

On Logopolitics. “After their tongues, after their nations”

Sources

I. « logon echon zoon » : Aristotle, Politics (Translation : Benjamin Jowett, 1885), Book I (Aristot. Pol. 1.1253a):

§ 9. Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature (φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστὶ), and that man is by nature a political animal (ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον).

§ 10. Now, that man is more of a political (πολιτικὸν) animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech (λόγον δὲ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζῴων). And whereas mere voice (φωνή) is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech (ὁ λόγος) is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state.

II. “After their tongues, in their lands, after their nations”. Tower of Babel

Gensis 10 (KJV)	Genèse 10 (Louis Segond)	בראשית 10
<p>Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. (...) By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations. (...) These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations. (...) These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after</p>	<p>Here is the genealogy of the sons of Noach — Shem, Ham and Yefet; sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Yefet were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Yavan, Tuval, Meshekh and Tiras (...) From these the islands of the nations were divided into their lands, each according to its language, according to their families, in their nations. (...) These were the descendants of Ham, according to their families and languages, in their lands and in their nations. (...) These were</p>	<p>ואֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת בְּנֵי־נֹחַ שֵׁם חָם וַיִּפֶּת וַיִּנְלָדוּ לָהֶם בָּנִים אַחַר הַמַּבּוּל: בְּנֵי יָפֶת גֹּמֶר וּמָגוֹג וּמְדַי וַיִּנּוּ וַתְּבַל וַיִּמְשֹׁד וַתִּירָס: וּבְנֵי יָוָן אֱלִישָׁה וַתְּרַשָּׁשׁ וַתְּגֵרְמָה: וּבְנֵי יָוָן אֱלִישָׁה וַתְּרַשָּׁשׁ וַתְּגֵרְמָה וַתְּגֵרְמָה וַתְּגֵרְמָה: מְאֵלָה נִפְרְדּוּ אֵי גוֹיִם בְּאַרְצֹתָם אִישׁ לְלִשְׁוֹ (κατὰ γλωσσάν) לְמִשְׁפָּחָתָם בְּגוֹיֵיהֶם: (...) אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי־יָוָן לְמִשְׁפָּחָתָם לְלִשְׁוֹתָם בְּאַרְצֹתָם בְּגוֹיֵיהֶם: (...) אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי־יָוָן לְמִשְׁפָּחָתָם לְלִשְׁוֹתָם בְּאַרְצֹתָם לְגוֹיֵיהֶם:</p>

their nations.	the descendants of Shem, according to their families and languages, in their lands and in their nations.	
Genesis 11 (KJV)	Genesis 11 (CJB)	בראשית 11
<p>1. And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech (χειλος ἓν, καὶ φωνὴ μία). 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3 And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. 4 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad (διασπαρῆναι) upon the face of the whole earth. 5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 6 And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language (γένος ἓν καὶ χειλος ἓν); and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language (τὴν γλῶσσαν), that they may not understand one another's speech (τὴν φωνήν). 8 So the Lord scattered (διέσπειρεν) them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language (τὰ χεῖλη) of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter (διέσπειρεν) them abroad upon the face of all the earth.</p>	<p>The whole earth used the same language, the same words. 2 It came about that as they traveled from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shin'ar and lived there. 3 They said to one another, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them in the fire." So they had bricks for building-stone and clay for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city with a tower that has its top reaching up into heaven, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth." 5 Adonai came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6 Adonai said, "Look, the people are united, they all have a single language, and see what they're starting to do! At this rate, nothing they set out to accomplish will be impossible for them! 7 Come, let's go down and confuse their language, so that they won't understand each other's speech." 8 So from there Adonai scattered them all over the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 For this reason it is called Babel [confusion] — because there Adonai confused the language of the whole earth, and from there Adonai scattered them all over the earth.</p>	<p>וַיְהִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אַחַת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים (χειλος ἓν, καὶ φωνὴ μία): וַיְהִי בְּנִסְעָם מִמֶּזְרָאִי בַקָּעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיִּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הִבֵּה גַלְבָּנָה לְבָנִים וּנְשָׂרָפָה לְשָׂרֶפֶה וְתַהֲי לָהֶם הַלְבָּנָה לְאֲבָן וְהַחֲמֵר הַזֶּה לָהֶם לְחֶמֶר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִבֵּהוּ וּבְנֵה־לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה־לָנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן־נִפְיֵץ (διασπαρῆναι) עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ: וַיֵּרֵד יְהוָה לְרַאֲתַת אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עַם אֶחָד וְשָׂפָה אַחַת (χειλος ἓν) לְכָל־ם וְזֶה חֲקֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא־יִבְצָר מֵהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: הִבֵּה גִרְדָּה וּנְבִלָה שֵׁם שַׁפְתָּם (τὴν γλῶσσαν) אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שִׁפְתַּת (τὴν φωνήν) רֵעֵהוּ: וַיִּפֹּץ (διέσπειρεν) יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְדְּלוּ לְבַנֹּת הָעִיר: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי־שָׁם בָּלַל יְהוָה שִׁפְתַּת (τὰ χεῖλη) כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפְיָצָם (διέσπειρεν) יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ</p>

III. “be” vs. “hear”. Tractate Megilla (Scroll)

<p>Mishna 2, 1 (Soncino translation)</p>	<p>משנה ב, א</p>
<p>If one reads the megillah backwards, he has not performed his obligation.</p> <p>If he reads it by heart, if he reads it in a translation [targum] in any language, he has not performed his obligation.</p>	<p>הקורא את המגילה למפרע – לא יצא. קראה על פה, קראה תרגום בכל לשון – לא יצא.</p>
<p>Gmara 17a (Soncino translation)</p>	<p>גמרא יז ע"א</p>
<p>A Tanna stated: The same rule applies to Hallel, to the recital of the Shema', and to the [Amidah] prayer. (...)</p> <p>‘To the recital of the Shema’, as it has been taught: The Shema’ must be recited as it is written, so Rabbi. The Sages, however, say: It may be recited in any language.</p> <p>What is Rabbi's reason? Scripture says “shall be” [Deuteronomy 6, 6-9: “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”], which implies, they shall be kept as they are.</p> <p>And what is the reason of the Rabbis? — Because Scripture says, “Hear” [Deuteronomy 6, 4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord”], which implies, in any language which you understand.</p>	<p>תנא: וכן בהלל, וכן בקריאת שמע, ובתפילה. (...)</p> <p>קריאת שמע – דתניא: קריאת שמע ככתבה, דברי רבי, וחכמים אומרים: בכל לשון.</p> <p>מאי טעמא דרבי? אמר קרא: "והיו" [דברים ו, ו-ט: "והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך; ושננתם לבניך ודברת במשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך; וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו לטפת בין עיניך; וכתבתם על מזוזת ביתך ובשערריך] – בהויתן יהו.</p> <p>ורבנן מאי וטעמייהו? אמר קרא "שמע" [דברים ו, ד: "שמע ישראל ה' אלוהינו ה' אחד"] – בכל לשון שאתה שומע.</p>