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MOSSES KIMCHI
AS EXEGETE AND GRAMMARIAN

With special reference to
his commentary on Proverbs

Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

Page

I. Exegetical Antecedents -	
Development of the Peshat -----	I-14
II. The Authorship of the "Ibn Ezra" on Proverbs	15-20

Part II.

I. Moses Kimchi As Exegete:	
1. Point of View-----	21-23
2. Theology and Philosophy-----	23-27
3. Method-----	28-30
4. Characteristic Terms-----	30-31
5. Sources-----	31-32
II Moses Kimchi as Grammarian:	
Introductory-----	33
1. Roots-----	33-35
2. Verbs-----	35-36
3. Adjectives-----	36-37
4. Prefixes and Suffixes-----	37-38
5. The Particle-----	38
6. Lexicography-----	39
7. Parallel Structure and Conditional Sentences-----	40

Conclusion

Bibliography

PART I

CHAPTER I

EXEGETICAL ANTECEDENTS- DEVELOPMENT OF THE PESCHAT.

The period in the history of Jewish Bible exegesis which began with Saadia and commonly known as "the period of Peshat" was characterized by the effort to interpret the Bible text from a rational point of view, irrespective whether the results arrived at harmonized with or were in contradiction to the traditional interpretations of that day. The word Peshat became the slogan of the new school of exegetes. Their chief effort was to get at the primary meaning of the Bible text, untrammelled by the Midrashic expositions of their day.

In Saadia Gaon this Peshat tendency finds its first and its most competent representative. In his Arabic translation of the Bible the new tendency of rationalism comes into bold relief. "Saadia's translation", writes ^(I) Baycher, "shows the same characteristic as his Bible exegesis, as far as it is known from the extant fragments of his commentaries, and from his chief religio-philosophical work. The characteristic is his rationalism; reason is for him the basis even in Scriptural exegesis; and in accordance with it the exposition of the text must contain nothing that is obscure or that contradicts logical thought."

(I) JE art. Bible exegesis, p. 166a.

But this rationalism, which became the standard and the characteristic of the Peshat school of exegesis, had very definite limits. These we must note specifically, for they govern the rationalism of Moses Kimchi and of his time, in which we are specially interested. The divine origin of the Bible was not doubted. הלכה למשה מסיני¹ not only remained fixed but reenforced by this rationalism. Hence the biblical miracles remained undisputed. They asserted the veracity of the Scriptures.

In his effort to get at the real meaning of the Bible text, Saadia created- or, at least laid the foundations for-the science of Hebrew philology. The rise of this new science was inevitable, for without getting at the root meanings of the Hebrew, the Peshat tendency could not-function. Words had to be analyzed and their exact meanings ascertained. From Saadia on, down to our own day, philology became the indispensable prerequisite to Bible exegesis.

But not only by his scholarly achievements did Saadia further the Peshat Movement. His being gaon of Sura facilitated the recognition of the new ideal through his position of authority and prestige.

"It was a matter of no little importance for the new method of exegesis, " writes Bacher, "that its founder⁽¹⁾

(1) JE art. Bib. Ex. p. 166a

held the highest position in the gift of tradition-loving Jews of his age; for the fact that it was the "Gaon of Sura" who opened up new paths for exegesis facilitated the recognition and further development of this method among the large majority of Jews who still held by tradition."

For a century the stream of rationalism in the study of biblical text, reenforced by attempts at philology, sought its bank. At its point of origin in the East, it gained impetus from the Karaites, especially because of Saadia's attacks on this sect. Westward, the stream of rationalism appeared in Northern Africa and Spain. A successor worthy of the man who had released this stream at Sura was not found till the eleventh century. He was Samuel ben Hofni (died 1034) who caught the new point of view perfectly, carrying it through ably both in the comprehensive- (1) and in the detail of biblical text. In his Arabic version of the Pentateuch and in his exegetical (2) works he gave full play to the new ideal. Like Saadia he too gave peshat the official sanction of Judaism. At Pumbedit^{ya}, Hai Gaon, Pumbeditta's last gaon of great renown, brought new strength to the new school of exegetes

which has been
preserved only in
very fragmentary
form with
La Comm.
de Sam. &
Hofni ben
Le. Parat.
Peshat
Peshat des
Chassidim
1818, xv +
xvi

(1) JE art. Bib. Ex. p. 166b.

(2) Ibid

with his lexicon and the commentary on Job. Philology by this time had become recognized as important a phase of exegesis, that Hai Gaon "consulted the Koran in order to explain Biblical passages; and once he sent to ask the Syrian Catholics how a certain difficult passage in the Psalms was explained⁽¹⁾ in the Syriac translation of the Bible".

The school at Kairwan played its part in furthering the Peshat movement, tho not as vigorously as did the school at Sura andumbedit~~sa~~. There, Dunash ibn Tamin, pupil of Isaac Israeli, "was the first to introduce the comparative study of Hebrew and Arabic as a fruitful source of Bible exegesis"⁽²⁾. Judah ibn Koreish before him had carried through a systematic study of the similarities between Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic. Hananeel ben Hushiel, contemporary of Hai, was another renowned Peshatist of Kairwan. "He, however, largely admitted Midrashic elements⁽³⁾ into his exegesis."

It was in Spain, however, that this stream attained its widest banks. This was attained through Hebrew philology, Hebrew lexicography, and Hebrew grammar. Between the time of Haddai ibn Shaprut to the time of

(1) JE art. Bib. Ex. p. 166b.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

Samuel ibn Nagala, gifted scholars appeared who produced works in the field of philology and grammar which determined the course of Bible exegesis for the subsequent ages. Among these works is included Menahem's dictionary; Dunash ibn Labrat's critical works; the polemics between the followers of these two scholars; Hayyuj's great discovery of the tri-literality of Hebrew roots; the critical works of Abulwalid, and that of Samuel ibn Nagala.

Of Bible exegesis proper ^{in Spain} nothing definite is known of the time preceding Abulwalid. Moses ibn Gikatila of Cordova and Judah ibn Salaam of Toledo, are the first renowned Jewish Bible exegetes coming from the golden period of Jewish culture in Spain. In Gikatila we see the rationalistic tendency striving for free play. He sought to explain the biblical miracles rationally. In his commentaries to Isaiah and Psalms he makes an effort for the historic point of view. Judah ibn Salaam attacked Gikatila for seeking to explain the biblical
(1)
miracles.

While the Peshat method found a friend in the form of philology in the golden period of Arabic-Jewish culture, it encountered there a new foe--the philosophic Midrash. Stimulated by the Arabic culture and the new Hebrew learning, the philosophy of religion came to the fore. In this golden period arose the towering figures

(1) JE art. Bib. Ex. p. 167

of Bahya ibn Pakuda, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Abraham ibn Hiyya, Moses ibn Ezra, Joseph ibn Zaddik, Judah ha-Levi and Abraham ibn Daud. These were philosophers of first rank, who had caught the spirit of world culture and sought to read it in the Bible. Hence the philosophic Midrash, and hence, too, a new foe for Peshat.

Quite independent of the Peshat exegesis as released by Saadia and developed by the Jewish scholars under Arabic influence, the same tendency appeared in Northern France. ⁽¹⁾ Like the Arabic school, but independently of them, the promoters of the Peshat method in France sought the simple, natural, and reasonable sense of the Bible pages, in frank contrast to the "Darshania" without, however, severing connections with them.

The founder and the unsurpassed figure of this school is Rashi (died 1105). Before him Menahem ben Helbo (circum 1080) began to stress the Peshat. Our knowledge of his works is extremely meager; but, it ⁽²⁾ seems that he paved the way for Rashi. But it was Rashi who by his Talmud and Bible, laid the foundations for sounder Bible Exegesis in France and who became the

[1] Geiger argues that the exegetes of Northern France were directly influenced by the Arabic school. When it is recalled, however, that the works of the Spanish scholars were written in Arabic, a language unknown to the exegetes of Northern France, unknown even to Rashi, and, moreover, that such an important contention of the Spanish exegetes as the discovery of the tri-literalality of Hebrew roots was unknown, Bacher's view seems the more plausible.

(2) Geiger: chapter 2

indispensable as well as the most popular commentator in all the history of Jewish Bible exegesis. Rashi so endeared himself in the heart of Israel, especially with his commentary to the Talmud,⁽¹⁾ that he has been called lovingly by his people throughout the ages:

⁽²⁾
גדול החכמים מאיר עיני הגולה. His commentary on the Bible is one of the first Hebrew books to be published. So far-reaching and so stimulating has been his work that close to two hundred books have been written on his commentary to the Pentateuch.

In Rashi the two streams of Bible exegesis-Midrash and Peshat-meet, and in him the two come into a cooperative relationship. Rashi draws heavily on the Midrashic literature, but he is careful to select those midrashim that harmonized easily with the biblical text. As if feeling reluctant to give midrashic interpretations, Rashi scrupulously cites his sources. His own remarks are devoted exclusively to the simple meaning of the text, showing a fine intuitive appreciation of the linguistic phase of exegesis. Rashi's popularity throughout the ages, down to our own day, is due more to the midrashim he quotes than to his own rational explanations. But to Rashi himself the Peshat was of primary importance,

(1) Liber, Rashi, ch. VIII

(2) Ibid. p. 73ff.

In his old age, when all his commentaries lay in written form before him, he is reported to have said to his illustrious grandson, Rashbam, that if he were to do his work over again he would lay greater emphasis on the ⁽¹⁾
Peshat.

Rashi's successors, Joseph Kara and Samuel ben Meir, Rashi's grandson, stressed the Peshat still more.

Kara reflects the influence of both the Arabic and the French school of exegetes. His grammatical standpoint is that of Rashi; but he is not as terse in his expressions. ⁽²⁾ He is original enough to express the opinion

that the Book of Samuel was not written by Samuel but later. ⁽³⁾ "Joseph ben Kara surpasses Rashi and

rivals Rashbam in his fair-minded criticism, his scrupulous attachment to the literal meaning, and his absolutely clear idea of the needs of a wholesome exegesis, to say nothing of his theological views, ⁽⁴⁾ which are always remarkable and sometimes bold."

His guiding principle was that "the Scripture must be interpreted by itself, without the help of traditional ⁽⁵⁾ literature".

(1) Geiger, Par. (German) p. 12-18

(2) JE art. Kara, Joseph ben Simeon p. 437

(3) Ibid

(4) Liberman Rashi, p. 197.

(5) JE art. Sib. Ex. p. 168b

Samuel ben Meir stressed this conception even more than did its author. "His commentary on the Pentateuch", writes Bacher, "may be regarded as the foremost production of the exegetic school of Northern France".⁽¹⁾ Literal exegesis he considered more forceful than Halakic interpretations. "He so resolutely pursued the method of the Peshat, that Nahmanides felt justified in declaring⁽²⁾ he sometimes overdid it."

The last important representative of the Peshat in Northern France was Jacob Bekor Shor, pupil of Jacob Tam. His commentary on the Pentateuch is characterized by insight into the contemptuous meaning of the Bible text. In him, too, the influence of the Spanish-Arabic school is felt most.

Characterizing the work of the French exegetes, Bacher writes:

"The Bible exegesis of the school of Northern France which was supplemented neither by scientific research into the Hebrew language nor by mental training in philosophical or other scientific studies, may be designated as the exegesis of plain, clear, common sense; its products are in many ways equal to those of the Spanish-Arabian school."⁽³⁾

Gradually the two streams of exegetical learning, the Spanish and the French, overflowed their geographic banks and their waters united into one. That was inevitable, slowly and laboriously as ideas moved from land to land.

(1) Ibid

(2) Liber, Rashi, p. 196-7.

(3) JE art. Bib. Ex. p. 168b and Liber, Rashi p. 198

Abraham ibn Ezra was the first one to studiously carry abroad the learning of Arabic-Jewish exegetes among their Jewish colleagues in Christian lands- which had already reached France and affected the growth of exegesis there. Wandering about from land to land he scattered in his path the pollen of rational thought. Poet, philosopher, profound student of Jewish lore, and versed in practically every ^{branch} ~~branch~~ of learning, Abraham ibn Ezra's renown rests primarily on his commentaries to the Bible. These he wrote in the course of his travels; but, tho written far away from Spain, they are, nevertheless, the outstanding product of Jewish Bible exegesis that the golden age of Judaism in Spain produced. Ibn Ezra is complete master of subject and material, ~~and he is~~

And in his own introduction to his Pentateuch commentary he states the characteristics of his exegetical works. Bacher summarized ^{these} ~~as~~ in these words:

"He knows nothing of the principle of the multiplicity, of meanings of Scriptural words, which the leaders of the exegetic school of Northern France acknowledged in order to justify the haggadic Midrash. Through this clear separation of the peshat from the Derash he accords only a limited place in his exegesis to the new Midrash, which introduces philosophy into the Bible text. He connects his philosophic explanations, either in longer passages or in brief allusions, with the explanation of the names of God, of the divine attributes of biblical precepts, and with single suitable passages. Ibn Ezra's endeavors to defend the biblical text against everything that might injure its integrity, may also find mention here. But he is nevertheless regarded, since Spinoza wrote his 'Tractus Theologico-Politicus', as the precursor of the

II

literary Pentateuch criticism of to-day. To judge from certain allusions, rather than from positive statements, he seems to have held that the Pentateuch, although undoubtedly composed by Moses, received in later times a few minor additions. He also obscurely alludes to the later origin of Isaiah, ch. 40-56." (1)

The Kimchi family-the father, Joseph, and the two sons, Moses and David- was another and a more sustained agency which transmitted the learning and the intellectual temper of the Arabic school to French Jewry.

Joseph Kimchi(c. 1105-1170) left Spain in the wake of the Almohades persecution and settled in Narbonne. Practically nothing is known of the personal vicissitudes of the family. It seems that Joseph was a poor man, earning his livelihood by teaching. His students were many,
(2)
tho his income small.

It is likely that Joseph Kimchi was personally acquainted with Ibn Ezra, with whose work he had a good deal in common. Like Ibn Ezra, Joseph (and this *should* ~~may~~ be said of his sons), searched for the natural meaning of the Scriptures. Grammar and rationalism are the two
(3)
tendencies dominating his work. Ibn Ezra was Kimchi's superior in knowledge, but the latter "can rightly claim to have been the first successful transplant of
(4)
Judeo-Arabic science in the soil of Christian Europe."

(1) JE art. Bib. Ex. p 169b.

(2) Leviae, Casper, JE art. Kimchi, Joseph, ben Isaac, p 496a

(3) Bacher, JE art. Bib. Ex. p 169b

(4) Leviae, Casper JE art. Kimchi, Joseph, ben Isaac, p 496b.

In the field of grammar, Joseph's works are: the "Sefer ha-Galui (II65), aiming at a settlement of the controversy between the followers of Menahem ibn Saruk and those of Dunash ibn Labrat, and the "Sefer Zikkaron". As grammarian Joseph Kimchi is dependent on Hayyuj, but in his explanations of words he relies mainly on ibn Janh. To the learning of his day he did make some contributions, tho of a minor nature. "Thus he was the first to recognize that the Hif'il has also a reflexive and an intransitive meaning; he was also the first to arrange a list of nominal forms, to indicate eight verb classes, and to classify the vowels into a system of five short and five long ones." (1)

As commentator, Joseph was extensive. He wrote commentaries on the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Song of Songs, Proverbs, Job, and a commentary of unknown contents called "Hibbur Ha-Leket". His method is mainly that of the Peshat. "His explanations are short and terse. His diction is elegant and lucid, the disposition of his material scientific, his treatment of his subject even and without digression." (2)

Joseph also attempted poetry, translations, and apologetics. As poet he did not rise to the standards of the Spanish singers. Nevertheless, he retains a place of some importance among the Provençal poets.

(1) *Levias, Casper, JE art. Kimchi, Joseph.*

(2) *Ibid*

As translator, he gave the Hebrew-reading world Bahya ibn Pakuda's "Hobot ha-Lebabot and Gabirol's "Mibhar ha-Penininim," which he rendered into metrical form. As translator he is much more free with his subject than as commentator; "carrying into the work his own spirit he often obscures the thought of author."⁽¹⁾ "Sefer Ma-Berit", is his apologetic work, written in the form of a dialogue between a loyal Jew and an apostate.

Moses was the older, and the less distinguished, of his two sons. Of his personal life, we are totally in the dark. All we know is that he received his education from his father, and was the teacher of his brother. Presumably, he lived with his father in Narbonne. The date of his death has been given as 1190.

Moses Kimchi's renown rests on his work as exegete and grammarian. He wrote commentaries on Job, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Proverbs. Moses has been unfortunate in history. Three of the four commentaries he wrote, those on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Proverbs, have been looked upon for centuries as the work of Ibn Ezra, appearing in all rabbinic Bibles under the latter's name. These have been successfully reclaimed for him. As grammarian he is important for his text-book on Hebrew grammar, a little volume which exerted a great influence even among non-Jewish scholars.

To evaluate Moses Kimchi as exegete and grammarian is the purpose of this thesis. Since the present thesis bases itself on the commentary on Proverbs, the case

(1) *ibid.*

I4

of the Ibn Ezra authorship is reviewed.

CHAPTER II

The Authorship of the Ibn Ezra to Proverbs.

Moses Kimchi's importance as a Bible exegete has been greatly enhanced by the discovery made by Jacob Reifmann and Gabriel Hirsh Lippmann that the commentary on Proverbs, passing in all rabbinical Bibles under the name of Ibn Ezra, is in reality the work of Moses Kimchi. This discovery was made by these two scholars independently, Reifmann announcing his find in the "Orient"⁽¹⁾ for November, 1841 and Lippmann in "Zion" for Iyar, 1842. Lippmann announcing his find after Reifmann had already published his, feels embarrassed, and writes: "I hope that you (the reader) will not suspect me of plagiarism, for I have discovered this after independent research. From one well and one fountain have we drawn the truth, and we both struck at the same mark. Let this be credited to both of us."⁽²⁾

The reasons for taking this commentary away from Ibn Ezra and giving it to Moses Kimchi are singularly convincing. There is ample evidence, both internal and external to the commentary, showing, first, that this commentary does not belong to Ibn Ezra, and, second, that it is from the pen of Moses Kimchi.

(1) This noted in "Zion" 1841, p. 76

(2) "Zion" 1842 p. 113.

The internal evidence may be grouped in two classes:

1) the lexicography and 2) the characteristic terms of the commentary. In both these respects it is decidedly contradictory to the genuine works of Ibn Ezra. (1)

Reifmann and Lippmann cite thirty-eight words which are explained in the Proverbs commentary and also in Ibn Ezra's genuine works. The explanations given by Ibn Ezra are in direct contradiction to the explanations in the commentary. Mainly, these differences are in grammatical analysis. (2)

(1) Lippmann p. 113

(2) I;4 *נ' צחות אות דל' דך ט"ו* cf. *נ"ו*

~~2,15~~

4,13 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Ps. 141,3

7,20 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Ps. 24,4

8,23 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibid. 2,6

8,24, *נ' צחות* cf. *נ"ו*

9,3 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Song of Songs I,10

11,26 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibid. Nu. 26,6 and *נ"ו*

9,5 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Ps. 22,8; 55,19

12,23 *נ' צחות* cf. *נ"ו*

14,14 *נ' צחות* cf. *נ"ו*

15,18 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Ps. 39,12

15,22 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Is. 56,2. Ps. 3,8

17,22 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibn Ezra to Hosea 5,13

20,25 *נ' צחות* cf. Ibid. to Job 6,3

- 26,18 שפת יומג ד'ס' פ"א cf. קמחלהלך
 26,28 ששה בורות כ"א ע"ד cf. ישמך דפיר
 28,1 ד'ט' cf. Ibn Ezra to Gen. 27,29
 28,18 ד'כ' cf. Ibid. Ecc. 10,18
 29,18 מאזנים ד' cf. מאשך הו
 30,17 ל'ק' cf. Ibn Ezra to Gen. 49,10
 30,31 צחות ז"ח ע"א cf. ג'ק'א
 31,3 שפת יתר מ"ה cf. מ'כ'ן

These references, as well as those to note (1) of the following page, are gathered from the articles by Lippmann and Reifmann in the "Orient" and "Zion", and are given here for the sake of completeness.

In thought too there is decided contradiction.

Moreover, the characteristic terms of the commentary

are unknown to Ibn Ezra, and the terms peculiar to
(2)
Ibn Ezra are not found in this commentary.

(1) 6,3 אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ cf. Ibn Ezra to Ps. 41,5

9,11 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibn Ezra to De. 34,6

10,8 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid to Hosea 4,14

13,11 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid to Gen. 30,30

14,13 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid Ps. 84,4

18,9 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibn Ezekiel 18,10

18,18 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid to Isaiah 41,21

23,5 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid Job 11,17

25,27 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ

26,2 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ In saying that names of birds

are not explainable, the writer contradicts

Ibn Ezra's effort in וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ to explain
the name of fowl given there.

29,11 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibn Ezra to Job 15,3

29,18 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibid Ex. 5,4

31,1 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ cf. Ibn Ezra to Is. 8,10

(2) These are given later in the present thesis.

The external evidence pointing to the non-Ibn Ezra authorship of the commentary is less formidable, but convincing, nevertheless. Commenting on Ruth 3,11 Ibn Ezra promises to explain the phrase *וְלִי אֶת* in his comment on Proverbs 31,10. But the explanation given here is in no way applicable to Ruth. Plainly, if we may expect consistency from Ibn Ezra, one of these explanations is not his.

Again, Ibn Ezra either introduces or concludes his biblical commentaries with an autobiographic poem as, for example, in the introduction to his commentary to the Pentateuch:

אֵלֶּה אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי אֵלֶּי
 וְהִי פֶתַח דְּבָרֶיךָ מֵאִיר לְעֵבֶדְךָ בֶּן עֲבֶדְךָ מֵאִיר
 וּמִיִּשׁוּעַת פֶּתַח תְּבַא עֲוֹנִי לֵבִן אֲמֹתְךָ הַנִּקְרָא בֶּן עֲוֹנִי

The same introduction is concluded with a longer poem in which the author's name is given in the acrostic. There is nothing of this in the Proverbs commentary.

Commenting on 30,6 "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar", the author of the commentary says that this is a warning against secular study - *נִכְזָר לְעֵבֶדְךָ עֵינֶיךָ לְחִכְמָה אֲחֵרָה*. Reifmann sees in this view support for the hypothesis that the commentary is not Ibn Ezra's.⁽¹⁾

(1) "Orient" 1841, p.750

Ibn Ezra had given himself too much to the sciences of his day to forward such a view.

The evidence presented thus far proves that the Proverbs commentary is not Ibn Ezra's, but it does not prove that Moses Kimchi wrote it. To prove the latter, Reifmann and Lippmann present a new set of facts.

David Kimchi in his **ס' השרשים** gives several explanations in the name of his brother. Under the root

שגה he writes: **נרד' אחי נרד' כמשה ז"ל פירושו**
דפירוש משנה (ה'ג) דצנין זה

This he repeats, explicitly in his brother's name, under the roots **שגח**, and **פתח**. The first two of these (1) explanations occur verbatim in the Proverbs commentary. (2) and the third varies slightly in phraseology but checks closely in thought. Moreover, David Kimchi explains many roots, which, tho not mentioning his brother's name, check closely in sense with the use of these words (3) in the commentary. Even some mistaken expositions in (4) the commentary are repeated in David's work.

(1) 5, 19 and 26, 10

(2) 24, 28

(3) Lippmann p. 186 writes: **אף אם הרד"ק כתב זאת פה דל' הזכרת שם אחי ז"ל אין טעמה כי כן נמצאו בשרשים פירושים רבים מפורש משלי של פנינו, דל' הזכרת שמו ודכך הרד"ק לעשות כן אם דעתו נוטה לדעת אחיו ולכן סתם דבריו**

(4) e.g. **לית** from **לית** (1:4)

Further evidence is found in that the commentary is strikingly similar, in points of grammar, exegesis, and peculiar expressions, to the commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah, which too are given in Rabbinic Bibles as Ibn Ezra's but the Moses Kimchi authorship of which has been established beyond the slightest doubt. (1)

Thus Lippmann writes: "The commentary on Proverbs suffered the same fate as did the commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah. The commentary on Proverbs was erroneously attributed to Ibn Ezra, and the same happened to the commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah in all the Rabbinic Bibles published so farAs to the real author of this commentary (Proverbs) we are absolutely certain. It is as clear as day-light that it is the renowned grammarian (2) Moses Kimchi."

(1) Lippmann "Eion" (1842) p. 171

(2) Ibid.

PART II

CHAPTER I

KIMCHI AS EXEGETEI. Point of View:

Moses Kimchi's point of view as exegete is that of a pious Jew looking for the natural meaning of the Bible text. He is not super-critical; neither is he ever credulous. He sees every difficulty and copes with it; but there is nothing of the professional critic in his interpretations. He is a rationalist in so far as to get at the specific meaning of the Scriptural text; but his rationalism, at no point, shows any tendency to broaden its historic limits. The *הנהגה במשנה מ'ס'ל* hypothesis is never doubted. Kimchi is a Peshatist, always searching for the simple, rational meaning of the text. There is not one midrash in his entire commentary on Proverbs. But there is nothing daring in his Peshat. He is simply a pious Jew seeking an honest, accurate understanding of the Scriptures.

Thus, in the phrase *הנהגה במשנה מ'ס'ל* (1) Kimchi sees (2) an exhortation to observe the *הנהגה*; in *הנהגה במשנה מ'ס'ל*

(1) 2,8

(2) 2,16

to rescue the traditional view by claiming that Lemuel
(1)
is another name for Solomon.

(2)

2. Theology and Philosophy.

The blending of Peshat and piety is best seen in Kimchi's interpretation of those words in Proverbs involving theologic or philosophic concepts. Here we see Kimchi's point of view best, for here he reflects clearest his religious temperament. We must be cautious, however, in arriving at conclusions regarding Kimchi's theologic, or philosophic ideas, because in his commentary on Proverbs he is primarily an exegete seeking the simple meaning of the text. The views he expresses are, therefore, the views he sees in the text. These he may or may not accept for himself. However, if a man's work reflects the man at all, from a purely psychologic standpoint, we may form some opinion of Kimchi's personal theology.

(1) דְּרָגָה לְחִימָל. דְּתַחֲלֵת הַסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה כִּי יִסְרוּ
אֲדֹנָי עַל הַחֲכָמָה וְעַל כָּאן שִׁינִיתָו אֱמֹל דֵּת שֶׁדֵּעַ
אֲחֵרוֹ מִיֵּת אֲדֹנָי. זֶמֶל הוּא שְׁלֵמָה וְיִתְכֵן שֶׁבְּרָא
כֵּן כִּי דִּמְיוֹ הִיָּה לָהֶם אֵל אֶחָד וְלֹא עֲדָדוֹ
פְּסוּלִים ה"כ נִקְרָא הַצֹּמֵד עַל כֵּסֶאן עֲמֵל אֵל.

(2) The line of demarcation between theology and philosophy among the rabbis generally, and similarly with Kimchi, is so vague that I thought it best to group theology and philosophy as one section.

Creation sprang into being ex nihilo. כבוד אל ה' ,
 he interprets: דבר כבודו דבור חכמה הנבראים יש מאין⁽¹⁾.
 The fortunes of man are determined by God. This Kimchi
 endorses emphatically. He accepts literally the state-
 ment, "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel
 against the Lord." No man, under any circumstances,
 can escape that. Poverty and riches come from God.
 Commenting on "the rich and the poor meet," Kimchi⁽²⁾
 expresses the view that men's fortunes are pre-destined.
 Nevertheless, free will is given man in a measure. Tho
 all his worldly possessions are pre-destined, his reputation⁽³⁾
 is not. This every man determines for himself. Nor
 is man's span of life pre-destined. He lives as long as
 his good deeds merit his existence.⁽⁴⁾ Kimchi's lack
 of daring and his piously contented outlook is thus
 strongly reflected in these passages referring to free
 will and fate.

(1) 25,2

(2) 22,2
 כ"ל ש העובות יורדות מן השמים על הארץ
 ודני אדם המקדלים נפגשו בהם כלומר שפגש דבר
 הנושר ודבר הישות וזה נעשה כלם ה' שהוא יתן
 הנושר והישות והוא נעשה הנשיר והדל

(3) Ibid: גדל שם טור איתנו פגז כי האדם קוהו לצצמן

(4) 10,27; II,4

דמנשיו קטנו דים

In those comments of Kimchi's dealing with reward and punishment, is again seen his ordinary, pious outlook, the same lack of uniqueness. Commit sin, and pain will come to you; abstain from sin, and God will heal you from all afflictions. God watches over the pious to that extent to which they adhere to His teachings. The merits of the father's bring benefit to the children.

Kimchi subscribes unqualifiedly to the statement that "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead." He supplements this expression with the remark: "The wicked are to be the atonement for the righteous." Similarly is a community rewarded and punished. If a slave becomes king and consequent distress comes to a people, it is because of that people's sins. The blasphemous generation is doomed to Sheol.

among interpretation that is
793 not 15783 of
per 21:18 + Kimchi's
comment there.
Interpretation usually
understood as a slave to become
king because of a people's
sin.

(1) 3,11

(2) 3,7 וְיָסֵר מִכָּדָשׁ מִחֲנֻשָּׁה הָרַע יֵאָזֵר יִפְאֹךְ הָשֵׁם מִכָּל מַחֲלָה

(3) 2,8 וְכִנֹּךְ חֲסִידָיו יִשְׁמַר הָשֵׁם כְּאִשֶּׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ הָאֲחֵינוּ
Again 12,14

(4) 11,21 וְהָיָה צַדִּיקִים. הֵם דְּבֵי הַצַּדִּיקִים שִׁמְלָטוּ מִצָּרָה דְּשִׁבּוֹל
אֲדֻתָם

(5) 11,8 וְהָיָה קָדָשׁ דְּצָרָה דְּכַדּוּרָא לְהוֹת כְּפָרוֹ

(6) 30,22 יִתֵּן מִלֵּךְ שֶׁהֵמְלִיכוֹ הָשֵׁם עֲלֵיהֶם דְּכַדּוּרָא חֲטָאֵם

(7) 30,16 שֶׁשִּׁשְׁלִיכֵי דִּי חֲדָדִיר הַמִּקְלָל וְיִמּוּתָּו דְּלֹא עָתִיד

The ethical element is not missing in his piety.

A **פִּדְיוֹן** is one who combines both **עבודת אלֹהים** and **כֶּסֶם מַעֲשֵׂי**
(1)
הַטוֹב.

Wisdom is the forerunner and the pre-requisite for
Creation. **כִּי דָבַר [חֲכָמָה] נִדְרָא יֵשׁ מִדְּלִי מֵה** (2) Again, *based on Prov. 8.22ff.*
on "by wisdom hath the Lord founded the earth," Kimchi
comments: **שֶׁדָּה נִדְרָא הַעוֹלָם הַצֵּלֶלֶן** (3) It is the root and
(4)
condition of all existence

The fear of God is the indispensable pre-requisite
for wisdom. This fear of God is realized through the
adherence to Torah. Thus, in "every word" of God is
pure, Kimchi sees an exhortation to observe the **מִצְוֹת**. (5)

This pious outlook is seen again in his treatment
of the anthropomorphic passages in the Bible. He meets
them with the traditional philosophy: **דָּדָה תוֹרָה כְּלָשׁוֹן דָּנִי אֲדָם** (6)

(1) I,3

(2) I,1

(3) 3,19; also 8,22: **כִּמְשִׁית כְּוֹנֶנֶתוֹ דְּדִיּוֹאֵה כְּמוֹ כִּי הוּא רִאשִׁית דְּרִכֵּי אֱלֹהִים**

(4) I,2 **תְּכַדִּיחֵהּ. וְהוּא שֶׁרֶשׁ הַכֶּלֶל**

(5) 30,5
**כֹּל אֲמִתּוֹת אֱלֹהִים צְרוּפָה. כִּעֲנֵן אֲמִתּוֹת ה' אֲמִתּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת
וְהֵם הַמִּצְוֹת הַצְּרוּפֹת כֻּלָּהֶם הַמְצִיּוֹק וְדָהֵם חֲכָמָה
יִכָּאֵת הַשֵּׁם וְאֵין לֹא הִתְעַסַּק בְּזוֹלָתָם**

(6) 22,12

We cannot assert that Moses Kimchi did or did not hold any of the above concepts. He states them in the course of an exposition of a biblical text, and not in any statement of his own personal views. But, on the basis of these passages, we may assert that he was a conservative, pious Jew and takes his stand as exegete as such. Had he cherished any philosophy or any theology which was not the ordinary and the conservative, he would undoubtedly have betrayed it somehow in his commentary. It must be noted, also, that he derives all these views without resorting consciously to midrash. Thus he acquires his chief characteristic as exegete; he combines piety and peshat.

3. Method

Moses Kimchi's style, as seen in his commentary on Proverbs, is extremely lucid. There is nothing of the involved and no trace of the laborious. His commentary on Proverbs reads as if it were written especially for inexperienced readers. Even in the exposition of difficult passages, ⁽¹⁾ Kimchi's style never loses its lucidity.

His procedure of explaining a biblical passage takes on one of three forms: one word explanations, or word by word expositions, or grouping several passages together and explaining them as a unit.

In the first of these methods Kimchi usually quotes the phrase he wishes to elucidate and then adds one word, which he states as the subject or the object of that passage. Thus to $\text{וְיָדָעְתָּ} \text{וְיָדָעְתָּ}$ he simply adds $\text{הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה}$ ⁽²⁾; to $\text{וְיָדָעְתָּ} \text{וְיָדָעְתָּ}$ he adds one word, הַדָּבָר ⁽³⁾, wishing to say by that that the subject of וְיָדָעְתָּ is $\text{הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוָה}$, and that the object of וְיָדָעְתָּ is הַדָּבָר . ⁽⁴⁾ More frequently the one word given in explanation defines a word in that text, as, e.g. וְיָדָעְתָּ ⁽⁵⁾; וְיָדָעְתָּ ⁽⁶⁾; וְיָדָעְתָּ ⁽⁷⁾.

You missed
together
comment's
Kimchi
+ Rashi
Rashi

(1) As, e.g. 8,31

(2) 3,2

(3) 6, 32

(4) Also, 2,14,15.; 3,6;;chapter 23, verses 23.24; 24,4;etc.

(5) 4,15

(6) 8,3

(7) 14,3 etc.etc.

Kimchi's second method is to take up each word of the Scriptural text separately and explain each in turn. These explanations take on the form of definition, or of correlation with what precedes or follows. ⁽¹⁾

Frequently, Kimchi will group together several verses and explain them as a whole. By joining several consecutive passages he gains a thought that explains the various verses which, singly, may be obscure. Kimchi will group together as many as five verses, and this he does repeatedly. ⁽²⁾ He will even join the last verse of a chapter with the opening verse of the subsequent chapter, thus interfering with the chapter arrangements. ⁽³⁾ Kimchi follows this method to such an extent that it is one of the chief characteristics of his commentaries.

Where the text may be understood in more than one way, Kimchi gives all possibilities. Usually he employs the expression א"ו marking the transition from one explanation to another. In the commentary on Proverbs this expression occurs sixty seven times-which is the finest tribute to Kimchi's open mindedness as exegete. ⁽⁴⁾

(1) 4,26,27 etc.

(2) 3, 11-12; 14, 12-13; 15-16; 18-19; 26-27;
15, 10-11; 22-23; 16, 18-19; 14, 20,21,22;
15, 13,14, 15; 27, 28, 29; 17, 3,4,5; 18, 4,5,6;
18, 10, 11, 12; 16, 1,2,3,4; 25, 8-13; 26, 23-28,etc.

(3) 14, 34&15,1; 16, 32,33 &17, 1

(4) 1,1,3; 2,17; 3, 3,27,34,35; 4,23; 5,6,14; 9,6,7;

(1)

To several verses he gives three possible meanings. Occasionally Kimchi will use the א"י in stating a second possible meaning, and the impression is left that he is in doubt as to its validity, tho he does not commit himself for it or against it.

3. Characteristic terms

Moses Kimchi's commentary is characterized by a number of expressions peculiar to it. They can not be looked upon as technical terms because they are not the accepted terms of the exegetes. They are expressions peculiar to Kimchi. They are: (1) פסוק Describing a distinct section or unit in the text

פסוק א	}	noting the beginning of a specific unit	(2)
פסוק אחר			
אחר פסוק	}	noting the conclusion of a specific unit	(3)
פסוק אחר			
2) א"י אחר		one word which stands for two	(4)

(Note 4 continued from preceding page)

(4) 10,4.6.9.10.17.20.23; 11,25.30; 12,17.18.21; 13,9.17;
14,4.9.14.32.33.34; 15,28; 16,25.27; 17,14.18.13;
19,13.18; 20,6.27; 21,12.23;

(1) 19,18; 30,32; etc.

(2) 1.1; 24,34; etc.

(3) 9.18

(4) 2.9

Ibn Ezra's term is חושך
(Is. 4.1) אחור אחר
 אחור
 אחור אחר

דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (1)

וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (2)

דְּשִׁכְתָּהּ וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (3)

(3) וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים referring to preceding verse and also the following.

(4) וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (5) this verse is part of the preceding verse.

(5) וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (6), the וְ indicates time.

(6) דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים two or more verses are interdependent: *rather belong together i.e. complete thought*

דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (7)

4. Sources: Moses Kimchi does not in any way, reveal his sources. He succeeds remarkably well in keeping us out of his study. He quotes no one, directly or indirectly. In only three passages in the entire commentary on Proverbs does he refer to the ש"ח (8).

(1) 28.17

(2) 13.1; 31.3.

Ibn Ezra's typical

(3) 12.24.30.1; 26.28; 28.21. etc.

(4) 26.8; 25.24; 26.18; 28.21. etc.

(5) 3.34; 13.19; 26.14. etc. Ibn Ezra usually uses the term:

וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים (Ps. 84:13)

(6) 8.27. Ibn Ezra's typical term is וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים or

וְיִחַד דְּחִקוּם שְׁנִים

(7) 12.2; 13.7; 14.12; 17.18.20.21. etc.

(8) 11.30; 21.24; 30.1.

Even in these passages to which he gives more than one explanation, he does not quote any one or refer to any one who advances one view or the other. For us, this is unfortunate, for in keeping us out of his study he keeps us also away from himself. If we knew the sources he utilized we might be able to determine the scholarly interests or the cultural tendencies of the man, and, possibly, something about his personal preferences. As it is, we are left outside the bolted door, totally in the dark as to the character of the man working within, and totally in the dark too as to the library at his disposal.

MOSES KIMCHI AS GRAMMARIAN

It is on Kimchi's grammatical works rather than on his exegetic that his fortunes in history rest. With his little manual of Hebrew grammar, the Mahalak, Kimchi reached a public far-flung in time as well as in geography. The Christian scholars of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are said to have been influenced by this compilation of the most essential rules governing the Hebrew language. The Mahalak gained its prestige not only because of its condensed, text-book character, but also for the reason that it was the only one of its kind in its time..It was the only little volume adapted for the uses of the Jewish layman and the Christian student of Hebrew.
(I)

We are interested in Kimchi's grammatical views which are explicitly stated in the commentary on Proverbs. The following pages, therefore, do not attempt a complete statement of Kimchi as grammarian. What is attempted in the subsequent paragraphs is to review the specific grammatical points Kimchi makes in the Proverbs commentary.

I. Roots.

In indicating the root of a word, Kimchi states another biblical word or phrase, introduced by *וְ*.

(I) Bacher, W. "Die hebraische Sprachwissenschaft"

meaning that the word in question comes from the same root as does the word referred to. Thus, for example, wishing to indicate the root of ⁽¹⁾קָדַחְתָּ, Kimchi says

That is, ⁽²⁾קָדַחְתָּ comes from the same root from which ⁽³⁾קָדַחְתָּ is derived. The root is קָדַח but Kimchi does not state it specifically. He

takes it for granted that the reader knows what he means.

Again, ⁽⁴⁾יָחַלְתָּ אֶת הַמִּצְוָה ⁽⁵⁾לִפְנֵי ה' (2)

Occasionally, but much less frequently, Kimchi will state the root itself, such as ⁽³⁾לָאָהָבָה ⁽⁴⁾מִן הָאֵל; ⁽⁵⁾הָיָה מִן הָאֵל;

⁽⁶⁾קָדַחְתָּ מִן הָאֵל. The latter example K. does not give root which is קָדַח but says it has rather meaning as קָדַח

To estimate the accuracy of Kimchi's derivations I took ten consecutive roots indications and compared them with the derivations given in Gesenius' Lexicon. All ten checked perfectly. In one instance Kimchi may

1) 4,15

2) 11,8; also: 2,7; 3,34; 4,8,9; 6,3; 8,25; 10,21 etc.

3) 12,21

4) 10,3

5) 11,26

- 6) 3,34 (יָחַל)
4,8 (יָחַל)
4,9 (יָחַל)
6,3 (יָחַל)
8,25 (יָחַל)
10,3 (יָחַל)
10,21 (יָחַל)
11,8 (יָחַל)
11,21 (יָחַל)
12,21 (יָחַל)

The checking should have been limited only to such roots whose 3 radicals do not always appear in the conjugations

if anyone says K. gave root קָדַח as קָדַח it does not check with dictionary.

Kimchi does not
in the passage
does that root is
פדפד is פדפ
פדפד in the text is
merely a glossing form
of פדפ

be thought to be careless. In 6,3 he traces פדפד to פדפ
through פדפד, not stating that פדפד is an Aramaic form.

Occasionally Kimchi blunders in establishing the root (I) of a form. On the whole, tho, he is altogether reliable. *you may say that when he says פדפד he means פדפד that פ is not part of root.*

2. Verbs

Kimchi is not given to technical terms. He used them sparingly. In the course of his verb exposition in the Proverbs commentary he employs four grammatical terms: פועל, פועל, פועל, פועל.

Under פועל he speaks of transitive verbs.

פועל is the expression for intransitive verbs.

This phrase he employs only twice. פועל is,

of course, the past tense, occurring twice in the commentary. (2)

The infinitive he expresses with the term פועל. This term too occurs only twice in the entire commentary. (3)

Not once does Kimchi give a full analysis of a verb.

In the above mentioned cases (and these references, plus 3,6; I,II; II,2; 29,25, are the only places where he speaks of verbs as such) he simply states one or the other

technical term. In stating this he follows one formula:

הדין. שם הפועל; והנה פועל פועל

פועל. Once he uses the term פועל. (4) *cf. also II 26*

(1) As, e.g., in I,2: פועל and פועל

(2) 26,22-- פועל פועל

24,4--- פועל פועל

8,8--- פועל פועל

13,21-- פועל פועל

21,11-- פועל פועל

21,4--- פועל פועל

3,23--- פועל פועל

(3) 6,8--- פועל פועל

20,27--- פועל פועל

(4) 19,11-- פועל פועל and 23,7 פועל פועל

(5) 14,8--- פועל פועל

1,3--- פועל פועל

(6) 3,6--- פועל פועל

After labeling the term he proceeds to express the meaning of the passage, without any attempt to complete the analysis of the verb.

3. Adjectives.

The term **שם תואר**, adjective, occurs in the commentary (1) seven times. **שם דבר**, substantive, occurs four times. (2)

In two instances Kimchi is not certain how to classify the word in question: (3)

עַד שֶׁיִּשְׁקֶה - נִדְּתָהּ וְהָיָה שֶׁשׁ דָּבָר וְיָחַד
נִתְּנָה שֶׁשׁ הַתּוֹאֵר כְּלוּמָר אִישׁ צִי שֶׁר

Again, **שֶׁר**. כמו נִתְּנָה אֲחֻרָּה וְהָיָה שֶׁשׁ דָּבָר אוֹ שֶׁשׁ תּוֹאֵר אוֹ שֶׁר (4)

In one instance Kimchi is not certain whether the word is an adjective or a verb. **מְדַרְךְ הַשֵּׁשׁ. וְהָיָה שֶׁשׁ הַתּוֹאֵר אוֹ שֶׁשׁ דָּבָר** (5)

It is characteristic of his temper as an exegete to state both possibilities. His formula in noting an adjective is the same as that in noting any other form: **שֶׁר. שֶׁשׁ תּוֹאֵר**;

מִתּוֹךְ. שֶׁשׁ תּוֹאֵר

Nowhere in the commentary does Kimchi describe the adjective, or tell anything of the form of this part of speech.

(1) I, I, 22; II, 26; 21, 16; 23, 30; 25, 18; 29, 11.

(2) II, 15; 13, 17; 25, 18; 29, 11.

(3) 25, 18

(4) 29, 11

(5) 21, 6

(6) 20.4

6. Lexicography.

Kimchi devotes a great deal of attention to lexicography. He never wearies of defining words. At times he defines words so common in the Bible that one wonders why he does it. He defines such simple words, and words which are of no consequence from any intellectual standpoint, such as *וְיָדָהּ, וְיָדָהּ, וְיָדָהּ, וְיָדָהּ, וְיָדָהּ*. In his definitions he is extremely accurate. To gauge his accuracy, I took thirty five consecutive definitions of words ⁽¹⁾ and compared them with the definitions given in Gesenius's Lexicon. Every one of these thirty five checked exactly. One of these is a mooted term *וְיָדָהּ* ⁽²⁾, and in this case, too, Kimchi and Gesenius give the same explanation.

This not only testifies to Kimchi's accuracy, but it testifies also to the indebtedness of the modern lexicographers to the Medieval Jewish scholars.

(1) 2, 12, 15; 3, 10, 13, 33.; 4, 15; 5, 15; 6, 3, 27, 27, 32;

7, 4, 6, 18, 20; 8, 3, 6, 9, 27, 28, 33, 35; 9, 2, 3; 10, 8, 15.

13, 3; 14, 3, 16, 14; 17, 14; 21, 13; 22, 5, 10; 25, 14; 26, 3.

(2) 7, 20

7. Parallel Structure and Conditional Sentences.

Kimchi recognizes parallel structure. His term for it is **כפוף חזק**. Thus he notes that in 8,34 **וְשִׁמְרוּ אֶתְמוֹתָם מִיָּדָיו** repeats the thought expressed by the preceding clause: **וְשִׁמְרוּ**

(I) **וְשִׁמְרוּ אֶתְמוֹתָם מִיָּדָיו**. In explaining Proverbs chapter 2, Kimchi shows his understanding of the conditional structure. The chapter consists of a protasis, verse 1-4, followed by a two-fold apodosis, marked in both instances by **וְאִם** viz. one in verse 5 and the other in verse 9, each followed by reflections confirming or illustrating the statement. Kimchi, tho not carrying it through to its final point, recognizes this structure. His comments on this chapter harmonize well with its structure.

In one instance Kimchi explains a dagesh. In **וְשִׁמְרוּ** he says, the dagesh in the **ש** is to compensate the loss of the **ש** in the third radical (correctly deriving **וְשִׁמְרוּ** from **שָׁמַר**).

(I) See also 8,36; 9,7

CONCLUSION

Moses Kimchi has been unfortunate in history. For over seven hundred years has he been denied the credit which was due him as author of three commentaries. Kimchi could not afford to lose the credit for these writings, just as Ibn Ezra, to whom they were credited, did not need them to perpetuate his name in history. Further, of Kimchi's commentary on Job only a few fragments have come down to us. These commentaries, ^{even} if rightly attributed to him, would not have placed him among the giants in Israel. They do not reflect any unique powers. They are creditable works; they reflect an honest and accurately informed mind, but they show nothing unique and no suggestion of the original. Thus, tho they would not have secured for their author a place among those in the first rank in Jewish learning, they surely would have won for him an honored place behind those in the front ranks. As it is, Moses Kimchi holds his place in history primarily as the author of the compact little. *7572*

As Exegete he is only referred to as having made some attempts in this branch of literature. Thus Bacher, tho fully aware of Kimchi's authorship of the so-called "Ibn Ezra" on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Proverbs, dismisses him as exegete with one sentence. ⁽¹⁾ Even in history, it seems, first impressions are of extreme importance. ^P Moses Kimchi was further unfortunate in that he was the son of a famous father and an even more famous younger brother. Between the two, Moses has been overlooked

(1) Geschichte der Rabbinischen Literatur, ed. by Winter and Wünsche.

unduly. Moreover, he is too neat a Peshatist. He adheres too closely to his text, for his own popularity in history. He makes no midrashic digressions, as does Rashi; he indulges in no polemics; he supports no one by name, and attacks no one. He is scrupulously a Peshatist and does not deviate from the text under any circumstances. To-day, we would gladly excuse him from practicing his virtues if he would only commit a few sins and make some digressions.

Moses Kimchi's importance as exegete must be given more emphasis than it has received till now. True enough, he blazed no new trails. There is nothing of the pioneer in his exegesis; but he followed diligently behind the plow of the pioneers in Peshat and, piously, removed the stones and broke the clods preparing the field for the harvest -- at least for a harvest that might have been.

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