

UPBRINGING IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL – THE IDEAL OF A YOUNG JEWISH MAN ACCORDING TO DANIEL 1:3-7

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The process of upbringing is a very complex phenomena having a multidimensional character. In the wider context of the word it means the whole of the influence targeting the comprehensive formation of a young man in his physical, intellectual, moral and religious development. There is no doubt that in such a comprehensive educational process a crucial role is played by the ideals and patterns of behaviour which are shown as worthy influences to be imitated in character and personality formation.

The biblical tradition is a rich source of models given as worthy figures to be imitated. One of them is Daniel – the main hero of the book that bears his name. The stories in the first chapter of the Book of Daniel depict him as one of a group of Jewish youths carried off as captives to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. After being placed in a special three-year training program together with his comrades, Daniel became a servant and royal advisor. Living at court with first the Babylonian and then the Persian kings, he obtained high rank and honours, which helped him attain a prominent position in public administration. In spite of his considerable influence at the pagan courts, Daniel remained faithful to God, who bestowed on him wisdom and numerous gifts making him superior to all the pagan

astrologers. Daniel is shown as the ideal of a young Jew, not only in religious categories but also socio-political, because he became a model of the preservation of religious and national identity while living in a pagan environment far away from the motherland.

1. THE FIGURE OF DANIEL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENTIRE BOOK OF DANIEL AND THE FIRST CHAPTER NARRATION (DAN 1)

A closer look at the circumstances from which Dan 1 arose, its role in the Book of Daniel, and the place in which it was written, permits the settling of certain important questions. Seen first of all is the cultural environment, whose views represent the Daniel figure created in this book, as to who is the author (or authors) of the stories of chapters one to six, as well as for whom he is supposed to be a model of behaviour.

The Book of Daniel in the currently existing form is the result of a very long and complex process of compiling different source materials; the final redaction of the work took place in the 60's of the second century before Christ. Generally, the entire book may be divided into two main sections: part one – the stories found in chapters 1-6; part two – apocalyptic visions (chapters 7-12), written for different purposes and in different circumstances. The stories of chapters 1-6 of the present version of the Book of Daniel introduce the Daniel figure of the vision from chapters 7-12 with whom the author/s identifies, because he portrays Daniel as a visionary, the one who not only receives the divine revelation in the form of a vision, but also interprets it¹. The choice of the Daniel figure as an

¹ See more J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 1993) 24-38; M. PARCHEM, *Księga Daniela. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz* (NKB.ST 26; Częstochowa 2008) 48-54; see also J.E. GOLDINGAY, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Dallas 1989) 326-328; G.W.E. NICKELSBURG, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah* (Minneapolis 2005) 83.

expression of pseudepigrapha enables the recognition of the real author of the apocalyptic visions and the final editor of the entire book. Since the author of the vision (the editor) identifies himself with the Daniel figure of the book's stories, it seems a justifiable statement that he accepts characteristics represented by Daniel as well as acknowledging his conduct. The final editor of the entire book in the Maccabean era, in joining the stories about Daniel to the apocalyptic visions, presents to his readers the main hero of the stories (Daniel 1-6) as an example and model of conduct, and consequently expresses the actuality that for him also, he is a model of the ideal Jew².

Therefore, who is Daniel and how is he described in chapters 1-6? The setting of Daniel in historic realities, in the exile and Babylonian captivity, does not yet testify to the historicity of this figure. Other than in the Book of Daniel, no mention appears of a prophet bearing this name in the Hebrew Bible³. It is proper, however, to notice that the prophet Ezekiel repeatedly mentions the name of a Daniel who is a legendary sage and a man who is just and lawful (Ezek 14:14.20; 28:3). The existence of this name is authenticated in texts from Mari (18th century BCE) and in the literary texts discovered at Ugarit (around 1400-1300 BCE), where the figure of a king bearing the name *Dnil*, a righteous and pious man, appears in the epic about Aqhat (KTU 1.17-1.19). In *the Book of Jubilees* it appears as the name of Enoch's father-in-law (Jub 4:20). All these testimonies refer to a legendary person in ancient Near East, well-known and greatly appreciated due to his justice, piety and wisdom. Most likely the material contained in the Book of Daniel was credited to the person of Daniel. The stories of chapters 1-6 contain colourful accounts depicting him as a sage having the ability

² See J.J. COLLINS, *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel* (HSM 16; Missoula 1977) 27; P.R. DAVIES, *Daniel* (Old Testament Guides; Sheffield 1998) 88.

³ In the Hebrew Bible this name is mentioned twice: in 1 Chr 3:1 (the name of the son of David and Abigail) and in Ezra 8:2 and Neh 10:7 (the name of the priest from Ithamar's line).

to interpret dreams and being superior to all the sages of the court, however in the visions (Dan 7-12) the author identifies himself with the sages who are the teachers of wisdom and justice⁴.

The first chapter of this book introduces the main character, Daniel, and is viewed as an introduction to chapters 1-6, as well as to the final redaction of the whole Book of Daniel. It is difficult to establish the concrete historical context in which the book of Daniel was written. The evidence of the first narrative – similar to the stories in chapters 1- 6 -would seem to be of eastern origin and most likely it was written in the Diaspora. It should be noted that numerous Akkadian and Persian words appear here; there is no evidence however of Greek words. The assumption is that the account from the first chapter was written as an introduction to the narratives of chapters 2-6. Later, probably during the initial period of the Hellenistic epoch, after having been compiled, the first chapter was edited in its final form. From an analysis of the story content (Dan 1) one is lead to the conclusion that it was written in a Jewish environment found in pagan surroundings, which were well-disposed towards Jews, who found success in the service of a pagan ruler, even in the royal court. Considering Daniel and his companions as young officials receiving education and moving up in the world at the pagan king's court could idealize the picture of the environment in which the author of Daniel 1 functioned. On the other hand, it is known that the occupation of high positions at pagan ruler's courts by Jews was not only "an ideal", but also happened in reality. Nehemiah is an example of all those who were so favoured, serving at the royal palace as cup-bearer (Neh 1:11). Therefore, it is possible to state that the story told in Daniel 1 reveals all the aspirations of upper-class Jews living in the Diaspora

⁴ See J. DAY, „The Daniel of Ugarit and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel”, *VT* 30 (1980) 174-184; J.J. COLLINS, *The Apocalyptic Imagination. An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids 1998) 86-87; M. Parchem, *Księga Daniela*, 30-31.

and their tendency to aim for careers at pagan royal courts without compromising their national and religious identity. For this reason Daniel's persona is portrayed as a model for those living in the Diaspora⁵.

2. THE IDEAL YOUNG MAN – AN ANALYSIS OF THE DESCRIPTION OF DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS

Chapter 1 is essentially an introductory chapter with verses 3-7 describing Daniel and his three friends. The training they were to receive would be a three-year program, after which they would be tested by king Nebuchadnezzar himself. The scene consists of three parts having specific “stages” in the presentation of the main characters of the story and also the entire book. At the beginning the author presents their social status and upper class background (v. 3), then describes their physical and intellectual features (v. 4), and only at the end mentions their names (v. 6-7).

2.1. Young men and their learning abilities

The author of the story in Daniel 1 introduces Daniel and his three companions as “young men” (heb. *yeladim*). Admittedly, the Hebrew noun used here does not indicate any specific age, however, in biblical tradition this term is used to describe children of the male sex who still had not reached maturity. In general, this word refers to men from the moment of birth to the celebration of marriage. According to the book of Leviticus (27: 3-7) the human life span can be split into a number of stages: childhood

⁵ See W.L. HUMPHREYS, „A Life-Style for Diaspora: A Study of the Tales of Esther and Daniel”, *JBL* 92 (1973) 217-219; J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (FOTL 20; Grand Rapids 1984) 45-46; L.M. WILLS, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*. Ancient Jewish Court Legends (HDR 26; Minneapolis 1990) 79-81; M. PARCHEM, *Księga Daniela*, 167-168.

(ages 1 month to 5 years), adolescence (ages 5 to 20), adulthood (ages 20 to 60) and senescence (over 60)⁶.

It is possible to assume that the description of Daniel and his companions as “young men” indicates they were of an age suitable to commence the education and training process. Even though it is difficult to specify their exact age, probably they were not over 20. According to the beliefs of ancient Israel – which were held later in Jewish tradition – a man reached maturity at the age of 18-20, whereas the prime age for assuming the highest responsibilities was 30. The biblical characters of Joseph and David could serve as good examples. The first, when he was 30 years old, became the most influential person in Egypt (Gen 41:2), the latter became a king at the age of 30 (2 Sam 5:4). It is worth pointing out that similar archetypes occur in the New Testament, where it is stated that Jesus “was about thirty years of age” when he began his public ministry (Luke 3:23).

The author placed great emphasis on the nobility of these young Jewish men, declaring that they were “from among the sons of Israel, both from the royal family and the nobility” (v. 3). The definition “sons of Israel” (i.e. Israelites) has here a wider conceptual range than the name “Judeans” (v. 6) and appears relevant in a theological rather than ethnic meaning. It does not refer to the inhabitants of Judah in the strict sense of the word, but refers to the faithful of YHWH - members of God’s people (see 2 Chr 11:16). Such a meaning of the term “Israelites” was adopted in the period after the exile, which indicates a similar use of this name in other biblical books, e.g. 1-2

⁶ The stages of a Jewish boy’s education were established according to rabbinic tradition culminating in the achievement of maturity: from age five to ten he studied the Hebrew Scriptures (Torah); at ten years he studied Mishnah; at thirteen, the Commandments; at fifteen Talmud; at eighteen, he could celebrate marriage; at twenty, he started his livelihood; at thirty, in the prime of life (Mishnah, *Aboth* 5:21). See A. LEMAIRE, „Education (Israel)”, *ABD* II, 307; see also N. DRAZIN, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Baltimore 1940) 13-14.

Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah⁷. Therefore, this description of Daniel and his companions used at the beginning of the book of Daniel is supposed to underline a notion that they as faithful Jews who as result of their given historical circumstances were found in a pagan environment having to resist the threatened loss of their religious and national identity.

Their aristocratic origin is enhanced by the following two expressions: the “king’s seed” and “the nobles”. In its literal meaning the first expression means “the seed of the kingdom” and suggests that Daniel and his companions belonged to the royal house. Though the text itself does not directly speak about it, later Jewish and Christian traditions spoke about Daniel as a descendant of the royal tribe of Judah. Nevertheless, differences appear in reference to details, e.g., according to Flavius Josephus he was a descendant of king Zedekiah, (*Ant.* 10:186), but Jerome refers his descent from king Hezekiah⁸. The second definition, “the nobles” (heb. *partemim*), refers rather to a specific function though it is also connected with social status. This Hebrew term derives from the Old Persian language and means “first”; from here comes “dignitary, nobleman” (cf. Esth 1:3; 6:9). The identification of Daniel and his companions as dignitaries and royal descendants is not without significance for the entire story in Daniel 1. In ancient Israel – before the Babylonian captivity – education was for the most part restricted to the sons of senior officials and state dignitaries who were also partially of royal descent. In Daniel 1 the author of the narrative argues that since Daniel and his companions were all members of the royal family, that fact alone entitled them to a good education and the *acquisition of wisdom*. Omitting the problem of the historicity of such a classification, it is

⁷ See J.E. GOLDINGAY, *Daniel*, 15; see also M. STONE, „A Note on Dan 1:3”, *Australian Biblical Review* 7 (1959) 69-71.

⁸ See J.A. MONTGOMERY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh 1927) 119; J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel*, 136; see more J. BRAVERMAN, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel* (CBQMS 7; Washington 1978) 66-71.

proper, however, to remember that among the inhabitants of Judah deported to Babylon these were, above all, aristocrats, officials, and craftsmen - people occupying higher positions in the society and constituting its elite.

The author of the story in Daniel 1 introduced the young Jewish men as candidates to be educated in the ways of Babylon and serve the king in his royal court and in this way presents their predispositions. They are divided and described in two categories; firstly, physical features, then intellectual abilities. These features accredited to Daniel and his three friends constitute a typical example of a good candidate for a comprehensive education.

In describing physical appearances the author of Daniel 1 mentions the lack of any defect and the fineness of their features. The first term has a negative meaning. The Hebrew word *mum* (Qere) used here literally means, “defect, blemish, error”, and in the biblical tradition refers to both the moral (e.g., Pro 9:7; Job 11:15; 31:7), and to the physical sphere (e.g., 2 Sam 14:25; Cant 4:7), especially in a cultic context (Lev 21:17-23; 22:20-25). Taking into account the context of the story in Daniel 1 it is possible that it refers to the physical appearance of the young men, furthermore it has been indicated in the description in the next passage as “beautiful appearance”. In other words, Jewish young men were without any blemish or physical defect. The second feature expressed in a positive form is “beautiful appearance”. It seems that this statement has more a symbolic character. In the biblical tradition this fineness is a feature which was credited especially to kings (e.g. David in 1 Sam 16:12.18; Adonijah in 1 Kings 1:6; Ps 45:3). The mention of the “fineness” without any doubt refers to the royal origin of young men, and simultaneously invokes the traditional image of the ideal king, both in outward appearance and character traits.

Besides physical features their intellectual abilities are also emphasized. Jewish young men are characterized by a proficiency “in every type of the conventional wisdom”, as well as having knowledge and discernment. It is worth emphasizing that the author of Daniel 1 uses

terms here, which in the sapiential tradition become almost technical attributes of wisdom in her different aspects, that is *chokmah*, “wisdom”, *daat*, “knowledge” and *binah*, “thoroughness, understanding”. In Daniel 1:17 two terms still appear: *madda*, “proficiency, intelligence”, and the verb *sakal*, “to be wise, intelligent”⁹. Such accumulation of the sapiential terminology stresses the truth that Jewish young men distinguished themselves in the highest possible degree of intellectual abilities, enabling them to acquire knowledge at the royal court. While taking into account the context of Daniel and his companions learning the Chaldean language, it is worth paying attention to the widespread tradition in the ancient Near East regarding the image of the ideal writer, that is the educated man who was often of upper-class origin.

The qualities of a good writer are described in the only known Egyptian text (13th century BCE) in following manner: “a youth distinguished of appearance and pleasing of charm, who can explain the difficulties of the annals like him who composed them” (ANET 475). In this text – as in Daniel 1 – the physical appearance of candidates who are supposed to get an education merge together with their intellectual predispositions.

2.2. Young Jewish men and the “Babylonian” education

According to the will of Nebuchadnezzar young Jewish men were supposed to learn “the language and literature of Chaldeans” (v. 4). It should be noticed that the word “Chaldeans” does not appear here in the ethnic meaning, that is as a description of residents of south Mesopotamia, or political meaning referring to the rule of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, but it describes the sages. That kind of a “shift” of meaning took place in Hellenistic times, when the term “Chaldean” was used as a description

⁹ For more information, see M. PARCHEM, *Księga Daniela*, 181-183 (Excursus: *Terminologia mądrościowa w Księdze Daniela*).

of a group of sages, especially those who were defined as interpreters of dreams, astrologers, and diviners (see Dan 2:2-5.10; 4:4; 5:7.11; Herodot, *Historiae* 1.181; Diodorus of Sicily, *Bibliotheca*, 2.29).

The term *sefer* in Hebrew is a word that means “books” and probably was used to describe Chaldean sapiential literature, while the word “language” should be identified with the Akkadian language¹⁰. In other words, Daniel and his companions were supposed to learn the Akkadian language and become acquainted with the teachings of the Babylonian sages.

The author of Daniel 1 states that the period of education of young Jewish men at the king’s court in Babylon was to last three years. Admittedly, the school year of the education system in Babylon varied, depending mainly on the course of instruction, however, a period of three years seems too short to gain expert knowledge of the Akkadian language and become familiar with Babylonian sapiential literature¹¹. Though the action of the story in Daniel 1 is to be found at the Babylonian king’s court, the three-year education period more likely corresponds to Persian times. J.A. Montgomery observes that the period of three years refers to the Persian system of education and has its origin in Avesta¹². We may assume that the author of the story in Daniel 1, writing in the early Hellenistic period, transferred the Persian models of education, still vivid in the ancient Near East, onto the Babylonian period in which the events took place.

One can allow that the narrator of the story intentionally highlights the royal origin of young Jewish men. In portraying Daniel and his companions as the members of high

¹⁰ See J.A. MONTGOMERY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 120; J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel*, 138; M. PARCHEM, *Księga Daniela*, 174-175.

¹¹ See more A. FALKENSTEIN, „Die babylonische Schule”, *Saeculum* 4 (1953) 125-137; M. CIVIL, „Education (Mesopotamia)”, *ABD* II, 301-305.

¹² See J.A. MONTGOMERY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 122.

social standing families he suggests the quality of their previous education acquired in the Jewish environment. According to the biblical testimonies and epigraphic sources the instruction of children focused on the attainment of basic literacy, reading and writing (Isa 28:9-10; see Judg 8:14; Deut 6:9; 11:20; Isa 8:1). Children acquired an understanding of the national traditions of Judaism within a geographical and historical perspective. Quite apart from formal schooling, particular emphasis was placed on ideological formation; preparing suitable candidates to be servants of the king, as well as the important part played by ethical formation¹³. A comparison based on the Mesopotamian and Egyptian school systems to other countries could indicate that there was also a special school for scribes at the royal court in Jerusalem, educating future royal clerks and diplomats who belonged to the social upper class¹⁴. It is mentioned in chapter 1 that Daniel and his companions were Hebrew youths of aristocratic origin and this fact indicates the possibility that they had been educated before their deportation to Babylon. It seems reasonable to assume that the learning of the “language and literature” of the Chaldeans at the Babylonian king’s court would constitute the next stage of their education. Certainly that kind of “Babylonian” education not only limited itself to conveying theoretical knowledge of the Babylonian sages, but also contained ideological elements which helped to shape the proper formation and upbringing of the loyal subjects the Babylonian king would wish to have. There is no doubt that a religious element also played a significant role in creating such loyalty (see Dan 3). A “Babylonian”

¹³ See A. LEMAIRE, „Education (Israel)”, 306-308; see more R. DE VAUX, *Instytucje Starego Testamentu*. I. Nomadyzm i jego pozostałości. Instytucje rodzinne. Instytucje cywilne (Poznań 2004) 58-60; M. FILIPIAK, *Biblia o człowieku*. Zarys antropologii biblijnej Starego Testamentu (Lublin 1979) 271-273.

¹⁴ See A. LEMAIRE, „Education (Israel)”, 308; see more B. LANG, *Die weisheitliche Lehrrede* (SBS 54; Stuttgart 1972) 21-53; IDEM, „Schule und Unterricht im alten Israel”, *La sagesse de l’Ancien Testament* (ed. M. GILBERT) (BETL 51; Leuven 1979) 186-201.

education for young Jewish men meant participation in the life of the king's court, indicated by the mention of a daily ration of food (Dan 1:5), and the new names assigned to them which in most cases are regarded as theophoric names (Dan 1:7). The principle purpose of this education was an effort at total cultural assimilation, attempting to make these young Jewish men leave behind their Hebrew God and culture. From a Jewish point of view such a situation was extremely difficult, not only on account of religion, but also because of native national traditions, i.e., the preserving of religious identity (= being faithful to God), as well as of national identity (= remaining a Jew). In other words, Jewish captives deported to Babylon were found in a situation, where it was necessary to choose between faithfulness to God and loyalty to the pagan king. Bearing in mind the form and didactic character of the story in Daniel 1, it is possible to conclude that Daniel and his companions' circumstances reflect the situation of all Jews living in the Diaspora and this dilemma constituted the fundamental problem concerning their existence¹⁵.

Special attention should be given to the fact that the author of the story in Daniel 1 does not see anything wrong with young Jewish men deepening their understanding of the secrets of pagan sages, or accepting new Babylonian names. What is more important, such an attitude finds theological justification, because the author clearly emphasizes that the abilities and wisdom of Daniel were bestowed by God (Dan 1:17), which subsequently led to success at the pagan ruler's court and a further career (Dan 1:19-21; see Dan 2:48; 4:6; 5:29). Daniel and his companions however purposed in their hearts that they would not "defile themselves" with the portion of the king's food (Dan 1:8). The conduct of Daniel and his companions was determined by a very specific reason – they had to draw a line on a critical issue so as to keep balance in

¹⁵ See N. PORTEOUS, *Das Buch Daniel* (ATD 23; Göttingen 1968) 16; R. HAMMER, *The Book of Daniel* (The Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge 1976) 18; J.E. GOLDINGAY, *Daniel*, 12-13.

the assimilation process of those Israelites faithful to God in a pagan environment. The author of Daniel 1 underlines that those young men in their “career” at the pagan king’s court clearly determine the limits of their loyalty to the pagan values. The point is that they can accept anything which comes from God, however, they should definitely reject what the pagan master offers to them. Anyway, although learning “the writing and language of the Chaldeans”, it is seen in the end that true wisdom comes from God. They accepted pagan names, but they already had their own Hebrew names which pointed to the God of Israel. It should be accepted in both cases what had already happened. A different matter is the eating of the food from the king’s table which is here of a more symbolic and general character. Life and a good appearance do not depend on the quality of food – even royal – but only on God. Everything which was given the young Jewish men came from the pagan ruler: names, education, and food. However, this doesn’t mean that the king can meet all their needs. When Daniel and his three friends made the decision to refuse to eat the royal food they subjected themselves to a test to prove that only God is in a position to ensure prosperity (Dan 1:8-16). From this event can be deduced the main theme of Daniel 1: the loyalty of Jews living in the Diaspora in the presence of a pagan ruler while preserving their national identity and faithfulness to God. Therefore, the clear message in Daniel 1 is: Jews living in an alien environment and in a subordinate position under the will of a pagan ruler may adapt themselves to customs prevailing in such an environment, but cannot credit the king with absolute power because this belongs exclusively to God who directs all, even the activity of the pagan ruler.

3. IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION: THE PAGAN EDUCATION OF JEWS IN DANIEL 1 IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HELLENISTIC ERA

Special attention must be given to the participation of young Jewish men in the pagan educational system, as well as its full acceptance by them, especially taking into account the evidence of the last editor's work on the entire Book of Daniel, from the Maccabean period. A positive attitude to the pagan education of Daniel and his companions is not surprising when we consider the composition date of the story in Daniel 1, that is, the early Hellenistic period where a strong memory of Persian times still lived on. This period is characterized on one hand by a lack of distinctly hostile acts towards Jews from the pagan side of their environment, and on the other – which indicates the general character of the story in Daniel 1 – the favourable leaning of the Jews themselves towards the pagan setting in which they lived and the success of some of them in the service of pagan rulers. Such a situation might be rather impossible in the later Hellenistic period, especially during the Maccabean crisis, when the ruler of Seleucid dynasty, Antiochus Epiphanes' hellenising policies brought him into conflict with the Jews. It is generally agreed that the final redaction of the Book of Daniel took place during Maccabean times and for the author there is nothing inappropriate with the fact that Daniel and his companions underwent a pagan education¹⁶. The conquest of Alexander the Great spread Greek culture and colonization over the entire ancient Near East, which included the Palestinian Jews. Hellenisation affected every sphere of life: social, political and religious.

The most important role in this process was played by the Greek education (gr. *paideia*) system, meant to train humans into their true form, their real and genuine nature. The growing differentiation of Jewish attitudes toward Hellenisation resulted in resistance, which in the

¹⁶ See J.J. COLLINS, *Daniel*, 139.

days of Antiochus Epiphanes turned into the persecution of the faithful Jews preserving their national and religious tradition (see Daniel 7-12).

This differentiation depends on whether the issues concern Palestine or whether they also include the Diaspora. More determined objections to Hellenisation appear in Palestine, which turned into the open resistance and rebellion demonstrated in the Maccabean revolt (see 1-2 Macc, *The Animal Apocalypse*: 1 Enoch 85-90), however, in the Diaspora, in spite of incidental acts of open resistance more moderate attitudes usually prevailed. This type of differentiation also concerns attitudes towards Greek education. From one point of view, the opposition becomes more visible; on the other hand – especially in the Diaspora – many Jews accepted and participated in the Greek education system¹⁷. The preservation of a national and religious Jewish identity developed into their basic attitude to Greek education. Sometimes, the acceptance of Greek culture by the Jews was equated with their abandonment of national traditions and faithfulness to God, but concurrently many showed a very good knowledge of the Greek language and culture, proof that they reached the highest level of Hellenistic education, and at the same time did not *forsake* their Jewish roots while becoming a member of the intellectual and religious elite.

More importantly, their Greek education was used as an instrument in the manifestation and propagation of Jewish traditions (and religion) in the pagan Hellenistic

¹⁷ For a further discussion of Jewish education during the Hellenistic period and later Judaism, see M. HENGEL, *Judaism and Hellenism. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period. I* (London 1981) 65-83; S. MĘDALA, *Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej* (BZ.TNT 1; Kraków 1984) 247-255; J.R. BARTLETT, *Jews in the Hellenistic World. Josephus, Aristaeus, The Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World, 200 BC to AD 200; Cambridge 1985) 1-10; J.T. TOWNSEND, „Education (Greco-Roman)”, *ABD* II, 312-317; see also V. TCHERIKOVER, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (with a preface by J.J. COLLINS) (Peabody 1999).

environment by a literature – even written in the Egyptian Diaspora – (see e.g., the Book of Wisdom, Eupolemus, Jason of Cyrene, Pseudo-Fokilides, Aristobulus of Paneas, Ezekiel Tragicus, Philo of Alexandria). The final editor of the Book of Daniel assembled the story of chapter 1 with the entire work as one book, including the passages about the Babylonian education of Daniel and his companions because also in Hellenistic times – even within the Maccabean period – the problem did not concern the fact of the involvement of Jews in pagan education, but first of all encouraged Jews to remain faithful to God and to preserve their national and religious identity. Daniel and his companions, educated at the Babylonian king’s court, remained faithful to God and in this context their testimony was a source of strength to every Jew living in times under the threat to their identity caused by Hellenisation. Thus, the message of the story of Daniel 1 can be seen as relevant also in the time of the last editor of the entire book: Daniel and his companions constitute the ideal for all Jews because by their behaviour they demonstrate that in spite of all obstacles a Jew may remain faithful to his own Jewish tradition and religion.

Summary

The opening chapter (Dan 1) introduces the reader to the Hebrew heroes of the book, Daniel and his companions, and records the manner in which these young nobles were taken to Babylon as captives by Nebuchadnezzar. The three-year program of study that Daniel and his three companions underwent involved “the language and literature of the Chaldeans”. The Babylonian education of the Jewish youths was to make them loyal courtiers to the king. In Daniel 1:3-7 are shown a number of qualifications necessary for these young men to be eligible for training, both the physical (without any defect, handsome), and intellectual skills (wisdom, knowledge, intelligence). The theme of the education of young Jewish men appears in Daniel 1 in the context of the preservation of Jewish na-

tional and religious identity of those living in the Diaspora, far away from the motherland and in a hostile pagan environment. The author of Daniel 1 accepts the possibility of a “pagan” education of Jews, but on the condition that they will remain faithful to God and national traditions. The figure of Daniel has been shown as the ideal – a model worthy of imitation – a Jew who in spite of a pagan upbringing remains faithful to God. This kind of “model” behaviour becomes a topic of the day in the era of the Book of Daniel’s final redactor (Maccabean). The struggle to preserve Jewish national distinctions and faithfulness to God in the face of growing Hellenisation was the quintessential problem in that period of history.

Keywords: Daniel, education, national and religious identity

Streszczenie

Opowiadanie w Dan 1 przedstawia Daniela i jego towarzyszy, którzy deportowani przez Nabuchodonozora do Babilonu mają w trzy lata uczyć się „pisma i języka Chaldejczyków”. Ta babilońska edukacja młodzieńców żydowskich ma na celu wychowanie lojalnych dworzan, którzy będą służyć królowi. W Dan 1,3-7 zostają ukazane predyspozycje młodzieńców umożliwiające im pobieranie nauki – zarówno fizyczne (brak jakiegokolwiek skazy, piękny wygląd), jak i intelektualne (mądrość, wiedza, inteligencja). Temat edukacji młodzieńców żydowskich pojawia się w Dan 1 w kontekście zachowania tożsamości narodowej i religijnej Żydów żyjących w diasporze, a więc z dala od ojczyzny, oraz w obcym pogańskim środowisku. Autor Dan 1 akceptuje możliwość „pogańskiej” edukacji Żydów, ale pod warunkiem że pozostaną oni wierni Bogu i narodowym tradycjom. Postać Daniela jest ukazana jako ideał – wzorzec do naśladowania – Żyda, który mimo pogańskiego wychowania pozostaje wierny Bogu. Tego rodzaju „model” postępowania staje się bardzo aktualny w czasach ostatniego redaktora Księgi Daniela

z czasów machabejskich, gdy podstawowym problemem było zachowanie swej odrębności narodowej i wierności Bogu wobec nasilającej się hellenizacji.