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IDEAL OF FRIENDSHIP IN CULTURE OF ANCIENT ISRAEL
IN LIGHT OF DIDACTIC BOOKS OF OLD TESTAMENT

Summary

Based on the analysis of an extensive spectrum of literary works — which undoubtedly are documents of human life of the time — one can notice that friendship interests people across various ages and cultures. The didactic books of the Old Testament, representing the culture of ancient Israel, are among these testimonies. Especially the Book of Sirach contains a lot of thoughts on friendship.

An important message of the biblical teaching regarding friendship is that the proper friendly relationship can exist only between people who have achieved God's wisdom by fearing and loving God and who live according to the Law. Hence, the friendship in the horizontal dimension in the society of Israel had a specific reference to God. This kind of friendship is an object of God's pleasure: "There are three things my soul delights in, and which are delightful to God and to all people: concord between brothers, friendship between neighbours, and a wife and husband who live happily together" (Sir 25:1). As Sirach the Sage points out, the friendship is delightful to people who repeatedly value friendship more than the blood ties; "A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov 18:24), wrote the author of the Book of Proverbs.

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Słowa kluczowe: przyjaźń, kultura, księgi dydaktyczne, Stary Testament.

Key words: friendship, culture, ancient Israel, didactic books, Old Testament.