoughts, but this action is hidden in the mind. But when the *voice* appears, as "brother of mind", or "instrument" reflecting the "music of Creator", the inner conceptions (*τὰ ἐνθυμήματα*) of reason (*διανοία*) come from darkness into light. This is a revealing of speech "both for me and for thee and for all men", that is the *logos proforikos* reflecting a harmony with divine Logos. This "disclosure" or the "expression" of the unity of mind/the *logos endiathetos* with divine Logos is the *joy* of creativity.

²¹ *Det.* 126-128; 286-287.

Thus, commenting on the figures of Moses and Aaron, Philo highlights the *activity* of divine Logos within the activity of the human mind. Philo stresses an *expressive* role of *joy*, revealed by *voice*, which can bring the incomprehensible divine wisdom into human thought, as light into darkness. The process of the birth of speech is linked to the creation of the world by God through the Logos, which is accompanied by joy, as a manifestation of the innermost mind. So, this joy we can understand as the actualization of the divine Logos in the sensual sphere and, at the same time, it is the first act of interpretation or revelation of human *logos endiathetos* outside, as the *logos proforikos*.

In the treatise *The Worse attacks the Better* Philo deals with the concept of “twofold” logos, where he reveals, on the one hand, the relationships between a human logos and the divine Logos and on the other hand, the relationship between two kinds of a human logos: the mind (*dianoia* or *logos endiathetos*) and the word of utterance (*logos proforikos*). Philo states a complicity of these relationships as a discrepancy between thought and utterance, belonging to the different spheres of existence: the intelligible and the sensible. The *thought* cannot be expressed in *utterance* adequately and therefore it is necessary to “fight” for the state of the meaning of words. Nevertheless, Philo finds the point, where thought and its expression are in harmony. It is *laughter*, or *joy*, an existential state of human logos where the divine Word both constitutes and actualizes the human mind. In Philo’s explanation of this concept we distinguish two steps:

Firstly, Philo reveals the *inside* activity of each of kind of human logos relating to the action of the divine Logos, “God’s question”. There is an allegorical interpretation of the figures of the brothers Cain and Abel as the mind (*dianoia*) and the word of utterance (*logos proforikos*). Here Philo shows that the Word of God enters into the human mind as a call, provoking a certain response. Philo finds a self-determination of mind relating to divine Logos in the initial transition from thinking into utterance, which, at the same time means a certain kind of link between internal thought (the *logos endiathetos*) and word of utterance (the *logos proforikos*). Philo shows two types of this relationship, according to the example of God’s questions: to Cain and to Abraham. In the first case, grief is revealed; but in the second, joy. In these two cases, the relationship of the mind towards utterance reveals the attitude of mind towards the Logos of God.

Secondly, Philo explains the *outside* activity of “twofold” human logos relating to the Logos of God, as a certain “answer” to God’s call. It is related to the functioning divine Logos into activity of human mind in the act of laughing or joy. The laughter/joy reveals the unity of divine and humane logos as living unity of the highest expression and understanding. This act is described by Philo as a re-

flection and perception of the poetry of God. Besides, Philo shows the development of an opposite, egoistic attitude of mind towards the divine Logos in terms of the fictional creativity of sophistry. Conceiving laughter as an initial expression of thought, which is at the border of thinking-utterance, intelligible-sensible, Philo provides his concept of correlation between the divine and human twofold logoi with dialectical integrity and living reality.

In general, the optimistic view of Philo on the disclosure of divine Logos within the united field of divine activity and human understanding, paves the way for Christian historicism, where the motives of revelation as expression and interpretation of Divine Logos in human language and historical perspective are linked with the experience of joy in God's presence.

ABBREVIATIONS OF PHILO'S WORKS

- Congr.* – *De congressu eruditionis gratia* — On the Preliminary Studies.
Migr. – *De migratione Abrahami* — The Migration of Abraham.
Mut. nom. – *De mutatione nominum* — On the Change of Names.
Opif. – *De opificio mundi* — On the Creation.
De plant. – *De plantatione Noe* — On Noah's Work as a Planter.
De praem. – *De praemiis atque poenis* — On Rewards and Punishments.
Det. – *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* — The Worse attacks the Better
De fuga. – *De fuga et inventione* – On Flight and Finding
Somn. – *De somniis* — On Dreams.
Mos. – *De vita Moysis* — Moses.
Leg. alleg. – *Legum allegoriae* — Allegorical Interpretation.
Quis. rer. – *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* — Who is the Heir.
Quaest. Ex. – *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Exodum* – Questions and Answers on Exodus.

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