

# Philo's Logos Doctrine: Bridging Two Cultures and Creating Philosophical Foundations of Christianity

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## Introduction

Philo of Alexandria<sup>1</sup> (ca 20 B.C.E–ca 50 C.E.), a Hellenized Jew also called Judaeus Philo, is a figure that spans two cultures, the Greek and the Hebrew. When Hebrew religious thought met Greek philosophical thought in the first century B.C.E. it was only natural that someone would try to develop speculative and philosophical justification for Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy. Doing this Philo also made a contribution to Platonic philosophy at the stage classified today as Middle Platonism

Thus Philo produced in his religious thought a synthesis of both traditions developing concepts that were used for future Hellenistic interpretation of messianic Hebrew thought, especially by Clement of Alexandria, Christian Apologists like Athenagoras, Theophilus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and by Origen. He may have influenced Paul, his contemporary, and perhaps the authors of the Gospel of John<sup>2</sup> and the Epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>3</sup> In the process, he laid the foundations for the development of the philosophical and theological foundations of Christianity in the West and in the East, as we know it today. Thus major components of future Christology were the Logos Doctrine developed in Middle Platonism and the Hebrew messianic traditions of the Dead Sea Scrolls that became fully expressed in the historical context of the first century C.E. in Palestine.

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1 Marian Hillar, *Philo of Alexandria*, The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/philo/> *The Works of Philo. Complete and Unabridged*. Translated by Charles Duke Yonge, New Updated Edition. (Hedrickson Publishers, 1995).

2 C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

3 Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970). Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989).

The church preserved the Philonic writings because Eusebius of Caesarea labeled erroneously the monastic ascetic group of Therapeutae and Therapeutrides, described in Philo's *The Contemplative Life*, as Christians.<sup>4</sup> Eusebius (263-339C.E.), Bishop of Caesarea and church historian, also promoted the legend that Philo met Peter in Rome. Jerome<sup>5</sup> (345-420C.E.) even lists him as a church Father and in the Byzantine excerpts from scriptural commentators, titled *Catena* (fifth to sixth century), Philo is listed under the heading of "Philo bishop." The Legend of *Philo Christianus* was initiated before, probably by Clement of Alexandria (ca 150-ca 220 C.E.), the first church Father who quotes him explicitly, and it was maintained thus until the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> Jewish tradition was uninterested in philosophical speculation and did not preserve Philo's thought.<sup>7</sup>

The major part of Philo's writings consists of philosophical essays dealing with the main themes of biblical thought that present a systematic and precise exposition of his views. He attempted to show that the philosophical Platonic or Stoic ideas were nothing but deductions made from the biblical verses of Moses. Philo was not an original thinker, but he was well acquainted with the entire range of Greek philosophical traditions from the original texts.

Philo's works are divided into three categories:

1. The first group comprises writings that paraphrase the biblical texts of Moses.
2. In the second group are a series of works classified as philosophical treatises.
3. The third group includes historical-apologetic writings: *Hypothetica* or *Apologia Pro Judaeos* which survives only in two Greek extracts quoted by Eusebius. The first extract is a rationalistic version of Exodus giving a eulogic account of Moses and a summary of the Mosaic constitution contrasting its severity with the laxity of the Gentile laws; the second extract describes the Essenes. The other apologetic essays include *Against Flaccus*, *The*

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4 Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*. Translated with introduction by G.A. Williamson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984). 2.17.1.

5 Jerome Eusebius Hieronymus Stridensis Presbyter, *De viris illustribus* Ch. 11 in Migne PL Vol. XXIII.

6 David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Assen: Van Gorcu; inneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). 4-7, 28-29; Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973). 446-452.

7 H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1947), Vols 1-2.

*Embassy to Gaius* and *On the Contemplative Life*. But all these works are related to Philo's explanations of the texts of Moses.

Philo uses an allegorical technique for interpretation of the Hebrew myth and in this he follows the Greek tradition of Theagenes of Rhegium (second half of the sixth century B.C.E.).<sup>8</sup> Theagenes used this approach in defense of Homer's theology against the detractors. He said that the myths of gods struggling with each other referred to the opposition between the elements; the names of gods were made to refer to various dispositions of the soul, e.g., Athena was reflection, Aphrodite, desire, Hermes, elocution. The Sophist Prodicus of Ceos (460-395 B.C.E.), contemporary of Socrates, interpreted the gods of Homeric stories as personifications of those natural substances that are useful to human life [e.g., bread and Demeter, wine and Dionysus, water and Poseidon, fire and Hephaestus].<sup>9</sup> He also employed ethical allegory. The allegory was used by the cynic Antisthenes (contemporary of Plato) and Diogenes the Cynic.<sup>10</sup> Stoics expanded the Cynics' use of Homeric allegory in the interest of their philosophical system.

Using this allegorical method, Philo seeks out the hidden message beneath the surface of any particular text and tries to read back a new doctrine into the work of the past. In a similar way Plutarch allegorized the ancient Egyptian mythology giving it a new meaning.<sup>11</sup>

### **Philo of Alexandria Facing the Ancient Hellenistic Culture**

Judaism was a mythical religion with anthropomorphic God in which the leading element was the concept of a covenant between God and the exceptional "chosen people." Such views produced a strong emphasis on ethnic and nationalistic unity and attitude of election and moral superiority vis-à-vis the rest of humanity. The whole Hebrew bible is full of statements reminding the readers of the leadership of the Jews and eschatological unification of the world under their religion and their Messiah.

When facing the cultural traditions of the surrounding Hellenistic people in Alexandria Philo must have felt inadequacy of the ancient Judaism to compete for their minds. For ancient Hellenes developed during centuries a sophisticated system of

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8. Vernant, Jean-Pierre *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1981).

9. Cicero, *ND* 1.38; Philodemus, *De pietate* 10.

10. Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.*, 8.20-21.

11. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*.

philosophical thought that was replacing the popular mythical religion, at least among educated people that found its best expression in the Stoic philosophy. Stoicism itself was a product of a long process of evolution of religious and philosophical thought that started with Pythagoras and Plato. Philo was thoroughly educated in Greek thought and culture as can be seen from his superb knowledge of classical Greek literature. He had a deep reverence for Plato and referred to him as “the most holy Plato” (*Prob.* 13). Philo’s philosophy represented contemporary Platonism, designated by scholars as Middle Platonism, that was its revised version incorporating Stoic doctrine and terminology via Antiochus of Ascalon (ca125-68 B.C.E.) and Eudorus of Alexandria (fl. ca 25 B.C.E.), as well as elements of Aristotelian logic and ethics and Pythagorean ideas. Clement of Alexandria even called Philo “the Pythagorean.”<sup>12</sup> It seems to be useful to review briefly ideas of these two important philosophers who shaped the views of Philo of Alexandria.

Antiochus of Alexandria<sup>13</sup> (ca 125-68 B.C.E.) was born in Ascalon. He moved early in his life to Athens ca 110 B.C.E., became a member of the Academy founded by Plato. Antiochus was a student and follower of Philo of Larissa, head of the school at that time. After Philo of Larissa left Athens and moved to Rome in 88 B.C.E., the next year we find Antiochus in Alexandria accompanying Lucullus, a Roman general and statesman. He also had an influence on Cicero who studied with Antiochus in Athens, and on Varro, apart from Cicero the greatest Roman intellectual of the first century B.C.E. Antiochus considered the criterion of truth (epistemology) and the goal of human life (ethics) as the two most important concerns of philosophy (Cicero, *Academica* 1.29). Antiochus is considered to be the founder of the Middle Platonism that lasted until Plotinus (204-270 C.E.) who is recognized as the founder of Neoplatonism.

**Epistemology.** Antiochus rejected skepticism of Philo of Larissa and became dogmatist and embraced the position that knowledge is possible and that there are truths known to humans. This epistemology was essentially Stoic thus he belonged in the Stoa rather than in the Academy. Stoic epistemology claimed that humans might attain wisdom as a condition free of opinion (false or insecure judgments). To achieve this there must be a criterion of truth which is a cognitive impression i.e. impression from and in accordance

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12 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, I.15.

13 James Allen, *Antiochus of Ascalon*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,  
<http://www.science.uva.nl/~seop/entries/antiochus-ascalon/>

with what is. They are perceptual as well as non-perceptual and by confining assent to cognitive impressions, one can act and avoid error. Antiochus followed the Stoics and added defense of the veracity of the senses, the view that corresponded to the empiricism of Philo of Alexandria.

**Ethics.** The Stoics maintained that only virtue, considered identical with wisdom or the perfection of reason, is good and only vice is evil. All the other goods, such as health and their opposites, evils, were indifferent. Nonetheless the Stoics considered some of these indifferent goods to be preferred and others not to be preferred. This distinction between them was the subject matter for rational selection. Antiochus in his ethical views regarded the preferred indifferent goods as goods, albeit lesser goods. Thus virtue is not the sole good in accordance with the Peripatetics. Similarly Philo of Alexandria, though he disdained the material world and physical body (*Spec. leg.* 3.1-6) advocates fulfilling first the practical obligations toward men and the use of mundane possessions for the accomplishment of praiseworthy works (*Fug.* 23-28; *Plant.* 167-168). He considers pleasure indispensable and wealth useful, but for a virtuous man they are not a perfect good (*LA* 3.69-72).

As to the development of human nature Antiochus supported the Stoic model in which, in opposition to the Epicureans, our first natural impulse is towards satisfying natural basic needs, and not to pleasure. These goods are indifferent though preferred. Only later humans recognize virtue and virtuous activity as the only human goods and human motives undergo transformation. Antiochus agrees with the Stoics about the first natural impulses, but he accepts the principle that what is agreeable or accords with a creature's nature is good for that creature. The good life for human beings is therefore the life characterized by the fullest possible enjoyment of the goods corresponding to our natural impulses (Cicero, *Academica* 1.19, 22; *De Finibus* 5.24-5). He also maintains that virtue is the highest human good, and not the only good as the Stoics had done.

In his ethical theory Antiochus distinguishes between the happy life designated by Cicero as *vita beata* for which virtue is sufficient, and the completely happy life (*vita beatissima* in Cicero's designation), which requires additional external goods (*De Finibus* 5.71, 95; *Tusculan Disputations* 5.22). For Philo of Alexandria the ideal of a happy life was achieved by reaching a state of philosophical contemplation.

Eudorus of Alexandria<sup>14</sup>(fl. ca 50-25 B.C.E.) was a native philosopher of

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14 Edward Moore, *Middle Platonism*, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

Alexandria who attempted to reconcile Plato's philosophy with Pythagoreanism. He was concerned with ethics, which he considered the first subject of philosophy to be studied. He defined ethics in terms of striving for a proper end (*telos*), which he considered to be "likeness to god as far as possible," the phrase, which he derived from Plato's *Theaetetus* (176b) adding "as far as possible." Eudorus, interpreted the Plato's statement as referring to the intellect, that part of the soul which is most close to the divine. By this conception Eudorus differs from Antiochus who considered physical pleasures or external goods as contributing to the happiness that depends on virtue. For him just as for Philo of Alexandria the true happiness is of the intellect alone.

In metaphysics and cosmology Eudorus departed from Pythagoreans and introduced a supreme transcendental monistic principle above the Monad and the Dyad (Limit and Unlimited) as creator of matter. This view was especially appealing to Philo's monistic doctrine of God.

But Philo also picked up his ancestral tradition, though as an adult, and once having discovered it, he put forward the teachings of the Jewish prophet, Moses, as "the summit of philosophy" (*Op.* 8), and considered Moses the teacher of Pythagoras (b. ca 570 B.C.E.) and of all Greek philosophers and lawgivers (Hesiod, Heraclitus, Lycurgus, to mention a few). For Philo, Greek philosophy was a natural development of the revelatory teachings of Moses. He was no innovator in this matter because already before him Jewish scholars attempted the same. Artapanus<sup>15</sup> in the second century B.C.E. identified Moses with Musaeus<sup>16</sup> and with Orpheus.<sup>17</sup> According to Aristobulus of Paneas (first half of the second

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<http://www.iep.utm.edu/midplato/>

15 Artapanus of Alexandria, a historian of Jewish origin who lived in Alexandria during the second century B.C.E. He wrote a history of the Jews entitled *Concerning the Jews* text of which did not survive. His writings were summarized by Alexander Polyhistor of the first century B.C.E. Fragments of his works were preserved by Eusebius of Caesarea in *Praeparatio evangelica* (IX.18,23,27) and by Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata* (I.23, 154). John J. Collins, *Artapanus*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudoepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), Vol. 2, pp. 889-903).

16 Musaeus of Athens was a legendary polymath reputed to have been the founder of priestly poetry in Attica (Euripides, Plato). The mystic and oracular verses of Eleusis are attributed to him.

17 Orpheus was a legendary musician, poet, and prophet in Greek religion. Orpheus was a founder and prophet of the so-called "Orphic" mysteries. He was credited with the composition of the *Orphic Hymns*, a collection of which survives.

century B.C.E.), Homer and Hesiod drew from the books of Moses, which were translated, into Greek long before the Septuagint.<sup>18</sup> Several Christian writers mention him and five fragments of Aristobulus's writings are preserved by Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica* and by Clement of Alexandria.<sup>19</sup> His treatise, *Exposition of the Law of Moses* was dedicated to the King Ptolemy VI Philometer (ca 181-145 B.C.E.)<sup>20</sup> and was probably written in the form of a dialogue in which Aristobulus answered questions posed by the king, thus a form similar to that of Philo's *Questions and Solutions*. The fragments indicate the influence of Greek Platonic and Pythagorean thinking and have an apologetic character.<sup>21</sup> Aristobulus and after him Philo, adopted the allegorical interpretation of the Jewish sacred writings from the Stoics who used it to interpret Greek poets, Homer and Hesiod. Using this allegorical method, Philo seeks out the hidden message beneath the surface of any particular text and tries to read back a new doctrine into the work of the past. In a similar way Plutarch allegorized the ancient Egyptian mythology giving it a new meaning.<sup>22</sup>

But in some aspects of Jewish life Philo defends the literal interpretation of his tradition as in the debate on circumcision or the Sabbath (*Mig.* 89-93; *Spec. leg.* 1.1-11). Though he acknowledges the symbolic meaning of these rituals, he insists on their literal interpretation. Aristobulus and Philo were the products of a trend in Jewish ideology that attempted, in confrontation with the Greek culture, to assert itself as a valid cosmic view to

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18 Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 9.27; 13.11.

19 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7. 32:17-18 (frag. 1); *Praeparatio evangelica* 8.10:1-17 (frag. 2); 13.12:1-2 (frag. 3); 13.12:3-8 (frag. 4); 13.12:9-16 (frag. 5), also in 7. 14:1. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, Bks 1, 5, 6 (parts of frags 2-5). *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed., James H. Charlesworth, (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday, 1985) Vol. 2, pp. 831-836. Borgen, *op. cit.*, 7-16. N. Walter, *Der Thorausleger Aristobulus* (Berlin, 1964).

20 2 Maccabees 1:10. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.150:1-3. Eusebius, *H. E.* 7. 32:16 (where not reliable dating is given). Eusebius, *Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, Bearbeitete Auflage herausgegeben von Édouard des Places (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1982, 1983), 2 vols. 9. 6:6; 8. 9:38. Peder Borgen, *Philo, John and Paul. New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), 7-16. Heinrich and Marie Simon, *Filozofia żydowska (Geschichte der jüdischen Philosophie)*, Berlin: Union Verlag, 1984), translated by Tomasz Pszczołkowski (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1990), 23-26.

21 C. Fritsch, *The Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (Princeton, 1943).

22 Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*.

support the existence of a community. Aristobulus may be considered as among the first who attempted to build a bridge between these two civilizations and tried to adapt Jewish Law to the new ideological situation. Such an attitude found its culminating expression in a Hellenistic system of Philo. The early Christian writers in the post-evangelical or apologetical period in turn used Aristobulus and Philo to show continuity of some of their assertions with Jewish tradition and the superiority for Christianity over the native religion of the Gentiles.

### **The Concept of Logos in Antiquity**

The pivotal and the most developed doctrine in Philo's writings on which hinges his entire philosophical system is his doctrine of the Logos. By developing this doctrine he fused Greek philosophical concepts with Hebrew religious thought and provided the foundation for Christianity, first in the development of the Christian Pauline myth and speculations of John, later in the Hellenistic Christian Logos and Gnostic doctrines of the second century. All other doctrines of Philo hinge on his interpretation of divine existence and action.

The term *Logos* was widely used in the Greco-Roman culture and in Judaism. Through most schools of Greek philosophy, this term was used to designate a rational, intelligent and thus vivifying principle of the universe (the Stoics). This principle was deduced from an understanding of the universe as a living reality and by comparing it to a living creature. Ancient people did not have the dynamic concept of "function," therefore, every phenomenon had to have an underlying factor, agent, or principle responsible for its occurrence.

In the Septuagint (designated as LXX) version of the Old Testament the term *logos* (Hebrew *davar*) was used frequently to describe God's utterances (Gen. 1:3, 6,9; 3:9,11; Ps. 32:9), God's action (Zech. 5:1-4; Ps. 106:20; Ps. 147:15), or spoken voice, and messages of prophets by means of which God communicated his will to his people (Jer. 1:4-19, 2:1-7; Ezek. 1:3; Amos 3:1). Usually it is expressed in the form "And God said." God's utterance is used there as a figure of speech designating God's activity or action.

In the ancient Near East it was a widely spread conceptual anthropomorphic device to express the action of a supreme divinity or a divine principle. The myth of creation by a spoken word (*logos*) goes back to the First Dynasty in Egypt (First and Second Dynasty dated between 2900-2628 B.C.E.) where we find such stories in the texts entitled *Memphis Theology of Creation*, *Hymn to Ptah*, and *Hymn to Ra*. Here is probably the beginning of the *logos* doctrine in general and especially of the Hebrew *Logos* as it was absorbed in the

creation story.<sup>23</sup>The first principle, Ptah, through his thought and his words, created or formed everything and brought it into order. Moreover, he not only creates everything from him, he also rules over the world and over humans rewarding or punishing them for their behavior.

The Hebrew concept of logos will be invoked in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Here the Hebrew Logos will be expressed substantively in the man Jesus. How this happened was explained by Michael Servetus (1511-1553), sixteenth century biblical scholar, who used for explanation the Hellenistic concept of substance. According to Servetus the Hebrew scripture invoking the concept of *davar*, logos, does not indicate the existence of a separate entity within God:

The Word [Logos] that constitutes the manifestation of God was located in this God as a visible essence by means of a divine arrangement; it is an apparition in the clouds such that whoever hears and sees the Word [Logos] does so by the grand design of God. There was the Word [Logos] in substance, the apparition in fire, and a certain visible force namely God...<sup>24</sup>

For Servetus the uttered Logos (Word) of God constitutes the manifestation of God within God that can be expressed in various forms. It became the human Jesus, a human being through a process of procreating in the Greek manner: the very Word [Logos] is the literal seed of generation that sprouted in Mary and yielded fruit.<sup>25</sup> Thus the human Jesus, not the Logos, can be considered the Son of God, the natural Son of God.

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23 *The Memphis Theology of Creation*, translated by John A. Wilson, in *Near East. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, edited by James B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958 sixth printing 1973), Vol. 1, pp. 1-2. Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels. Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, fully revised and expanded edition (New York/Mahawah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997). *Hymn to Ptah*, pp. 3-5; *Hymn to Ra*, pp. 6-18.

24 Michael Servetus, *Christianismi restitutio*, English translation: *The Restoration of Christianity. An English Translation of Christianismi restitutio, (1553) by Michael Servetus (1511-1553)*. Translated by Christopher A. Hoffman and Marian Hillar; Alicia McNary Forsey, Managing Editor, (Lewiston, NY; Queenston, Ont.; Lampeter, UK: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), p. 71.

25 *Ibid.* p. 72.

In the so-called Jewish wisdom literature we find the concept of Wisdom (*hokhmah* and *sophia*) (Proverbs, fifth century B.C.E.; 8:22-31; the Wisdom of Solomon, in the second century B.C.E.; 7:22,25-27; 9:1-2, 9; 18:15; the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, also in the second century B.C.E.; 24:1-22) that deals with the essential questions and problems related to human existence: How to conduct our life? How to think about death? Why is there suffering? Why do the good people sometimes suffer while the wicked prosper? This literature was the product of observations and contemplation made by sages. Ancient Israel like other neighboring nations had men and women who were famed and praised for their wisdom. The biblical wisdom literature has its beginning in the tenth century but it is preceded by a long history of the ancient Near Eastern texts from Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, Assyria which constitute its source.<sup>26</sup>

It seems that in Israel this type of literature gained the official support of the rulers since Solomon (1 Kgs 4:29-34). Some scholars tried to associate this genre of literature with the establishment of schools on the model of the Greek philosophical schools, but there is no evidence for this. The first mention of any Jewish school comes in the second century B.C.E. in the Greek text of the Wisdom of Ben Sirach (51:23). It seems that this wisdom literature is the closest Hebrew approximation to the reflective thought the Greeks described as philosophy. Though wisdom literature has a direct practical relevance to the problems of moral behavior of individuals, for ways how to achieve personal happiness and welfare, it was not a secular literature. All wisdom stemmed from God and could be received only by devout worshippers.

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26 James B. Pritchard, ed. *op. cit.*, Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *op. cit.* W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (Philadelphia: Old Testament Library, 1970). J. M. Thompson, *The Form and Function of Proverbs of Ancient Israel* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974). W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Eisenbrauns, 1996, reprint of 1960 edition). H. H. Rowley, ed., *The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951). Glen E. Bryce, *A Legacy of Wisdom: The Egyptian Contribution to the Wisdom of Israel* (Lewisburg, PA: Associated University Press, 1979). Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *op. cit.* William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard, Frederic W. M. Bush, *Old Testament Survey. The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982, reprinted 1992), pp. 532-610. Amar Annus and Alan Lenzi, *Ludlul B•l N•meqi, the Standard Babylonian Poem of Righteous Sufferer*, with introduction, cuneiform text, and transliteration, with a translation and glossary (Winnona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010).

For the purpose of our inquiry special importance acquires personification or individualization of wisdom. Wisdom is presented in Proverbs as a woman passing through the streets pleading with people to follow her instructions and abandon their foolish ways, to “fear the Lord and find the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:5). She claims to have been created by God before anything else and even to have assisted in the creation of the world (Prov. 8:22-30, Sir. 24:9). But she is with God for he created the world “by understanding” (Prov. 3:19). In the Wisdom of Solomon she is presented as “a breath of the power of God, a pure emanation of the power of the Almighty” (Wis. 7:25). In Wis. 9:1-2 she seems to be identified with God’s Word (Logos), she was present when God made the world (Wis. 9:9).

This concept of wisdom was created and used for the evaluation of crises in Jewish history, which seemed to indicate that there was no longer any wisdom in the world. To keep the memory of wisdom alive the writers of these books presented it as to be found only with God, imparted to those who feared God. In the Hebrew culture it was a part of the metaphorical and poetic language describing divine wisdom as God's attribute and often it is clearly referred to a human characteristic in the context of human earthly existence.

The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel of John seems to fuse the concept of Hebrew Logos with that of Wisdom. Both exist from the beginning, participate in or are agents of creation, and are life supporters. This was observed by a biblical scholar, C. H. Dodd, who clearly stated:

while the Logos [the Logos of John’s Prologue] has many of the traits of the Word of God in the Old Testament, it is on the other side a concept closely similar to that of Wisdom, that is to say, the hypostatized thought of God that projected in the creation remaining as an immanent power within the world and in man.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 275.

Finally one has to mention the modification of the ancient doctrine of Logos introduced by Xenocrates of Chalcedon<sup>28</sup> (ca 396-314 B.C.E.) who postulated Logos as the “thought of God.” Xenocrates was the second successor of Plato in his Academy after Speusippus (ca 407-339 B.C.E.). We have only fragments of their writings and testimonies left by others about their doctrines. They both elaborated further on the existence of cosmic principles in Plato's *Philebus*<sup>29</sup> already listed by Pythagoras.

The Xenocrates philosophy constitutes an important transition to Middle Platonism. In his theology, Xenocrates<sup>30</sup> differentiated two cosmic principles as divinities – the Monad and the Dyad. One was the masculine divinity, and, as such, had a role of the Father and ruled in heaven. He proclaimed it to be the One and the intellect (Nous). This was the Supreme Deity, the First God, immovable and unchanging, called Zeus. The other was the feminine divinity identified with primordial matter or the indefinite Dyad due to its multiplicity that had a role of the Mother of gods and ruled over the gods beneath the heaven – she was the Soul of the Universe. Xenocrates tried to preserve the Platonic concept of Ideas as the models of things so he treated them as numbers because just as numbers were defining things, so Ideas were defining matter. They were invisible, comprehensible by the intellect, and incorporeal principles of the sensible reality imparted from the supreme Monad. This was the most important contribution of Xenocrates to the history of Platonism and philosophy that he identified the Platonic Ideas as thoughts in the mind of the One.

### **Philo's Doctrine of the Logos**

The pivotal and the most developed doctrine in Philo's writings on which hinges his entire philosophical system, is his doctrine of the Logos. Philo attempted to explain Hebrew thought in terms of Greek philosophy by introducing the Greek concept of Logos into Judaism. But this was the modified concept of Logos in the version of Xenocrates who postulated Logos as the “thought of God.” Philo, by providing various descriptions and interpretations of the Logos, allowed its transformation from a metaphysical entity into an

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28 Senocrate, Ermodoro, *Frammenti* edizione, traduzione e commento a cura di Margherita Isnardi Parente (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1982).

29 Plato, *Philebus* cc. 23c - 27e.

30 Senocrate, *op. cit.*, *Fraqs* 213-230.

extension of a divine and transcendental anthropomorphic being and mediator between God and men.

### **The Utterance of God**

Following the Jewish mythical tradition, Philo represents the Logos as the utterance of God found in the Jewish scripture of the Old Testament since God's words do not differ from his actions. There are three quotes relevant in this context. When discussing the question why God created the world in six days, Philo explains that God did not need time for it, because he created things at once, however, the created things needed rearrangement in an orderly way: God creates everything at once “not merely by uttering a command but by even thinking of it.” In *De somniis* (1.182) Philo clearly states that God’s “words do not differ from his actions.” And finally in *De Sacrificiis* (8) Philo explains a passage from Deut. 5:31 where God elevated Moses above his people by a word. Thus God “both created the universe, and raised a perfect man from the things of earth up to himself by the same word.” And this was done in accordance with the Old Testament where God acts “by means of the word of the Cause of all things by whom the whole world was made.”<sup>31</sup>

### **The Divine Mind**

Philo accepted the Platonic intelligible Forms. Forms exist forever though the impressions they make may perish with the substance of which they were made.<sup>32</sup> They are not, however, beings existing separately, rather they exist in the mind of God as his thoughts and powers. Philo explicitly identifies Forms with God's powers. Those powers are his glory and Philo portrayed God as explaining to Moses:

The powers that you seek are invisible and intelligible, belonging to me who am[equally] invisible and intelligible, and by intelligible I speak not of those effectively apprehended by the mind but mean that if these powers could be apprehended, it would not be by sense but by mind at its purest. But though inapprehensible in their essence they show a sort of impress and copy of their

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31 Deut. 34:5.

32 *Det.* 75-77; *Mut.* 80, 122, 146; *Cher.* 51.

activity: like your seals ... Some among you, without missing the mark call them Forms<sup>33</sup>

Philo interpreted the Logos, which is the divine Mind as the Form of Forms, the Idea of Ideas or the sum total of Forms or Ideas.<sup>34</sup> The Logos is an indestructible Form of wisdom comprehensible only by the intellect.<sup>35</sup>

Philo reasoned that by analogy to the biblical version of the creation of man in the image of God, so the visible world as such must have been created in the image of its archetype present in the mind of God.<sup>36</sup> The invisible intelligible world, which was used by the Logos as an archetypal model for creation or rather the formation of the visible world from the (preexisting) unformed matter was created in the mind of God.<sup>37</sup>

Describing Moses' account of the creation of man, Philo stated: "And the invisible divine Logos he [Moses] calls the Image of God;"<sup>38</sup> also, "shadow of God is his Logos, which he used as like an instrument when he was making the world."<sup>39</sup> Forms, though inapprehensible in essence, leave an impress and a copy and procure qualities and shapes to shapeless things, unorganized matter. Mind can grasp the Forms by longing for wisdom.<sup>40</sup>

Creation thus took place from the preexistent shapeless matter (Plato's Receptacle) which is "the nurse of all becoming and change"<sup>41</sup> and for this creation God used the Forms which are his powers:

For from the pre-elemental matter God created all things, without laying hold of it himself ... Instead he employed his incorporeal Forms, so that each genus assumes its fitting shape.<sup>42</sup>

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33 *Spec.* 1.45-50.

34 *Det.* 75-76.

35 *Mig.* 103.

36 *Op.* 25.

37 *Op.* 36.

38 *Op.* 24; 31; *LA* 1.9.

39 *LA* 3.96.

40 *Spec.* 1.45-50.

41 Plato, *Timaeus* 49-51.

This may seem a controversial point whether the primordial matter was preexistent or was created *ex nihilo*. Philo's view is not clearly stated and there are seemingly contradictory statements. In some places Philo states, “nothing comes into being from the nonexistent and nothing is destroyed into the nonexistent.”<sup>43</sup> The same is repeated in his *De Specialibus Legibus*: “Being made of us [i.e., elements] when you were born, you will again be dissolved into us when you come to die; for it is not the nature of any thing to be destroyed so as to become nonexistent, but the end brings it back to those elements from which its beginnings come.”<sup>44</sup> The resolution of this seeming controversy is to be found in Philo's theory of eternal creation which is described next in connection with the Logos as the agent of creation. Philo, being a strict monist, could not accept the existence of independent and eternal preexistent matter (however disorganized and chaotic) as Plato did.

### **Agent of Creation**

Philo believed that the Logos is “the man of God”<sup>45</sup> or “the shadow of God” which was used as an instrument of creation and a pattern of all creation.<sup>46</sup> The role of the Logos in creation was described by Philo's doctrine of creation.

### Philo's Doctrine of Creation

In antiquity most philosophers asserted that the world had a beginning and having begun it was everlasting (like Plato) or was subject to eternal sequence of cyclic generations and destructions (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Stoics). Aristotle maintained that the Platonic view was untenable and asserted that the universe was eternal.<sup>47</sup> Some Platonists disagreed with the formulations of Platonic cosmogony and asserted that the world was really uncreated but for the practical pedagogical reason it could be presented as continually created and derived from the action of some principle on unorganized matter, the Indefinite Dyad.

Philo attempts to bridge the Greek “scientific” or rational philosophy with the strictly mythical ideology of the Hebrew scriptures. As a basis for the “scientific” approach

42 *Spec.* 1.327-329.

43 *Aet.* 5-6.

44 *Spec.* 1.266.

45 *Conf.* 41.

46 *LA* 3.96.

47 Aristotle, *De Coelo* 1. 10 R79.

he uses the worldview presented by Plato in *Timaeus* which remained influential in Hellenistic times. The characteristic feature of the Greek scientific approach is the biological interpretation of the physical world in anthropocentric terms, in terms of purpose and function that may apply to biological and psychological realities but may not be applied to the physical world. Moreover, Philo operates often on two levels: the level of mythical Hebraic religious tradition and the level of philosophical speculation in the Greek tradition. Nevertheless, Philo attempts to harmonize the Mosaic and Platonic accounts of the generation of the world by interpreting the biblical story using Greek scientific categories and concepts. He elaborates a religious-philosophical worldview that became the foundation for the future Christian doctrine.

Philo's doctrine of creation is intertwined with his doctrine of God and it answers two crucial questions: 1. Was the world created *ex nihilo* or from primordial matter? 2. Was creation a temporal act or is it an eternal process?

#### Philo's model of creation

Though Philo's model of creation comes from Plato's *Timaeus*, the direct agent of creation is not God himself (described in Plato as Demiurge, Maker, Artificer), but the Logos. Philo believes that the Logos is "the man of God" (*Conf.* 41) or "the shadow" of God that was used as an instrument and a pattern of all creation (*LA* 3.96).

The Logos converted unqualified, unshaped preexistent matter, which Philo describes as "destitute of arrangement, of quality, of animation, of distinctive character and full of disorder and confusion," (*Op.* 22) into four primordial elements: God created everything, without indeed touching it himself, for it was not lawful for the all-wise and all-blessed God to touch materials which were all misshapen and confused, but he created them by the agency of his incorporeal powers, of which the proper name is Ideas (*LA* 1.329).

According to Philo, Moses anticipated Plato by teaching that water, darkness, and chaos existed before the world came into being (*Op.* 22). Moses, having reached the philosophy summit, recognized that there are two fundamental principles of being, one, "an active cause, the intellect of the universe." The other is passive, "inanimate and incapable of motion by any intrinsic power of its own" (*Op.* 8-9), matter, lifeless and motionless. But Philo is ambiguous in such statements as these: "God, who created all things, not only brought them all to light, but he has even created what before had no existence, not only being their maker, but also their founder" (*Somn.* 1.76; *Op.* 81; *LA* 3.10). It seems that Philo does not refer here to God's creation of the visible world *ex nihilo*

but to his creation of the intelligible Forms prior to the formation of the sensible world (*Spec. leg.* 1.328).

Philo reasons that by analogy to the biblical version of the creation of man in the image of God, so the visible world as such must have been created in the image of its archetype present in the mind of God. “It is manifest also, that that archetypal seal, which we call that world which is perceptible only to the intellect, must itself be the archetypal model, the Idea of Ideas, the Logos of God” (*Op.* 25). In his doctrine of God Philo interprets the Logos, which is the Divine Mind as the Form of Forms (Platonic), the Idea of Ideas or the sum total of Forms or Ideas (*Det.* 75-76). The Logos is an indestructible Form of wisdom. Interpreting the garment of the high priest (Exod. 28:34; 36) Philo states: “But the seal is an Idea of Ideas, according to which God fashioned the world, being an incorporeal Idea, comprehensible only by the intellect” (*Mig.* 103).

The invisible intelligible and incorporeal world, which was used by the Logos as a model for creation or rather formation of the visible world from the (preexisting) unformed matter was created in the mind of God; the world, perceptible by the external senses, was made by the Logos on the model of it (*Op.* 36). Describing Moses' account of the creation of man, Philo states also that Moses calls the invisible Divine Logos the Image of God (*Op.* 24; 31; *LA* 1.9). Forms, though inapprehensible in essence, leave an impress and a copy and procure qualities and shapes to shapeless things and unorganized matter. Mind can grasp the Forms by longing for wisdom. This desire for wisdom, which is continuous and incessant in humans, fills us “with famous and most beautiful doctrines” (*Spec. leg.* 1-45-50).

Creation thus took place from preexistent shapeless matter (Plato's Receptacle), which is “the nurse of all becoming and change”,<sup>48</sup> and for this creation God used the Forms that are his powers (*Spec. leg.* 1.327-329). This may seem a controversial point whether the primordial matter was preexistent or was created *ex nihilo*. Philo's view is not clearly stated and there are seemingly contradictory statements. In some places Philo states, “for as nothing is generated out of nothing, so neither can anything which exists be destroyed as to become non-existence” (*Aet.* 5-6). The same is repeated in his *De Specialibus legibus*: “Being made of us [i.e. elements] when you were born, you will again be dissolved into us when you come to die ... “ (*Spec.* 1.266).

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48 Plato, *Timaeus*, 49-51.

The resolution of this seeming controversy is to be found in Philo's theory of eternal creation, which is described next in connection with the Logos as the agent of creation. Philo, being a strict monist, could not accept the existence of independent and eternal preexistent matter (however disorganized and chaotic) as Plato did.

#### Eternal creation

Philo denies the Aristotelian conclusion coming, according to him, from the superficial observation that the world existed from eternity, independent of any creative act (*Op.* 7). He elaborates instead his theory of the eternal creation (*Prov.* 1.6-9), as did Proclus (410-485 C.E.) much later in interpreting Plato.<sup>49</sup> Proclus brilliantly demonstrated that even in the theistic system the world though generated must be eternal, because the “world is always fabricated ... is always becoming to be.”<sup>50</sup> Proclus believed, as did Philo, that the corporeal world is always coming into existence but never possesses real being.<sup>51</sup>

Thus God, according to Philo, did not begin to create the world at a certain moment, but he is “eternally applying himself to its creation” (*Prov.* 1.7; *Op.* 7; *Aet.* 83-84):

But God is the creator of time also, for he is the father of his father, and the father of time is the world, which made its own mother the creation of time, so that time stands towards God in the relation of a grandson; for this world is a younger son of God, inasmuch as it is perceptible by the outward sense, for the only son he speaks of as older than the world, is Idea, and this is not perceptible by the intellect, but having thought the other worthy of the rights of primogeniture, he has decided that it should remain with him (*Deus* 31-32).

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49 Proclus, *Commentaire sur le Timée. Traduction et notes* par A. J. Festugière (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1966-1968) Vol. 1-5. Vol. 2, 290, 3.25.

50 *In Defense of the Timaeus of Plato in Fragments of the Lost Writings of Proclus*, translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor (Lawrence, KS: Selene Books, 1987) p. 4.

51 *Arguments in Proof of the Eternity of the World*, in Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-107. Proclus' main argument was that if God did not always make the world, he would be an imperfect Demiurge indigent of time. It is amazing that these arguments were never considered later by Christian philosophers who always argued instead for the biblical scheme of creation.

Philo contends that God thinks simultaneously with his acting or creating; while he speaks [Logos] he creates [deed], thus his Logos is his deed (*Sacr.* 65; *Mos.* 1.283).

Thus any description of creation in temporal terms, e.g., by Moses, is not to be taken literally, but rather is an accommodation to the biblical language (*Op.* 19; *Mut.* 27; *LA* 2.9-13):

Thus ever thinking he [God] creates, and furnishes to sensible things the principle of their existence, so that both should exist together: the ever-creating Divine Mind and the sense-perceptible things to which beginning of being is given (*Prov.* 1.7).

Thus Philo postulates a crucial modification to the Platonic doctrine of the Forms, namely that God himself eternally creates the intelligible world of Ideas as his thoughts. The intelligible Forms are thus the principle of existence to the sensible things which are given through them their existence. This simply means in mystical terms that nothing exists or acts except God. On this ideal model God then orders and shapes the formless matter through the agency of his Logos (*Her.* 134, 140) into the objects of the sensible world (*Op.* 19).

Philo claims a scriptural support for these metaphysics saying that the creation of the world was after the pattern of an intelligible world (Gen. 1:17), which served as its model. During the first day God created Ideas or Forms of heaven, earth, air (= darkness), empty space (= abyss), water, pneuma (= mind), light, the intelligible pattern of the sun and the stars (*Op.* 29). There are, however, differences between Philo and Plato: according to Plato, there is no Form of space. In Plato space is not apprehended by reason; rather it had its own special status in the world. Also pneuma as a Form of soul does not exist in the system of Plato.

Plato designates this primordial unorganized state of matter a self-existing Receptacle; it is most stable and a permanent constituent that must be called always the same, because it never departs from its own character.<sup>52</sup> Philo, being a strict monist could not allow even for a self-existing void so he makes its pattern an eternal idea in the divine mind.

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52      Plato, *Timaeus*, 50.

Before Philo there was no explicit theory of creation *ex nihilo* ever postulated in Jewish or Greek traditions. Both Philo and Plato do not explain how the reflections of Forms are made in the world of senses. They do not attribute them to God or the Demiurge because it would be contrary to their conception of God as “good” and “desiring that all things should come as near as possible to being like himself.”<sup>53</sup> God could not create the copies of the Forms that should be “disordered.” It seems then that the primordial unorganized matter was spontaneously produced on the pattern of the Ideas. The Logos would shape the elements from this preexistent matter, first into heavy (or dense) and light (or rare) elements which were differentiated properly into water and earth, and air and fire (*Her.* 134-140; 143). As in Plato certain geometrical descriptions characterize Philo's elements. Fire was characterized by a pyramid, air by an octahedron, water by an icosahedron, and earth by a cube (QG 3.49). In Plato's theory too, one can envision a sort of automatic reflection of the Forms in the Receptacle due to the properties of Forms. God could not, according to Philo's philosophy, create the preexistent matter (*Her.* 160).

Logically, God is for Philo indirectly the source of preexistent matter but Philo does not ascribe to God even the shaping of matter directly. In fact this unorganized matter never existed because it was simultaneously ordered into organized matter – the four elements from which the world is made.

### **Transcendent Power(s)**

The Logos that God begat eternally because it is a manifestation of God's thinking-acting,<sup>54</sup> is an agent that unites two powers of the transcendent God. Philo relates that in an inspiration his own soul told him that in the one living and true God there were two supreme and primary powers, Goodness [or Creative Power] and Authority [or Regent Power]; and that by his Goodness he had created everything; and by his Authority he governed all that he had created; and that the third thing which was between the two, and had the effect of bringing them together was the Logos, for that it was owing to Logos that God was both a ruler and good.

And further Philo states that biblical cherubim are the symbols of the two powers of God but the flaming sword (Gen. 3.24) is the symbol of the Logos.<sup>55</sup>

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53 Plato, *Timaeus*, 29.

54 *Provid.* 1. 7; *Sacr.*65; *Mos.* 1. 283.

55 *Cher.* 1. 27-28. Cf. *Sacr.*59; *Abr.* 124-125; *Her.*166; *QE* 2.68.

Philo's description of the Logos (the Mind of God) corresponds to the Greek concept of mind as hot and fiery.<sup>56</sup> There are other powers of the Father and his Logos in addition to these two main powers including *merciful* and *legislative*:

Perhaps we may say that the most ancient, and the strongest and the most excellent metropolis ... is the divine Logos, to flee to which first is the most advantageous course of all. But the other five, ebbing as it were colonies of that one, are the powers of Him who utters the Word, the chief of which is his creative power, according to which the Creator made the world with a word; the second is his kingly power, according to which he who has created rules over what is created; the third is his merciful power, in respect to which the creator pities and shows mercy towards his own work; the fourth is his legislative power by which he forbids what may not be done ....<sup>57</sup>

Also the Logos has an origin, but as God's thought it also has eternal generation. It exists before everything else all of which are secondary products of God's thought, and therefore it is called the "first-born."

The Logos is thus more than a quality, power or characteristic of God; it is an entity eternally generated as an extension, to which Philo ascribes many names and functions. The Logos is the first-begotten Son of the uncreated Father:

For the Father of the universe has caused him to spring up as the eldest son, whom, in another passage, he [Moses] calls the first-born; and he who is thus born, imitating the ways of his father, has formed such and such species, looking to his archetypal patterns.<sup>58</sup>

This picture is somewhat confusing because we learn that in the final analysis the Creative Power is also identified with the Logos.

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56 Aëtius, IV.3.3-11 (Stoics); IV. 3.4. (Parmenides); IV.3.5 (Democritus); IV.3.6. (Heraclitus); IV.3.7. (Leucippus); IV.3.11 (Epicurus). In *Dox. graeci op. cit.*; SVF 3. 305; 2. 446.

57 *Fug.* 94-95.

58 *Conf.* 63.

The Beneficent (Creative) and Regent (Authoritative) Powers are called God and Lord, respectively. Goodness is Boundless Power, Creative, God. The Regent Power is also Punitive Power and the Lord.<sup>59</sup> Creative Power, moreover, permeates the world; it is the power by which God made and ordered all things. Philo followed the ideas of the Stoics<sup>60</sup> that *nous* pervades every part of the universe as it does the soul in us. Therefore Philo asserts that the aspect of God which transcends his powers (which we have to understand to be the Logos) cannot be conceived of in terms of place but as pure being, as that power of his by which he made and ordered all things and which is called God “enfolds the whole and passes through the parts of the universe.”<sup>61</sup> According to Philo, the two powers of God are separated by God “himself standing above in the midst of them, ... the senior powers of the Existent.”<sup>62</sup> Referring to Genesis 18:2 Philo claims that God and his two Powers are in reality one. To the human mind they appear as a Triad with God above the powers that belong to him:

For this cannot be so keen of spirit that, it can see Him who is above the powers that belong to Him, (namely) God, distinct from everything else. For so soon as one sets eyes on God, there also appear together with His being, the ministering powers, so that in place of one he makes the appearance of a triad.<sup>63</sup>

At birth two powers enter every soul, the salutary (Beneficent) and the destructive (Unbounded). The world is created through these same powers. The creation is accomplished when “the salutary and beneficent (power) brings to an end the unbounded and destructive nature.” Similarly, one or the other power may prevail in humans, but when the salutary power “brings to an end the unbounded and destructive nature” humans achieve immortality. Thus both the world and humans are a mixture of these powers and the prevailing one has the moral determination.<sup>64</sup>

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59     *Her.* 166.

60     *DL* 7. 138-139.

61     *Conf.* 136-137.

62     *Her.* 166.

63     *QG* 4.2.

64     *QE* 1.23.

Philo evidently analyzes these two powers on two levels. One is the divine level in which the Unlimited or the Unbound is a representation of God's infinite and immeasurable goodness and creativity. The Logos keeps it in balance through the Limit. The other level is the human one where the Unlimited or the Unbounded represents destruction and everything morally abhorrent. Human reason is able, however, to maintain in it some kind of balance.

Philo obviously refers these powers to the Unlimited and the Limit of Plato's *Philebus* and Pythagorean tradition.<sup>65</sup> Among the beings Plato differentiated are the Unlimited, and the Limited, a third one a mixture of these two, and a fourth, the cause of mixing. When the first two principles are combined in one unity it is called a body (a component of the world or a human, and on the cosmic level the universe). The fourth principle is the cause which is producing the mixture and everything that becomes from that mixture. The cause that produces order is reason and wisdom. If it acts on the cosmic level it is the cosmic soul and if it acts in humans, it is a human soul. The ideal life thus described by Plato, just as later by Philo, is the one governed by reason.

In Plato these two principles or powers operate at the metaphysical, cosmic and human levels. Philo considered those to be powers inherent in a transcendental God, and that God himself may be thought of as multiplicity in unity.

The Creative Power is logically prior to the Regent Power since it is conceptually older. Though the powers are of equal age, the creative is prior because one is king not of the nonexistent but of what has already come into being.<sup>66</sup> These two powers thus delimit the bounds of heaven and the world. The Creative Power maintains things so they should not be dissolved; the Regent Power arbitrates through the laws order and equality which are the seeds of peace and perpetual survival.<sup>67</sup> The positive properties of God may be subdivided into these two polar forces; therefore, the expression of the One is the Logos which constitutes the manifestation of God's thinking-acting.<sup>68</sup>

According to Philo these powers of the Logos can be grasped at various levels. People at the summit level grasp them as constituting an indivisible unity. At the two lower

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65 Plato, *Philebus* 23c - 31a.

66 *QE* 2.62.

67 *QE* 2.64.

68 *Provid.* 1.7; *Sacr.* 65; *Mos.* 1.283.

levels are, respectively, those who know the Logos as the Creative Power and beneath them, those who know it as the Regent Power.<sup>69</sup>

The next level down represents those limited to the sensible world and unable to perceive the intelligible realities.<sup>70</sup> At each successively lower level of divine knowledge the image of God's essence is increasingly more obscured.

### **Universal Bond**

The Logos is the Bond holding together and administering the entire chain of creation binding s all parts together. In humans the soul does not permit separation of the parts of the body, but holds them in integrity and harmony. Especially in the wise man his mind preserves the virtues and keeps them in communion with the good will.<sup>71</sup> The Logos of God is a glue and a chain that fills all things with its essence.<sup>72</sup>

### **Immanent Reason**

The reasoning capability of the human mind is a portion of the all-pervading divine Logos.<sup>73</sup> Philo emphasizes that man “has received this one extraordinary gift, intellect, which is accustomed to comprehend the nature of all bodies and of all things at the same time.”<sup>74</sup> Humanity resembles God in the sense of having free volition.<sup>75</sup>

This concept, that it is chiefly in intellect and free volition that humans differ from other life forms, has a long history which can be traced to Anaxagoras and Aristotle.<sup>76</sup> Philo called “men of God” those people who made God-inspired intellectual life their dominant issue. Such men “have entirely transcended the sensible sphere, and migrated to the intelligible world, and dwell there enrolled as citizens of the Commonwealth of Ideas, which are imperishable, and incorporeal ... those who are born of God are priests and prophets who have not thought fit to mix themselves up in the constitutions of this world

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69 *Fug.* 94-95; *Abr.* 124-125.

70 *Gig.* 20.

71 *Fug.* 112.

72 *Her.* 188.

73 *Deus* 47.

74 *Deus* 47.

75 *Deus* 48.

76 Aristotle, *De Anima* 429a 4.16-18.

.... “<sup>77</sup> Philo wrote the following in reference to the Old Testament expression that God “breathed into” (equivalent of “inspired” or “gave life to”) inanimate things:

For there must be three things: that which breathes in is God, that which receives what is breathed in, and that which is breathed in. Now, that which breathes is God, that which receives what is breathed in is the mind, and that which is breathed in is the spirit. What then is collected from these three things? A union of the three takes place, through God extending the power, which proceeds from himself through the spirit, which is the middle term, as far as the subject.<sup>78</sup>

Though the spirit is distributed among men and also fills the world, it is not diminished nor is it injured by participating in humans as their understanding, their knowledge or their wisdom.<sup>79</sup> The nature of the reasoning power in men is indivisible from the divine Logos, but “though they are indivisible themselves, they divide an innumerable multitude of other things.” Just as the divine Logos divided and distributed everything in nature (i.e., it gave qualities to undifferentiated, primordial matter), so the human mind by exertion of its intellect is able to divide everything and everybody into an infinite number of parts. And this is possible because it resembles the Logos of the Creator and Father of the universe.<sup>80</sup>

Uninitiated minds are unable to comprehend the Existent by itself; they only perceive it through its actions. To them God appears as a Triad, himself and his two Powers: Creative and Ruling. To the “purified soul,” however, God appears as One,<sup>81</sup> as one image of the living God, and others of the other two, as if they were shadows irradiated by it.<sup>82</sup>

So the one category of enlightened people is able to comprehend God through a vision beyond the physical universe. It is as though they advanced on a heavenly ladder

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77 *Gig.* 61.

78 *LA* 1.37.

79 *Gig.* 27.

80 *Her.* 234-236; *Det.* 90. (Cf. *Gig.* 27; *LA* 1.37).

81 *Abr.* 119-123.

82 *Abr.* 119-123.

and conjectured the existence of God through an inference,<sup>83</sup> The other category comprehends him through himself, as light is seen by light. For God gave man such a perception “as should prove to him that God exists, and not to show him what God is.” Philo believed that even the *existence* of God “cannot possibly be contemplated by any other being; because, in fact, it is not possible for God to be comprehended by any being but himself.”<sup>84</sup> Philo adds, “Only men who have raised themselves upward from below, so as, through the contemplation of his works, to form a conjectural conception of the Creator by a probable train of reasoning”<sup>85</sup> are holy, and are his servants.

Next Philo explains how such men have an impression of God's existence as revealed by God himself, by the similitude of the sun (Philo<sup>86</sup> borrowed this analogy from Plato<sup>87</sup>). As the light is seen in consequence of its own presence so, “In the same manner God, being his own light, is perceived by himself alone, nothing and no other being co-operating with or assisting him, a being at all able to contribute to pure comprehension of his existence; But these men have arrived at the real truth, who form their ideas of God from God, of light from light.”<sup>88</sup>

As Plato and Philo had done, Plotinus later used this image of the sun: “The illumination which is diffused from Him who remains immobile, is as light in the sun which illuminates everything else around.”<sup>89</sup> Philo differentiated two modes for perceiving God, an inferential mode and a direct mode without mediation: “As long therefore as our mind still shines around and hovers around, pouring as it were a noontide light into the whole soul, we, being masters of ourselves, are not possessed by any extraneous influence.”<sup>90</sup> Thus this direct mode is not in any way a type of inspiration or inspired

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83 *Proem.* 40.

84 *Proem.* 39-40.

85 *Proem.* 43.

86 *Mut.* 4-6.

87 Plato, *Republic* 507 C.

88 *Proem.* 45-46.

89 Plotino, *Enneadi*; Porfirio, *Vita di Plotino*. Traduzione con testo greco a fronte. Introduzione, note e bibliografia di Giuseppe Fraggin (Milano: Rusconi, 1992/1996). English translation: *The Enneads* translated by Stephen Mac Kenna and abridged with introduction and notes by John Dillon. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991). 5.1.6.

90 *Her.* 264.

prophecy; it is unlike “inspiration” when a “trance” or a “heaven-inflicted madness” seizes us and divine light sets as it happens “to the race of prophets.”<sup>91</sup> and at the same time it emanates into everything in the world.

### **Immanent Mediator of the Physical Universe**

In certain places in his writings Philo accepted the Stoic theory of the immanent Logos as the power or Law binding opposites in the universe and mediating between them, and directing the world. For example, Philo envisions that the world is suspended in a vacuum and asks, how is it that the world does not fall down since it is not held by any solid thing? Philo then gives the answer:

The Logos extending himself from the center to its furthest bounds and from its extremities to the center again, runs nature's unvanquished course joining and binding fast all its parts. For the Father when he begat him constituted him an unbreakable bond of the universe.<sup>92</sup>

The divine Logos produces harmony in the universe.<sup>93</sup> Thus Philo saw God as only indirectly the Creator of the world: God is the author of the invisible, intelligible world which served as a model for the Logos. Philo says Moses called this archetypal heavenly power by various names: “the beginning, the image, and the sight of God.”<sup>94</sup> Following the views of Plato and the Stoics, Philo believed that “in all existing things there must be an active cause, and a passive subject; and that the active cause is the Logos of the universe.”<sup>95</sup> He gives the impression that he believed that the Logos functions like the Platonic “Soul of the World.”<sup>96</sup>

### **The Angel of the Lord, Revealer of God**

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91 *Her.* 265.

92 *Plant.* 9-10. (Cf. *Plant.* 7-10. Cf. *LA* 1.37; *Her.* 188; *Deus* 176; *Det.* 90; *Gig.* 27; *QE* 2.68, *Fuga* 110; *Op.* 143).

93 A favorite word of the Stoics.

94 *LA* 1.43.

95 *Op.* II. 8-9.

96 *Aet.* 84.

Philo describes the Logos as the revealer of God symbolized in the scripture by an angel of the Lord.<sup>97</sup> Referring to Gen. 31:13, Philo states: “We must understand this, that he [God] on that occasion took the place of an angel, as far as appearance went, without changing his own real nature.”<sup>98</sup> Philo claims that the angel who appeared to Hagar in Gen.16:8 was “the Word (Logos) of God.”<sup>99</sup> The Logos is the first-born and the eldest and chief of the angels.<sup>100</sup>

According to Philo, man's highest union with God is limited to the deity's manifestation as the Logos. God's transcendence prevents our having access to God's essence. The notion of God's transcendence could be found in Plato's concept of the Good as One above the Being,<sup>101</sup> but the credit for the concept in Greek philosophy goes to Speusippus (408-339 B.C.E.), Plato's successor as the head of the Academy.<sup>102</sup> The idea was also developed by Neopythagoreans, Eudorus of Alexandria (fl. 30 B.C.E.) and Moderatus of Gades (fl. second half of the first century C.E.). Eudorus claimed that the Pythagoreans held that the supreme principle, the One, existed above the principles of Monad and Dyad. Moderatus of Gades, in turn, taught the existence of three principles: the supreme principle, the One, identified with the Good; next was the active Logos, identified with the intelligible realm; and the third one was the realm of the soul. Anaximander (d. ca 546 B.C.E.) postulated *apeiron*, the Unlimited, as the first principle, not a natural substance, from which many worlds are becoming. The Middle-Platonists postulated this first principle supranoeitic above a pair of the opposites, Monad representing Form and Dyad representing Matter<sup>103</sup>

Somewhat like that Middle-Platonic doctrine, Philo emphatically insisted on a doctrine of God's transcendence which held to a distinction between God's essence and

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97 *Somn.* 1.228-1.239; *Cher.* 1-3.

98 *Somn.* 1.238.

99 *Fug.* 5.

100 *Conf.* 146-147.

101 Plato, *Republic* 509 b.

102 Speusippus frag. 34, in Paul Lang, *De SpeusippiAcademiciScriptis.AcceduntFragmenta* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965). Speusippo *Frammenti*. Edizione, traduzione e commenti a cura di Margherita Isnardi Parente (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1980). Leonardo Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens. A Critical Study with a Collection of the Related Texts and Commentary* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981).

103 Simplicius, *In Phys.* 181, 10 ff.

God's existence, and which taught our complete inability of cognizing the former. This position is rather alien to biblical and rabbinical traditions. In the Bible, God is represented in a "material" and "physical" way: "God breathed into man's face both physically and morally."<sup>104</sup> And, "The mind is vivified by God, and the irrational part of the soul by the mind; for the mind is as it were a god to the irrational part of the soul, for which reason Moses did not hesitate to call it the god of Pharaoh (Exodus 7:1)."<sup>105</sup> But Philo asserts that we may not know the exact nature of God "for he has not displayed his nature to any one."<sup>106</sup>

God's qualities are most generic and there can be no distinction in him between genus and species since God "exists according to the indivisible unit."<sup>107</sup> God belongs to no class; he has properties, but they are not shared with others. His essence is, therefore, one and single. "Now there is an especial attribute of God to create, and this faculty it is impious to ascribe to any created being. But the special property of the created being is to suffer."<sup>108</sup>

God's essence, though concealed, is made manifest on two secondary levels. One is the level of the intelligible universe of the most ancient Logos which is the God's image.<sup>109</sup>

The second level is the level of the sensible universe, which is an image of the Logos.<sup>110</sup>

The essence of God remains forever undisclosed; only its effect, images or shadows may be perceived. Since the essence of God is forever beyond any possibility of human experience or cognition, including the mystic experience of vision, the only attributes that may be applied to God in his supreme state are those of the *via negativa* or of the *via eminentiae*. But there is also a third way which consists of depriving the object of knowledge of any sensible attribute:

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104 LA 1.36,39.

105 LA 1.40.

106 LA 3.206; LA 3.26; *Deus* 53,56.

107 *Gig.* 52.

108 *Cher.* 77.

109 *Conf.* 147-148; *Somn.* 1.239.

110 *Op.* 25.

For of men some are attached to the service of the soul, and others to that of the body; now the companions of the soul, being able to associate with incorporeal natures, appreciable only by the intellect, do not compare the living God to any species of created beings; but, dissociating it with any idea of distinctive qualities (for this is what most especially contributes to his happiness and to his consummate felicity, to comprehend his naked existence without any connection with figure or character), they, I say, are content with the bare conception of his existence, and do not attempt to invest him with any form.<sup>111</sup>

He is beyond being, like Plato's Good.<sup>112</sup> It may be inferred, however, from the fact that God alone is, that his being is at an order altogether different from anything else:

God alone exists in essence ... he speaks of necessity about himself, saying, 'I am that I am,' (Exodus 3:14).<sup>113</sup>

### **The First-Born Son of God**

God governs the world and everything in it just like a king, but not directly, but through an appointed governor who is his reason and his first-born son,<sup>114</sup> and who receives his charge as the lieutenant of the great king.<sup>115</sup>

Logos is the first-born son of God because he was born before all other angels and before anything else that was created.

### **Multi-Named Archetype**

Philo's Logos has many names: son of God, the first-born Logos, the eldest of God's angels, the great archangel, the Authority, the name of God, and man according to God's image, and he who sees Israel.<sup>116</sup>

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111 *Deus* 55. (Cf. Alcinous *Did.* 185.14).

112 Plato, *Republic* 509a, b.

113 *Det.* 160.

114 *Agr.* 51.

115 Exod. 23:20.

116 *Conf.* 146. Just like the Logos-Zeus of the Stoics (*SVF*, 1.537; *D.L.* 7.135; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 9.2.31; or Isis (Plutarch. *De Iside et de Osiride* edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by J.

Making reference to Proverbs (8:22) Philo says that Logos is also called Wisdom.<sup>117</sup> He is “Beginning,” “Image,” “Sight of God”:

For he [Moses] called that divine and heavenly wisdom by many names, and he made it manifest that it had many appellations; for he called it the beginning, and the image, and the sight of God. And he exhibits the wisdom which is conversant about the things of the earth (as being an imitation of this archetypal wisdom), in the plantation of the Paradise ....<sup>118</sup>

Earthly wisdom is also a copy of this Wisdom as an archetype. Moreover, terrestrial virtue of the human race is “a copy and representation of the heavenly”<sup>119</sup> which is “the Logos of God, the first beginning of all things, the original species or the archetypal idea, the first measure of the universe.”<sup>120</sup>

### **Soul-Nourishing Manna**

God sends “the stream” from his Wisdom which irrigates God-loving souls; consequently they become filled with “manna.” Manna is described by Philo as a “generic thing” coming from God. It does not come from God directly, however: “the most generic is God, and next is the Logos of God, the other things subsist in Word (Logos) only.”<sup>121</sup> According to Philo, Moses called manna “the most ancient Logos of God.”<sup>122</sup> For God:

nourishes us with his own Word (Logos), which is the most universal of all things, for manna being interpreted, means ‘what?’ and ‘what’ is the most

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Gwynn Griffith (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1970). 372 E); Apuleius of Madauros, *The Isis-Book: (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by J. Gwynn Griffith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975). XI.5.

117 *Ebr.* 31.

118 *LA* 1.43, 45-46.

119 *LA* 1.43, 45-46. (Cf. *Ebr.* 92; *Mut.* 125; *Somn.* 2.254; *QG* 3.40).

120 *QG* 1.4.

121 *LA* 2.86

122 *Det.* 118.

universal of all things; for the Logos of God is over all the world, and is the most ancient, and the most universal of all things that are created.<sup>123</sup>

Next Philo explains that the soul of the more perfect man is nourished by the whole Word (Logos) but others must be content if they are nourished by the part of it.<sup>124</sup>

This Wisdom as the Daughter of God is “a true-born and ever virgin daughter” and “has obtained a nature intact and undefiled both because of her own propriety and the dignity of him who begot her.” Having identified the Logos with Wisdom, Philo runs into a grammatical problem: in the Greek language “wisdom” (*sophia*) is feminine and “word” (logos) is masculine; moreover, Philo saw Wisdom's function as masculine. So he explained that Wisdom's *name* is feminine, but her *nature* is masculine:

Indeed all the virtues have women's designations, but powers and activities of truly perfect men. For that which comes after God, even if it were the most venerable of all other things, holds second place, and was called feminine in contrast to the Creator of the universe, who is masculine, and, in accordance with its resemblance, to everything else.<sup>125</sup>

### **Intermediary Power**

The fundamental doctrine propounded by Philo is that of the Logos as an intermediary power, a messenger and mediator between God and the world.

To his chief messenger and most venerable Logos, the Father who engendered the universe has granted the singular gift, to stand between and separate the creature from the Creator. This same Logos is both suppliant of ever anxiety-ridden mortality before the immortal and ambassador of the ruler to the subject... For I am an ambassador of peace to creation from the God who has determined to put down wars, who is ever the guardian of peace. Therefore the sacred Logos, having given us instruction respecting the division into equal parts, leads us also to the knowledge of opposites, saying that God placed the divisions ‘opposite to one another’ (Gen.15:10); for in fact nearly all the things that exist in

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123 LA 3.175-176.

124 Det. 115-117, 160; Her. 191; Fug. 138.

125 Fug. 50-52.

the world, are by nature opposite to one another. And we must begin with the first....<sup>126</sup>  
 God is the cause, not the instrument, and what was born was created indeed through the agency of some instrument, but was by all means called into existence by the great first cause.<sup>127</sup>

And Logos is the suppliant for men, God's ambassador sent to men:

And the Father who created the universe has given to his archangelic and most ancient Logos a pre-eminent gift, to stand on the confines of both and separated that which had been created from the Creator. And this same Logos is continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race, which is exposed to affliction and misery; and is also the ambassador, sent by the Ruler of all, to the subject race.<sup>128</sup>

When speaking of the high priest Philo describes the Logos as God's Son, a perfect being procuring forgiveness of sins and blessings:

For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world [the high priest] should have as a paraclete, his Son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins, and a supply of unlimited blessings.<sup>129</sup>

Philo transformed the Stoic impersonal and immanent Logos into a being who was neither eternal like God nor created like creatures, but begotten from eternity. This being was a mediator giving hope to men and who "was sent down to earth." God, according to Philo, sends "the stream of his own wisdom" to men "and causes the changed soul to drink of unchangeable health; for the abrupt rock is the wisdom of God, which being both sublime and the first of things he quarried out of his own powers." After the souls are watered they are filled with the manna which "is called something which is the primary genus of everything. But the most universal of all things is God; and in the second place is

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126 *Her.* 205-206. (Cuff *Somm.* 2.188).

127 *Cher.* 125.

128 *Her.* 205-206.

129 *Mos.* 2.134.

the Logos of God.”<sup>130</sup> Through the Logos of God men learn all kinds of instruction and everlasting wisdom.<sup>131</sup> The Logos is the "cupbearer of God ... being itself in an unmixed state, the pure delight and sweetness, and pouring forth and joy, and ambrosial medicine of pleasure and happiness.”<sup>132</sup> This wisdom was represented by the tabernacle of the Old Testament which was “a thing made after the model and in imitation of Wisdom" and sent down to earth” in the midst of our impurity in order that we may have something whereby we may be purified, washing off and cleansing all those things which dirty and defile our miserable life, full of all evil reputation as it is.”<sup>133</sup> Thus God sows and implants terrestrial virtue in the human race, which is an imitation and representation of the heavenly virtue.<sup>134</sup>

### **Source of Wisdom Sent down to Earth as Illumination of Humans**

The Logos is thus an intermediary between men and God, but it can be interpreted as a direct intermediary or as acting through Wisdom sent to humans. For in another fragment Philo seems to make the Logos a source of wisdom and illuminating power among humans which later was described by Numenius as the Third God and among Christians as the Holy Spirit:

Those also who have inquired what it is that nourishes the soul, for as Moses says, ‘They knew not what it was,’ learnt at last and found that it was the Word of God [Logos] and the divine reason, from which flows all kind of instinctive and everlasting wisdom. This is the heavenly nourishment which the holy scripture indicates, saying, in the character of the cause of all things, ‘Behold I rain upon you bread from heaven;’<sup>135</sup> for in real truth it is God who showers down heavenly wisdom from above upon all the intellects which are properly disposed for the reception of it, and which are fond of contemplation.<sup>136</sup>

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130     *LA* II.86.

131     *Fuga* 127-129.

132     *Son.* II.249.

133     *He* 112-113.

134     *LA* 1.45.

135     Exod.. 16:4.

136     *Fuga.* 137-138.

## Second “God”

In three passages Philo describes the Logos even as God:

- a. Commenting on Genesis 22:16 Philo explains that God could only swear by himself since he alone has any knowledge concerning his actions;

“... which is not possible for anyone else to do.... For no man can rightly swear by himself, because he is not able to have any certain knowledge respecting his own nature, but we must be content if we are able to understand even his name, that is to say his Logos, which is the interpreter of his will. For that must be God to us imperfect beings, but the first mentioned, or true God is so only to wise and perfect man.”<sup>137</sup>

- b. Next Philo ponders:

“What then ought we to say? There is one true God only: but they who are called gods, by an abuse of language, are numerous, on which account the holy scripture on the present occasion indicates that it is the true God that is meant by the use of the article, the expression being “I am the God (*ho theos*);” but when the word is used incorrectly, it is put without the article, the expression being, “He who was seen by thee in the place, not of the God (*ton theon*), but simply of God” (*theon*); and what he here calls God is his most ancient Logos, not having any superstitious regard to the position of the names, but only proposing one end to himself, namely to give a true account of the matter; for in other passages the sacred historian, when he considered whether there really was any name belonging to the living God, showed that he knew that there was none properly belonging to him, but that whatever appellation any one may give him, will be an abuse of terms; for the living God is not of a nature to be described, but only to be.”<sup>138</sup>

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137 LA 3.207.

138 Son. 1.229-230.

c. Commenting on Genesis 9:6 Philo states:

“Why is it that he speaks as if of some other god, saying that he made man after the image of God, and not that he made him after his own image? Very appropriately and without any falsehood was this oracular sentence uttered by God, for no mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe but only after the pattern of the second deity, who is the Logos of the supreme Being; since it is fitting that the rational soul of man should bear it the type of the divine Logos; since in his first Word God is superior to the most rational possible nature. But he who is superior to the Logos holds his rank in a better and most singular pre-eminence, and how could the creature possibly exhibit a likeness of him in himself?<sup>139</sup>

### **Importance of Philo of Alexandria**

Philo fused the biblical concept of the Hebrew Logos and Hebrew Wisdom with the Platonic concept of Ideas or Forms and the Stoic concept of Logos as the world-permeating noetic element into one doctrine broad enough to accommodate diversified philosophical and religious traditions. Philo's doctrine of the Logos is blurred by his mystical and religious vision, but his Logos is clearly the second individual derived from one God as hypostatization of God's Creative Power, Wisdom. The supreme is God and next is Wisdom or Logos of God.<sup>140</sup> Logos has many names as did Zeus in the Stoic tradition,<sup>141</sup> and multiple functions.

The Logos is described metaphorically as “God’s Son” and is a “paraclete” to humans, at least to prominent humans like priests.<sup>142</sup> By extension, this function of the Logos could be later understood by Christians as being the Holy Spirit. To those people who are enlightened and who have purified souls perceive God as a three-fold image of one subject, one image of the living God, while others who are not yet made perfect with respect to the important virtues see the other two entities as “shadows” and have “a vision

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139 *QG* 2.62.

140 *Op.* 24; *Hermética* II.14.

141 *SVF*, I. 537; Cleanthes D.L. 7.135, 147; *LA* 1.43, 45,46.

142 *Mos.* 2.134.

of three” so they perceive God as a Triad. Still by contemplation of God’s works they can approximate the truth.

Philo of Alexandria advanced further the Middle-Platonic-Stoic transcendentalist and abstract philosophical doctrine concerning the divinity and divine structure and fused it with the Hebrew biblical tradition. He initiated a chain of further philosophical-religious speculations by Numenius of Apamea (fl. ca 150 C.E. in Rome) concerning the triadic organization of the divinity that was used by Justin Martyr to explain the New Testament tradition in terms of the philosophical metaphysical concepts. Both biblical traditions, one issuing from the other, offered a personal approach to God, which was lacking in the abstract, impersonal analysis of the philosophers. Thus both, Philo of Alexandria and Numenius were the crucial figures in the development of the Logos Christological doctrine and theory of the triadic or dyadic structure of the divinity. Such views are absent from the Old and New Testaments, nevertheless, the Christian church read these philosophical speculations into the biblical texts.

By developing this doctrine Philo fused Greek philosophical concepts with Hebrew religious thought and provided the foundation for Christianity, first in the development of the Messianic/“Christian” Pauline myth and speculations of John, later in the Hellenistic Christian Logos and Gnostic doctrines of the second century. Christian writers used the Philonic Logos and its epiphanies in the scripture as the model for their doctrine of Father-Son relationship.<sup>143</sup> Finally there is the Egyptian tradition, where we find the religious mythical concept of the tri-unity.<sup>144</sup> Tertullian combined this with Greek abstract thought into a trinitarian synthesis.<sup>145</sup>

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143 M. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects, and Visions* (London: 1980), 46-56.

144 John Gwynn Griffith, *Triads and Trinity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996).

145 *Adversus Praxeam*, Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani, *Opera Pars I. Opera Catholica. Pars II. Opera Montanistica*. In *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontifici, MCMLIV). English version in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by Alexander Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). Marian Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity. The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (New York, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University press, 2012).