

**THE BABYLONIAN EXILE OF THE JUDAEANS
AND THE FORMATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE BODILY
RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD:**

From the Naturalistic Allegory of the Collective Revival of the Jews upon Their
Expected Return to Judaea through the Personified Image of the People's
Rising from the Dead to the Concept of an Individual
Eschatological Resurrection in the Flesh

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ABSTRACT. The author reveals the following sequence in the formation of the Jewish doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead: during the Babylonian captivity of the Judaeans, a naturalistic allegory of their revival upon their expected return to their Motherland arises (Ezek. 37:1–14, Isa. 26:19, 41:14); by the end of the period of exile / at the very beginning of the Persian period, the personified image of the people's rising from the dead is developing (the allegory of the Servant of the Lord in Isa. 42:1–9, 49: 1–7, 50:4–9, 52:13–53:12; perhaps also the image of Job, cf. especially: Job 19:25–27a and 42:5, 7–17). In the time of another national catastrophe – the persecution of the faithful Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes – the concept of an individual eschatological resurrection in the flesh arises; at this receiving of the afterlife requital is assumed to be realized in the body (Dan. 12:1b–3, 13).

KEYWORDS: Formation of the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, eschatology, Babylonian exile of the Judaeans, the concept of an individual eschatological resurrection in the flesh, the Servant of the Lord, Books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Job, Daniel.

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I

The Book of the Judaeen prophet Isaiah 26:19 contains an allegory of the revival of the Jews in their native land after the Lord “punishes the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities”¹:

Thy dead will come back to life, the dead bodies of my (people)² will rise!³
 Wake up and rejoice you, dwelling in the dust,
 for Thy dew (will be) the dew of the (reviving) light⁴,
 and the earth will give birth⁵ to her dead.⁶

Although part of the Book of Isaiah, chapters 24–27 (conditionally called “Prophetic Announcement of the Lord’s New World Order: Prophecy of the Salvation for Zion / Israel”⁷), was included in the prophecies of Proto-Isaiah (second half of the eighth century B.C.E.), however many researchers date it now to the period of the Babylonian exile of the Jews (after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.) or even to the very beginning of Persian dominion in Judaea.⁸

The prophet Ezekiel, who lived among the Jewish exiles in the first decades of the Babylonian captivity (the first third of the sixth century B.C.E.)⁹, in one of his prophecies creates a naturalistic image of the people of Israel rising from the dead in exile, whom the Lord God eventually brings home, to the Land of Israel (*Ezek.* 37: 1–14). In particular, the prophet says about the “dry bones” of the Israelites/Judahites scattered on the field in a foreign land as follows:

<...> and now, shuddered (the earth), and the bones came together, bone to bone.

And as I looked, they were covered with sinews; flesh was growing on them and skin was covering them, (yet) there was no spirit¹⁰ in them. <...>

¹ *Isa.* 26:21.

² Targum, Peshitta: “their dead bodies”.

³ Variant translation: “Thy dead will come back to life, (together with) my dead body they will rise”.

⁴ Variant translation: “for Thy dew (will be) the dew of the (curative) herbs”.

⁵ Or: “will cast out”.

⁶ Cf., on the other hand: *Isa.* 26:14.

⁷ Sweeney 1996, 311ff.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 311–353. M. A. Sweeney even supposes that this part of Proto-Isaiah (chapters 24–27) was composed after the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah (see below).

⁹ Ezekiel was among the Judaeans who were exiled to Babylonia in 597 B.C.E. by King Nebuchadnezzar II. His prophecies date back to the period between 593 and 571 B.C.E.

¹⁰ Or: “breathe”.

And He said to me, «Prophecy to the Spirit; prophesy, son of man. Say to the Spirit, “The Lord God says this: ‘Come from the four winds, O Spirit; breathe on these dead, so that they come to life!’”».

I prophesied as he had ordered me, and the spirit entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet, a great, an immense army.

Then He said, «Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. (They) keep saying, “Our bones are dry, our hope has gone; we are done for”.

So, prophesy, and say to them, “The Lord God says this: ‘I am now going to open your graves; I shall raise you from your graves, My people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel’”» (*Ezek.* 37: 7b–12).

The image of the resurrection to the life of the seemingly lost people of Israel acquires particular relevance in *Isa.*, chap. 40–55, in the so-called Deutero-Isaiah, whose core of prophecies is usually dated to the time close to the very end of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews and their return to their homeland (probably the 540s – about 539 B.C.E.).¹¹ Thus, in *Isa.* 41:14 we read:

“Fear not, you worm of Jacob¹²,
you the dead¹³ of Israel (*mt̄y yśr’l*)¹⁴!
I will help you”, says the Lord.
“I am your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel”.

Deutero-Isaiah also personifies the image of the people of Israel in his allegory of the Servant of the Lord (see the so-called Songs of the Servant of the Lord in *Isa.* 42:1–9, 49:1–7, 50:4–9, 52:13–53:12), suffering and, as it seemed to others, practically ceased to exist in Babylonian exile. However, the prophet is confident that as a result, the Lord will raise His Servant and, returning him to his homeland, will exalt among the nations. This idea is especially distinctly expressed in *Isa.* 53:8b–9, 11–12:

<...> He was cut off from the land of the living;
for the sin of My people He was stricken.
he was given a grave with the wicked,
and his <tomb-hill>¹⁵ is with the rich¹⁶;

¹¹ Cf., e.g.: Blenkinsopp 2002; Whybray 2004, 1–12.

¹² That is, the corpses of the Israelites and Judaeans devoured by worms.

¹³ Or: “men of Israel”.

¹⁴ Cf.: *Isa.* 22:2.

¹⁵ We read *bāmātô* instead of Masoretic *bmt̄yw*; in *1Q Is^a* (Qumran), the Septuagint, the Peshitta, the Vulgate: “after his death”.

¹⁶ This phrase probably implies Babylonia.

although he had done no violence,
 had spoken no deceit. <...>
 After the ordeal he has endured,
 he will see <the light>¹⁷ and be content.
 “By his knowledge, the upright one, My servant will justify many
 by taking their guilt on himself.
 Hence I shall give him (a portion) with the many,
 and he will share the booty with the mighty,
 for having exposed himself to death
 and for being counted as one of the transgressors;
 whereas he was bearing the sin<s>¹⁸ of many
 and interceding for the transgressors.

It is also likely that the righteous man of ancient antiquity, the servant of the Lord Job¹⁹ (see: *Job.* 42:7–8), personifies the Jewish people in the Babylonian captivity in the Biblical book of the same name²⁰: the author of this work, as the reader can understand, correlates the misfortunes of pious and wealthy Job, sincerely worshipping God, with the fate of the Judaeans who carried out religious reform in *ca.* 621 B.C.E., which resulted in the establishment of a single centralized Divine service in the Temple of Jerusalem, cleansed of any pagan elements, but lost their Motherland and found themselves in the Babylonian exile on the verge of national death. At the same time, the descriptions of Job’s loss of livestock (broadly – property), servants, children, and finally his deadly disease – all this “by hand” of figure, designated in the book as *has-šātān*, lit. “enemy, adversary, rival, etc.”, the reader could correlate with the successive invasions of the

¹⁷ This word is present in the Qumran manuscripts 1QIs^a, 1QIs^b; 4QIs^d and in the Septuagint.

¹⁸ The plural in all the Qumran manuscripts of the Book of Isaiah, the Septuagint, the Peshitta and the Vulgate.

¹⁹ The meaning of the name of the main character of the book – its Masoretic vocalization: *ʾIyyôb* – is significant: it should probably be interpreted as “Where is the spirit of (my) ancestor (forefather)?” (= *ʾēy (ʾ)ôb*). The name *ʾIyyôb* is found in *Ezek.* 14:14, 20 (along with the names of Noah and Daniel [Ugarit.: *Dannyllu*]). Analogous names with components *-ʾabu* (“father”), *-ʾaḥu* (“brother”), *-ḥammu/ḥalu* (“paternal/maternal clan”) are attested in the Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Ugaritic texts of the second millennium B.C.E. (see, *e.g.*: Albright 1954, 223–233; Pope 1973, 5f.).

²⁰ According to the ancient Judaic tradition, the authorship of the Book of Job is attributed to Moses, *the prophet and the consolidator of Israel as a people*. It is significant that in the corpus of the Qumran Biblical manuscripts, copies written in the *Paleo-Hebrew* script were only found among fragments of the scrolls of the Pentateuch and the Book of Job (*4QpaleoJob^c*).

Babylonians to Judaea (since 605 B.C.E.), the plunder and devastation of the country, the treasures of the Temple and the royal palace, the removal of prisoners and, finally, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple of the Lord in 586 B.C.E.

However, like the Servant of the Lord in the Book of Isaiah, the servant of the Lord Job was also regenerated by God to life; he found new children and property, his relatives returned to him. In this connection it is significant that the turn *šāb 'et šēbūt* (lit. “to return captivity (captives)”) attested in the final part of the book (*Job* 42:10a) describing the final restoration of Job and his rebirth by the Lord to a new life, was used by the prophets, who lived at the beginning of the Babylonian captivity (see: *Jer.* 29:14, 30:3, *Ezek.* 16:53, 39:25; this phrase is also present in *Deut.* 30:3) and proclaimed the final return of the exiles to their homeland.²¹

The innocent sufferer Job, being on the verge of death and complaining about his fate, declares an unjust arrangement of the world where, in his opinion, the righteous suffer, and the wicked are prosperous and dominate. At the same time, behind the coffin, there seems to be no hope as well, for the transition of the human spirit to Sheol (the underground abode of the deceased) turns out, according to the widely spread opinion known to Job, to be tantamount to practically total non-being.

But God “opens” people’s “ear in oppression” (*Job* 36:15b; cf.: *Isa.* 50:4b–5), that is, “sensitivity” to intuitive knowledge in existential situations; and here Job comes to his main conclusion, which he would like to not simply write down in the scroll, but suggests to “cut into the rock²² with iron chisel and engraving tool for ever”, so that it is available to all generations:

I know (that) my Redeemer lives,
And (at) last (*wē'ahārôn*) He shall stand over the ashes²³,
after my skin is destroyed;
however, from my flesh I shall see God (*ūmibbšārî 'ehēzeh 'ēlô^ah*)²⁴,

²¹ Proceeding from this, it would be possible to date the Book of Job to the time of the end of the Babylonian captivity or the very beginning of the Persian period of the post-captivity era. Many scholars believe that this work probably originated in its present form in the Persian period, although the prose material at the beginning and the end of the book and some poetic passages can have been composed at the age of captivity or even in the pre-captivity period. (See, e.g.: Pope 1973, XXXII–XL; Fokkelman 2012 3–34; Seow 2013, 17–37.) Cf. also the next note.

²² Some researchers see in *Job* 19:24 a hint at the grandiose in size Behistun inscription (ca. 519 B.C.E.) of the Persian king Darius I, embossed high on a rock (in the Kermanshah Province of modern Iran) in Ancient Persian, Elam and Akkadian languages.

²³ Lit.: “dust”.

I shall see (Him) by myself,
My eyes shall behold – (I myself), and not another (*Job* 19:25–27a).

Moreover, God gives to Job, who is on the verge of death, in fact already in a liminal situation, an opportunity to look at the world created by Him from the moment of its formation – and not from the point of view of man, but from the point of view of the Creator Himself. This Revelation contains, as the reader can conclude, the essence of God's answer to Job who was inquiring of Him. Job himself characterizes the Divine Revelation that he received as follows:

I have heard of Thee only by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees Thee! (*Job* 42:5).

After Job acquired this higher Knowledge, he was reborn by the Lord, in fact, he found a new life. It was this miraculous restoration of Job in the flesh that was rendered in *Job* 42:10a by the turn *šāb 'et šēbīt*, meaning literally: "to return captivity (captives)". The Lord doubled Job's inheritance, his relatives and friends returned to him, and he again found children and offspring (*Job* 42:10b–16). This all could be interpreted by the reader of the Book of Job as an allegory of the revival of the Jews in their homeland after the Babylonian exile and the construction of a new Temple of the Lord YHWH by them in Jerusalem.²⁵

It is significant that the Tetragrammaton YHWH, the Name of God²⁶ revealed by Him to His people, Israel (*Ex.* 3:14–15, 6:3), who was in Egyptian bondage, is used in the Book of Job only in its beginning – up to seemingly fatal blow received by Job (the Tetragrammaton sounds three times in the mouth of Job himself; *Job* 1:21c–d), and at the end, when the Lord Himself appears to the suffering Job – in *Job* 38:1–42:6 (the author's remarks introducing the Lord's speeches and Job's answers), as well as in the prosaic part concluding the book, which tells about the

²⁴ This interpretation one can find, for example, in the Vulgate. Another possible interpretation: "And outside my flesh (*i. e.*, going beyond the limits of my rotted flesh. – *I. T.*) I (*i. e.*, the spirit of Job, cf.: *Job* 32:8, 33:4, 6, 34:14–15. – *I. T.*) shall see God".

²⁵ The new Temple was erected by ca. 516 B.C.E.

²⁶ Judging by Exodus 3:14, the Name of God YHWH – the Tetragrammaton – interpreted in accordance with tradition as the *Lord*, originated from the verb *hāwāh* (the ancient form of the verb *hāyāh*; in *qal*, imperfect, 3rd person, masculine, singular), meaning "to be", "to exist". Thus, the Name of the Lord can be interpreted as "He Who was, is and will be," that is, the *Everlasting*. According to Exodus 3:14, the Lord Himself interprets His Name in this way: "I am the One Who I am ('*ehyeh 'āšer 'ehyeh*)», *scil.* "I am the Existing" (cf.: LXX and Vulgate *ad loc.*). Cf. also: Hosea 1:9b. Concerning the interpretation of the Tetragrammaton by Jewish thinkers, see, *e.g.*: Tantlevskij 2016^b, 171f.; 183, n. 5f.

rebirth of Job to life by the Lord and the restoration of everything that he had (*Job* 42:7–17).

But the Tetragrammaton is not used in the speeches of Job affected by the deadly disease and lost practically everything except his wife (a personification of the Jewesses?) and in the orations of his multinational interlocutors²⁷, full of pathos and represented in poetic form²⁸; they all designate God by the terms *'ēl/'ēlō^ah/'ēlōhîm*, "God", *šadday*, the traditional interpretation: "Almighty"²⁹, *'elyôn*, "the Most High", known in the Semitic milieu. (In this connection let us note that, as cuneiform sources and bulls show, the Judaeans in Babylonia sometimes gave their children local Neo-Babylonian names, and also replaced the typical Jewish component *-yahu* (abbreviated form of the Tetragrammaton YHWH) in their theophoric names to the general-Semitic element *-'ēl³⁰*.) It seems that the use of the Tetragrammaton by the author of the Book of Job symbolizes the presence the people of Judaea, whom Job supposedly personifies, in their homeland: the beginning of the book – the period before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem; the end of the book – the appearance of the Lord to the Jews in the Babylonian captivity (by analogy with the way it was during the slavery of the Jews in Egypt; cf. especially: *Ex.* 3:14–15, 6:3) and the "return of captives" to Judaea and the construction of a new Temple in Jerusalem. The genre organization of the book also contributes to the expression of this idea: prosaic beginning and end, describing the pious and serene life of Job, are probably called upon to lead the reader to the idea that the life of the Jews, whom Job *ex hypothesi* personified, will return/returns to its blessed origins.

²⁷ The name of one of them, *'Ēlîhû'*, meaning "He is my God," is witnessed among the names of the Israelites (see: *1 Sam.* 11, *1 Chr.* 12:21, 26:7; cf.: *1 Chr.* 2:13 and 27:18). One can assume that *'Ēlîhû'* personifies exiles from the Northern (Israel) kingdom. On the other hand, many researchers consider the speech of *'Ēlîhû'* (*Job*, chap. 32–37) a later insertion.

²⁸ Exception is the passage of *Job* 12:9 (cf.: *Isa.* 41:20), but the writing *'ēlō^ah*, "God", is also attested in several manuscripts here. (Cf.: Pope 1973, 91.) *Job* 28:28 recorded the writing *'ādōnāy*, "the Lord" (however, in many manuscripts the Tetragrammaton is attested here); but the text of chapter 28 of the Book of Job is a hymn of wisdom, which originally was probably an independent work. (Cp.: *Ibid.* P. 206.)

²⁹ This interpretation is attested in the Septuagint and the Vulgate. Cf. also, *e. g.*: the Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah, 12a.

³⁰ See, *e.g.*: Coogan 1974, 11f.; Purvis 1988, 161f.

II

In the mid-160's B.C.E. the Jews again found themselves on the verge of ending of their national existence – this time in connection with the terrible persecutions that the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (whose state included Judaea then) brought upon them. The king ordered the Jews to abandon the basic elements of their religion under the threat of painful death. At this time, the faithful Jews demonstrated mass examples of martyrdom for faith – for the first time in the history of mankind; simultaneously, other Jews were ready to take a collaborative attitude towards the Hellenizers –for fear or by conviction. It is to this period that the first indisputable indications of the appearance among the Judaeans of the doctrine of the *individual* bodily resurrection from the dead at the End of the Days date back. This concept could crystallize under the influence of the expressive allegories of the rising from the dead of the people of Israel/Judaea in the flesh, *i. e.*, their revival in the Motherland, used by prophets of the Babylonian captivity period and, as may be supposed, by the author of the Book of Job.³¹ The doctrine of the individual bodily resurrection is attested, first of all, in the Book of Daniel, composed in its modern form in Judaea towards the end of 165–164 B.C.E.³² So, *Dan.* 12:1–3 says:

<...> And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was
since nations came into existence to that time.
And at that time (certain of) your people shall be delivered,
all those who are found written in the Book.
And many of those who sleep
(in) the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life,
some to shame (and) everlasting contempt.
Those who are wise shall shine
like the brightness of the firmament,³³
and those who turn many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever.

³¹ Cf., on the other hand: 1 *Kgs* 17:17–24; 2 *Kgs* 4:18–37, 13:20–21 about the miraculous revival of recently deceased individuals, whose flesh has not yet decayed.

³² See, *e. g.*: Hartman, Di Lella 1978, 14. Some scholars admit that the verses *Dan.* 12:11 and 12:12, as well as the prayer in *Dan.* 9:4–20 could be added later. Cf., on the other hand, Seow 2003, 9: “Finally, to this whole work, a postscript (12:5–13) was later added (probably some time in the spring of 163 B.C.E.) to update the final revelation in 10:1–12:4” (see also: *Ibid.*, 191–196). See further, *e.g.*: VanderKam, Flint (eds.) 2002, *passim*.

³³ That is, as the dawn.

Perhaps it was supposed that the most terrible sinners would not be resurrected at all, which was regarded as the most severe punishment.³⁴

Dan. 12:13 contains an individual presage to the righteous Daniel himself:

“And you, go to (your) end, and you will rest, but (afterwards) you will arise (*wěṭáāmōd*) to (receive) your lot at the End of the days”.

In the Hasmonean and Early Roman periods, the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead in the End of the Days was widely spread in the Judaeen society.³⁵ It is attested in the Dead Sea scrolls, in particular, in the works of the Qumran community^{36,37} a number of pseudepigraphs³⁸ and other compositions of the

³⁴ A similar idea is also attested in the text of the Manual of the Discipline of the Qumran Community (*1QS*) 4:9–14, which says that after cruel torments in the “dark areas” (of Sheol; probably Abaddon is implied here, lit.: “destruction”), the souls of the wicked will be “destroyed without a remnant and (possibility) of salvation”. According to the pseudepigraph *1 Enoch* 108:3, the souls of the wicked, whose names are deleted from the Book of Life, after being preliminary tormented by fire in a certain invisible (or: “chaotic”) desert, are destroyed. (See also, *e.g.*: *1 Enoch* 22:10–13.)

³⁵ The after-death Divine “judgement” is repeatedly mentioned in the Book of Ecclesiastes (see, *e.g.*: Tantlevskij 2014^c, 142–145; Idem 2018, 21–28), written, according different opinions, between the end of the sixth century B.C.E. and the end of the third century B.C.E. (see, *e.g.*: Seow 1997, 11–59; Brown 2011, 7–18; Tantlevskij 2014^c, 139–141; Idem 2018, 19–28). For example, *Eccl.* 3:17 says:

I said in my heart,
 “God shall judge
 the righteous and the wicked,
 for (there is) a time (of requital) for every work
 and (judgement) for every deed there (*šām*)”.

However, the Ecclesiastes most probably does not mean the eschatological Judgment at the resurrection of the dead, but the judgment of God over the soul of man after the death of his body in the other world, as a result of which the souls of the righteous ascend to God and the souls of the wicked descend into Sheol. (Cf. further, for instance, our articles: Tantlevskij 2017, 133–138; Idem 2018, 19–28.)

³⁶ *E.g.*, in the so-called Teacher’s Thanksgiving Hymns (*1QH^a* 12:21f., 14:29f., 34; cf., *e.g.*: 11:11–14, 13:11f., also: 19:11–14; 21:11f.), the Commentary on Habakkuk (*1QpHab*) 9:12–10:5 (cf. also: 5:3–6, 10:6–13), the Messianic Apocalypse (*4Q521*); cf., *e.g.*: the so-called Damascus Document (*CD-A* 6:10f.; *4QD^b*, 6, 1; *4QD^d*, 4, 2).

³⁷ In all probability, the Qumran community was an Essene sect (see, *e.g.*: Dupont-Sommer 1980, *passim*; Amusin 1983; Tantlevskij 2014^a, 50–53; Idem 2014^b, 54–66; Idem 2016^a, 61–75; cf., *e.g.*: VanderKam, Flint 2013, *passim*).

Judaeans³⁹, becoming one of the most important components of Judaistic eschatology.

The Apostle Paul introduces a significant aspect in the doctrine of the resurrection: in *1 Cor.* 15:42–55 and *Philip.* 3:20–21 he foretells the resurrection of the dead in the “incorruptible” “spiritual bodies” of “heavenly” nature, as well as the “change”, “transformation” of the bodies of the living, “putting on imperishability” and “immortality” at the End of the Days.⁴⁰ It is possible that this idea goes back to the passage of *Dan.* 12:1–3 already cited above, judging by which the author of the Book of Daniel believed that as those who will survive to the End of the Days, so also those who rise from the dead then will receive eternal bodies of a radiant heavenly nature – of course, only the “wise” and “righteous” ones are meant here.

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³⁸ Cf., e.g., the so-called Pseud-Ezekiel (4Q385), fr. 2, 5–9, where *Ezek.* 37:1–14 is probably interpreted as an indication of the resurrection of the righteous at the End of the Days. Cf. further, e.g.: 4Q181, 1, 4–6; also: *Dan.* 7:9–10 and 4Q Giant^b ar = 4Q530, 2, 16–19 (cf.: *Joel* 4:12); 1QpHab 5:3–6, 9:12–10:13; CD-A 4:3f. And, for example, the Songs of the Servant of the Lord, in all likelihood, came to be interpreted by members of the Qumran community as prophecies about the leader of their community, the Teacher of Righteousness, whose resurrection (coming) was expected by them at the End of the Days. (Cf., e.g.: Dupont-Sommer 1980, 371–377.)

³⁹ See, e.g.: 2 Macc. 7:14, 29; 14:46; cf.: 12:43–45.

⁴⁰ Cf.: Tantlevskij 2015, 149.

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