

INSTRUCTIONS TO LIBRARY

Statement
by Referee

The Senior Thesis of Stanley J. Garfein

Entitled: "The Philosophical Position of David Kimchi"

- 1) May (with revisions) be considered for publication () (✓)
yes no
- 2) May be circulated () () () (✓)
to faculty to students to alumni no restriction
- 3) May be consulted in Library only () ()
by faculty by students
() (✓)
by alumni no restriction

June 15, 1966
(date)

A. J. Reines
(signature of referee)

Statement
by Author

I hereby give permission to the Library to circulate my thesis
(✓) ()
yes no

The Library may sell positive microfilm copies of my thesis

(✓) ()
yes no

March 6, 1964
(date)

Stanley J. Garfein
(signature of author)

Library
Record

The above-named thesis was microfilmed on

July 22, 1964
(date)

For the Library

Anoisa Steiner
(signature of staff member)

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHIC COMMENTARIES OF DAVID KIMCHI

by

Stanley J. Garfein

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1964

Referee, Prof. Alvin J. Reines

DIGEST

The purpose of this thesis was to probe the philosophical position of Rabbi David Kimchi (RaDaK).

Kimchi, whose family traced its roots to Spain, lived in Narbonne, on the southern French seacoast, during the approximate dates of 1160 - 1232. He was one of those Sephardic Jews who were transmitters of Judaeo-Arabic science from Islam to Christendom. In his old age he was active in the defense of the Maimunist writings during the Maimunist-anti-Maimunist controversy.

Kimchi's works include a grammar, a lexicon, and several Bible commentaries. Of his commentaries, he makes a distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric. The former is intended for the masses; the latter is intended for the intellectual elite. The exoteric commentaries are concerned with the conveying of a grammatically correct and rational understanding of the text. Although RaDaK's philosophical position undergirds his exoteric commentaries, there are few sections in them in which he presents to any extent his philosophical position. In his esoteric commentaries on the "Maaseh Ha-Merkavah" and on Gen. 2.7-5.1, he devotes almost all of his comments to the exposition of his philosophical position. Even so, he presents his position in verse-by-verse commentary form, rather than in a systematic

fashion. He left the work of systematizing to the reader. After systematizing, it becomes clear that David Kimchi's philosophical position follows closely that of Maimonides.

The Introduction of the thesis includes commentaries on RaDaK's basic philosophic commentaries. RaDaK's Introduction to the Prophets is a key to the understanding of the function of RaDaK's commentaries. RaDaK considered his commentaries as guides to the correct interpretation of Scripture. The diligent student of Scripture was to begin his studies with the aid of the exoteric commentaries, and then to deepen his understanding with the aid of the esoteric commentaries. In this way, he would acquire the correct interpretation which was the philosophic interpretation. Indeed, Kimchi points the diligent student on to the study of other philosophic texts, especially those of Maimonides. That the esoteric commentaries were intended for the more sophisticated student is a point that seems not to have been grasped by any of the authors of the secondary sources in Kimchi. Moreover, the secondary sources fail to stress the importance of the esoteric commentaries. Yet how can they not be crucial, since they contain RaDaK's guide to man's only way of transcending death?

The esoteric commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-Merkavah" deals with the system of spheres and Intelligences that are emanated from God and through whom general Providence is effected.

The esoteric commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1 deals with the possibility of living under the aegis of individual Providence, and the way that is open for the man who so wants to live.

The remainder of the thesis includes tentative translations of RaDaK's Introduction to the Prophets, commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah," and commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1.

TO DR. ALVIN J. REINES - -

ירדתי למרכבה
נכנסתי לפרדס
והוא חזיריך
אותי.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Chapter I: Toward a Translation of the Introduction of RaDaK to His Commentary on the Prophets	19
Chapter II: Toward a Translation of RaDaK's Esoteric Commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah"	26
Chapter III: Toward a Translation of RaDaK's Esoteric Commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1	59
Footnotes	86
Bibliography	90

THE BASIC PHILOSOPHIC COMMENTARIES OF DAVID KIMCHI

Introduction

Rabbi David Kimchi (RaDaK) was born c. 1160 and died c. 1232.¹ He lived at Narbonne,² which is on the Mediterranean seacoast of southern France. The Kimchi family had come to France after having fled the persecutions of the Almohades in Spain. The Kimchis, along with other Spanish Jews, made of southern France a bridge for the transmission of Judaeo-Arabic science from Islamic Spain to Christian Europe. Southern France was also the center of the Maimunist controversy, which took place shortly after the death of Maimonides in 1204. Samuel ben Judah Ibn-Tibbon, translator of Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed and friend of David Kimchi, lived in Lunel, which is sixty-five miles east of Narbonne. In Montpellier, which is fifteen miles west of Lunel, lived Rabbi Solomon ben Abraham, who denounced the Maimunist writings as heretical to Dominican inquisitors, who subsequently burned publicly the Maimunist writings. David Kimchi himself participated in the controversy by defending Maimonides through appearance in various communities and through correspondence with one of the leading anti-Maimunists, Judah bar Joseph Ibn-Alfachar of Toledo.

David Kimchi is known to posterity by his grammatical, lexicographical and exegetical works. Geiger compiled a

probable list of these works and their order of composition.³

That list is as follows:

1. Ha-michlol (grammar and dictionary)
2. Commentary on Chronicles
3. Commentary on Psalms
4. Commentary on Prophets
5. Commentary on Genesis.

Graetz dismisses Kimchi's work by saying, "David Kimchi did not establish one original point of view."⁴ Geiger is more temperate in stating that Kimchi's originality lay in his skill in writing well.⁵ RaDaK himself does not claim to be an innovator.

The Lord has stirred my spirit and strengthened my heart to write a book concisely. I come thus like the gleaner after the reaper, following in the footsteps of my predecessors, but abridging their material.⁶

Moreover, RaDaK usually cites the sources of his ideas. Geiger compiled a list of these sources.⁷

The secondary sources on RaDaK usually mention to some extent the philosophical bent of his commentaries.⁸ There is little, however, in the secondary sources that gives the student information on the content of Kimchi's philosophical position. It is our intention here to probe the subject of David Kimchi's philosophical position.

In beginning, what better introduction can there be be-

side an introduction by Kimchi? We are referring to his Introduction to the Prophets,⁹ which offers clues for the understanding of the function of his commentaries in the light of his philosophical position.

RaDaK's Introduction to the Prophets is an exposition of Ps. 111.10:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all they that do thereafter;
His praise endureth forever.

FEAR OF THE LORD refers to the study of the written Torah, the commandments, the words of the prophets, and the tradition of the sages in the oral Torah. WISDOM refers to the study of philosophy. A GOOD UNDERSTANDING means correct speculation, and there is Providential care for anyone who exerts himself to study both the FEAR OF THE LORD and WISDOM, for he who only studies the FEAR OF THE LORD is not a whole man.

Nevertheless, THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. One should study Torah, derive his metaphysical principles from that discipline, and then study philosophy. Otherwise, if he studies philosophy first, he is liable to become confused and deny the signs and wonders of Scripture.

It would appear that Kimchi is advocating Fundamentalism here, but this is not the case. If one is not to deny the signs and wonders of Scripture, he nevertheless is not to accept them literally.¹⁰ RaDaK's commentary serves as a guide to the correct understanding of Scripture. This must

precede the study of philosophy.

Therefore, I, the youthful David . . . have seen fit to write a Scriptural commentary, according to that which I've studied and received (from tradition), and which the power of my thought has achieved, in which with me has been the Lord . . .

I shall write on the verses that are in need of commentary. I shall make mention of the words that are in need of special attention. . .

. . .

Indeed, when one gives precedence to the study of the Torah . . . and sets his mind to believe all that is written in it and in all of Holy Scripture, and when he does research in them, he will find in them the ways of philosophy. . .¹¹

According to Graetz, " (RaDaK) preserved in Jewish circles a faint recollection of a simple, sober, literal exegesis in opposition to the extravagant, Agadic, pseudo-philosophical method of exposition."¹² Indeed, although Kimchi states in his Introduction that he will mention in his commentary various interpretations of the Rabbinic Aggadah and of the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, he does not mention such interpretations uncritically.¹³ Also, although he himself was a Talmudist,¹⁴ he did not share with his contemporary Talmudists their disdain for grammatical investigations.¹⁵ Nevertheless, despite these considerations, it is not necessarily the case that Kimchi's goal was simply literal exegesis, as Graetz states. How are we to account for the extravagant, philosophical, allegorical commentaries of RaDaK? How are we to account for his dependence upon Maimonides and other

Jewish philosophers,¹⁶ whose opinions he cites in his commentaries and usually accepts, even though he makes no mention of his reliance upon them in his Introduction?

In order to account for these phenomena, mention must be made of RaDaK's distinction between two types of commentaries, the exoteric and the esoteric, a distinction that was common among his contemporaries.¹⁷

. . . both interpretations are true, but the exoteric is for the masses, while the esoteric is for those few who are the elite of the masses.¹⁸

RaDaK seems to indicate that there are two levels of truth: truth that is sufficient for the comprehension of the masses; and truth that is precise for the keener comprehension of the intellectual elite. Kimchi wrote exoteric commentaries for Chronicles, Psalms, the Prophets, and Genesis. He wrote esoteric commentaries on Gen. 2.7-5.1 and the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah" of Ezekiel. The exoteric commentary at times alludes to a fuller statement of the philosophical position that is expressed in the esoteric commentary.¹⁹ Evidently, the student was to proceed by studying the exoteric commentary and then the esoteric commentary, thereby making FEAR OF THE LORD THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM. This would seem to be one of RaDaK's reasons for beginning his commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah" with the rabbinic statement: "One should not study the Merkavah alone, unless he is a sage and understands (it) on his own." In other words, the study of the

Merkavah is not for the untutored beginner.

In short, Kimchi wrote commentaries which would enable the student to proceed step-by-step in what Kimchi considered to be the proper understanding of Scripture. After having studied the commentaries, the student would know the approach well enough to be able to apply it to sections of the Bible on which RaDaK had not written his commentaries.²⁰ Thus, the goal of Bible study for Kimchi was an esoteric understanding of the Bible. This certainly was not what Graetz meant by the "literal exegesis." It remains to be seen whether David Kimchi thought that his esoteric understanding was what the Bible really meant to convey, or whether Kimchi was simply using the Bible to further his conception of the truth. The question of communal power was also involved, for he was a Talmud teacher by profession²¹ and a community leader.²² His open denial of the truth of the literal meaning of the Bible would probably have cost him his position.²³ But then, one might ask, if Kimchi was merely being cynical, why did he take such pains with grammar and lexicography? Was it because he was dealing with scholars and had to make his case appear more convincing? These questions must be posed, but they cannot be answered on the basis of existing evidence.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM: A GOOD UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY THAT DO THEREAFTER. At the

outset Kimchi defines GOOD UNDERSTANDING as correct speculation which results in Providential care. But what is he to do with HAVE ALL THEY THAT DO THEREAFTER? I.e., if correct speculation results in Providential care, what is to be done with a Scriptural text that stresses the importance of doing? Kimchi brings in at this point a long string of rabbinic statements that stress the moral supremacy of action over study. Having "proved" that action is more important than study, he enumerates two kinds of action. One kind applies to all men; the other kind applies to scholars. The former includes the observance of commandments and the ways of morality. The latter includes the recording of the sciences, interpretation of the Torah and commandments, and the writing of them in a book for posterity. Let us note that the former kind seems to apply to what we usually mean by "action," whereas the latter kind applies to what we usually mean by "study."

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM; A GOOD UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY THAT DO THEREAFTER; HIS PRAISE ENDURETH FOREVER. Kimchi interprets HIS PRAISE ENDURETH FOREVER as referring to the fruits of engaging in the two kinds of action during one's lifetime.

This may be interpreted in terms of the first kind of action, for when one does righteousness and keeps the Torah and the commandments and engages in the study of philosophy, his praise endures in the mouth of men for several generations, and his soul also exists forever in the world to come. This may be

interpreted in terms of the second kind of action, for when one writes books, his praise endures forever (in the minds of) those who read these books and study them. . . . They have a good reward in their toil and their righteousness endures forever.

Note how Kimchi has extended the first kind of action to include the study of philosophy! The first kind of action includes also what we would usually call "study." The fruits of performing this kind of action are immortality of the soul and historical immortality. Historical immortality is also the reward for the second kind of action. RaDaK has cleverly twisted the verse from Psalms to fit an approach in which study is superior to action. Kimchi, it would seem, is alluding to the Aristotelian distinction between and evaluation of the moral and intellectual virtues. This point becomes clear in the esoteric commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1. Thus, we see the importance of his esoteric commentaries, for they convey his philosophical position, and it is through the conceptualization of this philosophy that one's soul lives eternally. For this reason, Kimchi's extravagant, allegorical, esoteric commentaries would seem to be most crucial in the study of the sophisticated student.

Let us now probe the philosophical position of RaDaK as expressed in his esoteric commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah." Then we shall probe his esoteric commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1.

RaDaK's Commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-Merkavah"

The Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages considered the revelations of the prophets to be constitutive of knowledge.²⁴ One's ability to receive a revelation depended upon the degree to which his intellect and imagination were actualized.²⁵ Moses' intellect was most actualized among the prophets, with the result that God spoke directly to him, whereas the other prophets received their revelations from the Active intellect.²⁶ Among the other prophets there were also differences in the degrees of actualization. Thus, the revelations of Isaiah and Ezekiel of the Divine Throne (Isa. 6, Ezek. 1, 10) were both concerned with the subject of Providence. But Isaiah's prophetic faculty was more highly developed than was that of Ezekiel, for Isaiah's vision was less dependent upon illustration by means of sensible objects.²⁷ Ezekiel's vision of the Divine Throne is called "Masseh Ha-merkavah" (The Chariotwork). In this vision there was revealed the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord sitting on His throne above the firmament. The firmament itself was borne by four living beings (Ezek. 1) or by four cherubim (Ezek. 10). Each had four faces, four wings, a straight foot, and a wheel. It was because the vision depicted a sort of Divine Chariot that it received its name "Maaseh Ha-merkavah."

Following the philosophical Jewish tradition,²⁸ RaDaK

assumed that the vision of Ezek. 1 corresponded only symbolically to the external world. RaDaK's commentary was an extended analogy that compared The Chariot to the workings of general Providence. Of course, RaDaK would have us consider his commentary to be the explanation of the prophet's vision, rather than the drawing of an analogy. The vision in all its detail was thought to signify truths. Much of the detail was to be taken figuratively; some of the detail was to be taken literally;²⁹ all of the detail conveyed truths.

Structurally, the Divine Chariot represented both the macrocosm and the microcosm, for both are built on various combinations of four, as is the chariot itself.³⁰ For example, the sublunar world has four species: mineral, vegetable, animal and rational;³¹ man's bodily guides are four: the nutrition, the perception, the imagination, and the appetite.³² Another example of this dual representation occurs in the verse, THEIR APPEARANCE WAS LIKE COALS OF FIRE (Ezek. 1.13). In the governance of the macrocosm, the fire is compared to the great luminary; in the governance of the microcosm, the fire is compared to natural heat.³³

The beings in the vision of the Divine Chariot represent the various beings who are responsible for the governance and perpetuation of the macrocosm and the microcosm.

The rider of the chariot is God.³⁴ The throne is a

figure signifying that God exists, and that His existence is identical with His essence.³⁵ God is the First Cause, for from Him are emanated the spheres and the Intelligences.³⁶ He is also the Unmoved Mover.³⁷ Man does not perceive God's essence, but only His effects in the world.³⁸

The living beings or cherubim signify the Intelligences.³⁹ They are incorporeal and therefore are non-spatial and not subject to the category of quantity.⁴⁰ They have will and free choice to the extent that these have been emanated unto them.⁴¹

The wheels of the chariot signify the spheres.⁴² Evidently, the uppermost sphere is an emanation from God.⁴³ This sphere emanates an Intelligence which emanates a sphere and so on to the last Intelligence which is the Active Intellect, whose sphere is the sublunar world.⁴⁴ Each sphere has a soul which moves it.⁴⁵ The uppermost sphere is moved by the love of its soul for God.⁴⁶ The other spheres are rotated in similar fashion by the gazing of their respective souls on their respective Intelligences. Thus we see how God and the Intelligences are movers without being moved themselves. They induce motion in the spheres by being objects of love. The spheres are corporeal, being composed of quintessence.⁴⁷ They cannot be seen, because of their great distance away from the earth.⁴⁸

WHEN THE LIVING CREATURES WERE LIFTED UP . . . THE

WHEELS WERE LIFTED UP (Ezek. 1.19). This is a figure for the cause of natural evils such as tidal waves, torrential rains, and earthquakes, for what seems to have occurred is that Providence has been suspended and the earth left to chance.⁴⁹ But this is the nature of the general type of Providence, which serves to perpetuate the whole, but does not extend necessarily to concrete individuals, either in the macrocosm or in the microcosm.⁵⁰

Is there individual Providence? RaDaK asserts that there is individual Providence for man when the "higher portion" rules over him.⁵¹ This type of Providence, called "miraculous Providence" by RaDaK, is also symbolized by the Divine Chariot, whose departure from the Temple signified the withdrawal of individual Providence, because of the evil deeds of Israel.⁵² Kimchi treats individual Providence more extensively in his esoteric commentary in Genesis 2.7-5.1.

This has been a summary of much that was repetitious, disorganized, extravagant and unclear in the commentary of RaDaK on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah."

RaDaK's Commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1

Ezekiel's vision was constitutive of our knowledge of general Providence. Gen. 2.7-5.1 was constitutive of our knowledge of individual Providence. This section of Genesis, which deals with the creation of man, is part of the revelation which Moses received. Prior to the chronicle of man's creation, Moses' revelation informs us of the creatio ex nihilo of the universe.⁵³

At the time of the creation of the Intelligences by God (ex nihilo through emanation),⁵⁴ THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN (Gen. 2.8). Eden is a figure signifying the Active Intellect, to whom God gave the faculty of bestowing forms upon sublunar creatures, each according to its function in the sublunar world.⁵⁵

According to the esoteric meaning of Gen. 2.7-5.1, "man" refers to the species Man, rather than to the individual named Adam.⁵⁶ The human species is the principal being of the Garden, which is the sublunar world,⁵⁷ for Man is composed of the pure matter of the sublunar world and a potential intellect, which was bestowed upon him by the Active Intellect.⁵⁸ Because of his intellect, man is distinguished from all other sublunar creatures.⁵⁹ This intellect is emanated unto him by the Active Intellect; it flows to the heart of Man, and then it becomes four cavities of the brain, in which cavities reside three faculties: perception, dis-

crimination, and memory.⁶⁰

WITH THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD (Gen. 2.9). In Man's heart there are two faculties. The TREE OF LIFE signifies the human intellect; The TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD signifies the material intellect, which is derived from the human intellect.⁶¹ The human intellect is good when it is engaged in the study of metaphysics.⁶² The material intellect is good when it is engaged in the study of mathematics and physics, which are as ladders leading upward to the study of metaphysics, or when it is engaged in the arts for the sake of the life of the body, or when it is engaged in the appetites for the purpose of producing offspring.⁶³

The material intellect is bad when it engages in pleasures which exceed what is necessary for the perpetuation of the species and the preservation of the bodily existence of the individual.⁶⁴

THE LORD GOD TOOK THE MAN AND PLACED HIM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN (Gen. 2.15). What is indicated here is not movement in space but movement from potential to actual intellect. GOD TOOK refers to the help given by the Active Intellect in the process of actualization of the intellect. But the actualization requires more than the help of the Active Intellect. It requires individual study and self-exertion of the human intellect.⁶⁵

THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF THE LORD GOD MOVING ABOUT IN THE GARDEN AT THE BREEZY TIME OF THE DAY (Gen. 3.8). God refers to the human intellect that acts as an authority that warns and cries out to Man concerning God's will for Man.⁶⁶ But Man has free choice whether or not to accept that will. If he acts in accordance with the will of God, he will "eat of the fruit of the tree of life" by actualizing his human intellect, thereby making it immortal by cleaving to the Active Intellect.⁶⁷ The alternative to this is death of the intellect along with death of the material body. This is the meaning of "expulsion from the Garden of Eden," for Man is expelled when he eats not of the tree of life.⁶⁸

Our speculation concerning RaDaK's position on the moral and intellectual virtues is confirmed in this commentary. The moral virtues were necessary but not sufficient for the attainment of an immortal intellect. The whole man -- the fully actualized individual -- was distinguished by intellectual virtues as well as by moral virtues.⁶⁹ It is clear that the regimen that RaDaK was suggesting would and could be taken on only by the select few, and that the fewest of the few would live in Eden.⁷⁰ Nor was long life an indication that one possessed an immortal intellect.⁷¹ On the other hand, one's intellect could become immortal even within the lifetime of the body, as RaDaK states in

his poem in the introduction to the commentary on Isaiah:

"Though alive, their soul departs their body."

Just as Kimchi makes allegorical use of "Adam," "Eden," and "Garden," so he makes allegorical use of the other characters of Gen. 2.7-5.1. Thus "Eve" becomes the name for the material intellect of Man.⁷² "The Serpent" becomes the impulse in Man which entices him to partake of bodily pleasures in excess of what is required for the perpetuation of the species and the preservation of the individual.⁷³ "Cain," "Abel," and "Seth" were allegorized respectively both as Man The Farmer, Man The Merchant, and True Man, and as Man in Boyhood, Man in Young Manhood, and Man in Adulthood.⁷⁴

In this commentary, it is clear what Kimchi held concerning the question of individual Providence. In order to live under the aegis of individual Providence, one would have to: 1) create for himself an environment - around and within himself - in which the intellectual virtues could be pursued; 2) pursue the intellectual virtues, which would bring about the actualization of his intellect and the transcendence of death.⁷⁵ "Actualization" meant the individual's conceptualization of what was known at the time of a modified version of the Aristotelian sciences.

When the hylic intellect creates a concept it becomes to that extent an acquired intellect; for the intellect is nothing else than the aggregate of its conceptions . . . This acquired intellect holds the same relation to the human

being as God to the Universe; they are transcendent. It is also called "emanated" . . . , because all knowledge is an emanation from the Active Intellect . . . (Israel Efros, Philosophical Terms in the Moreh Nebukim, p. 114)

Thus, immortality for Kimchi meant an intellectual transcendence, but not a personal transcendence. For matter, the principle of individuation, died with the body.

In conclusion, one sees how closely David Kimchi followed the philosophical position of Maimonides. In RaDaK's system, the intellectual virtues are ultimately decisive in determining man's destiny as a rational being. For this reason, the esoteric commentaries, which are RaDaK's philosophic commentaries, constitute the most crucial guidance that he would offer to the student of the Bible.

Chapter I: Toward a Translation of the Introduction of RaDaK to His Commentary on the Prophets

This chapter consists of a tentative translation of RaDaK's Introduction to his Commentary on the Prophets. Three consecutive dots (. . .) mark the omission of passages considered by the translator to be non-essential in respect to the expression of the philosophic position of the commentator. Such omissions include Midrashic and Targumic passages and passages that seemed to be unclear in meaning. The numbers 10-40 refer to lines in the Hebrew text on page 2^a of the Pessel Balaban edition.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all they that do thereafter;
His praise endureth for ever (Ps. 111.10)

King David, may he rest in peace, said: One who would prepare himself to study wisdom should first engage in the fear of the Lord and derive from that (regimen) fundamental and derivative principles, and then all of its ways will be conducted with wisdom. That which David teaches accords with what our rabbis of blessed memory asserted: "One whose fear of his sinning takes precedence of wisdom, his wisdom will not endure." (Avot III)

FEAR OF THE LORD includes the written Torah, the commandments, words of the prophets, and the tradition of the sages in the oral Torah.

WISDOM is the wisdom of philosophy, and if one studies philosophy first, his mind will become confused and he will presumptuously deny the great signs and wonders that are mentioned in Holy Scripture, for they are matters which that wisdom does not include.

Indeed, when one gives precedence to the study of the Torah, which is FEAR OF THE LORD, and sets his mind to believe all that is written in it and in all of Holy Scripture, and when he does research in them, he will find in them the ways of philosophy, as it is written, "For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" (Dt. 4.6)

For there is no need to say (in Dt. 4.6) of the Torah and the commandment that they are built upon a way of the intellect. But also the statutes are built on the way of the intellect. Of the statutes, it is said that they have no

10

meaning. In truth, it is (the case) that they have no apparent meaning to most human beings. But the wise person who does research in them will find their meaning clear and explained; and after the wise person who understands the way of the Torah has done research, he will make (Torah) a foundation for wisdom and he will endeavor in his mind to make intelligible the things that are unintelligible.

Then, when he studies the wisdom of philosophy afterward, his mind will not be confused when he studies the wisdom in the Torah, which he had studied first, for he's already fastened it (his mind) as a peg in a sure place (Isa. 22.23), that he may draw the ways of wisdom unto it with all his

power and ability, so that his reward will be complete.
(Ruth 2.12).

It is written, A GOOD UNDERSTANDING HAVE ALL THEY THAT DO THEREAFTER. The meaning of A GOOD UNDERSTANDING is "good speculation," and there is Providential care for anyone who exerts himself to study both the FEAR OF THE LORD and WISDOM, for he who only studies the FEAR OF THE LORD is not a whole man.

Or perhaps the meaning of A GOOD UNDERSTANDING is "success," as it is written, "David had great success in all his way (I Sam. 18.14)."^m That is to say, that the one who engages in (FEAR OF THE LORD and WISDOM) will prosper in this world and in the world to come.

Our rabbis of blessed memory said that the fact that "all they that study thereafter" is not written, but rather, ALL THEY THAT DO THEREAFTER (is written), teaches that actions are more important. Even though they said also that study is more important, when study leads one to actions, they only stressed study because study leads one to actions, and there is no integrity of actions without study, as they said, "A man void of intelligence cannot be sensitive to sin, nor can an ignorant person be pious (Avot II)."^m

But certainly, actions are more important, as it is written, "that you may learn them, and observe to do them (Dt. 5.1)," -- study that you may do!

Our rabbis of blessed memory said, "Whoever has works has learning; whoever lacks works lacks learning." Moreover, they said, "Whoever says, 'I have only Torah,' has no Torah," meaning, I have no involvement in the doing of commandments beside reading the Torah -- he hasn't even the reward of reading the Torah, as it is said, "that you may learn them, and observe to do them."

They also said, "everyone who engages in study of the Torah only is as one who has no God," as it is said, "without the true God, . . . and without Torah (II Chron. 15.3)."

The meaning of this is that study without works is not something that helps. Instead, it hurts and injures oneself and (others) beside oneself.

Our sages of blessed memory likened (one who occupies himself in) study without works to someone who builds a house and does not build doors for it, for certainly that house will be abandoned and deserted like the wilderness. Some of them likened him to someone who does not have a house and builds doors for a house, in which case doors are a disadvantageous encumbrance.

Our sages of blessed memory said that wisdom without works is (a cause of) criticism by the Creator of his creatures. They said that one whose words are unlike his deeds shames himself.

Since we have established that action constitutes the highest good, let us say that action consists of two kinds, and each one of them (has) a large account page (on which are reckoned actions performed) for man's reward in this world and in the world to come. One kind includes the performance of commandments and their observance, and

30

the ways of morality. One finds through (performance of them) good favor in the eyes of God and man. The second kind includes the recording of the sciences, interpretation of the Torah and commandments, and the writing of them in a book in order that they may be extant for many years. For had not the ancient sages written down their words, already the sciences would have been lost, artifices would have been destroyed, and the Torah and commandments would have ceased to exist. But the sages and masters of the Torah, by writing their words and comments, left a blessing after them, and certainly these sages did not die.

Our rabbis of blessed memory said, "The righteous, even when dead, are called alive." They also said that Moses our teacher is not dead. The One Whose Name is Praised said:

Go, write it before them on a tablet,
And inscribe it in a book,
That it may be for the time to come
For ever and ever. (Isa. 30.8)

Therefore, King David, may he rest in peace, concluded the verse which we quoted at the outset (Ps. 111.10): HIS

PRAISE ENDURETH FOREVER. This may be interpreted in terms of the first kind of action, for when one does righteousness and keeps the Torah and the commandments and engages in the study of wisdom, his praise endures in the mouth of men for several generations, and his soul also exists forever in the world to come. This may be interpreted in terms of the second kind of action, for when one writes books, his praise endures forever (in the minds of) those who read these books and study them. Therefore the sages are called "masters of collections (Eccl. 12.11)," because they collect their own words and the words of others beside themselves into a book which will forever be for them a watch and a memorial. They have a good reward in their toil

40

and their righteousness endures forever.

Therefore, I the youthful David b. R. Joseph Kimchi of blessed memory, have seen fit to write a Scriptural commentary, according to that which I've studied and received (from tradition), and which the power of my thought has achieved, in which with me has been the Lord, to Whom praises are due. I ask for help to begin and to finish, for He is the Helper and the Support, praised be His name.

I shall write on the verses that are in need of commentary. I shall make mention of the words that are in need of special attention.

In some places, I shall mention the translation of Jonathan b. Uzziel, in which are good and pleasing interpretations.

Also, I shall mention the words of our rabbis, of blessed memory, in the places where we need their interpretation and their tradition. I would also mention anyhow some of the Midrashic interpretations for those who like the Midrash.

I now begin, with the help of the One who teaches man knowledge.

Chapter II: Toward a Translation of RaDaK's Esoteric
Commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah"

This chapter consists of a tentative translation of RaDaK's commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah." Three consecutive dots (. . .) mark the omission of passages considered by the translator to be non-essential in respect to the expression of the philosophical position of the commentator. Such omissions include Midrashic and Targumic passages and passages that seemed to be unclear in meaning. The numbers 78^b - 80^a refer to the pages of the Pardes edition of the Mikraot Gedolot on Ezekiel. The numbers in parentheses that follow the page numbers refer to ten sections into which the translator divided the commentary for the purpose of convenience in comparing the Hebrew text with the translation. (1) is the first column on 78^b. (2) is the second column on 78^b. (3) is the first 51 lines of 79^a. (4) is the balance of the first column of 79^a. (5) is the first 51 lines of the second column of 79^a. (6) is the balance of the second column of 79^a. (7) is the first 51 lines of 79^b. (8) is the balance of the first column of 79^b. (9) is the first 51 lines of the second column of 79^b. (10) is the remainder on 79^b and 80^a.

78^b (1)

The chariot that is seen in the prophet's prophetic vision is so-called because it appeared to him in the likeness of the chariot with four living beings and four wheels. The chariot that is made for the chariot of human beings has four living beings. As it is written: AND A CHARIOT CAME UP AND WENT OUT OF EGYPT . . . (I Kings 10.29). Our rabbis of blessed memory called this vision a chariot when they said, "One should not study The Chariot alone, unless he is a sage and understands (it) on his own." No chariot is without a rider, therefore God revealed to the prophet the likeness of a chair as a vision above the chariot. AND THERE WAS A LIKENESS LIKE THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN UPON IT

(Ezek. 1.26). The chariot is a symbol of movement, and He revealed to the prophet in the prophetic vision that the Glory of the Lord was moving from the Temple, and the prophet also saw and understood that as in the vision of the chariot, God cares for the created beings, understands their actions, and acts with them in accord with His will just as the rider understands the action of his chariot and drives it and does with it as is His will. All this God revealed to him to make known to him that His presence was moving from its place, because of the bad deeds of Israel. And similarly he saw in this prophetic vision the chariot by itself in the return of the Glory of the Lord to the Temple in the future in the days of the Messiah, as is written at the end of the book.

Scripture calls the team of the chariot "living beings," because the four of them in the vision were of the animal species and not of the vegetable or mineral species, but one cannot specify for the living beings a name since they are composite in their likeness and in their appearance, therefore Scripture calls them "living beings," a generic name including them all. And that which he saw as the likeness of living beings is due to the fact that the principal amount of the Providence of the Rider and His Providential Care is over the human species by means of the living beings. And that which he saw as four faces unto every one of the living beings is due to the fact that the animal species is divided

into four classes according to their species. And Scripture mentions the chief of every one of them. For the lion is king of the wild beasts. The ox is king of the domesticated animals. The vulture is king of the fowl. But man is king over all of them. Therefore, he saw the living beings in the likeness of a man. He saw the honored side of the directions, which is the eastern side. He saw in front of (that side) the face of a man . . . since the creation of man was in the East. The honored and strongest of the living beings after (man) is the lion, therefore he saw the face (of a lion) on the right side. And he saw the face of an ox which is less honored and strong than (the lion) on the left side, because most settlement is in the north, the reason being that crops (are produced) by the strength of the ox. To the south is the lion, for there is the major segment of wild life. (Isa. 30.6) He saw the face of the vulture on the west side opposite the face of the man which faces eastward, because the fowl have an advantage over the rest of the animals, in (their ability to) fly over the face of the firmament of heaven, and moreover because its creation was from the sea which is related to the West (Dt. 3.27). The faces are the significant characteristic in what is created and the principle (mark of) recognition, therefore he saw the variety of faces. There was no mention of the fish in this, because they are not like man (who is an inhabitant)

of dry land, and moreover, the fowl which Scripture mentioned have in them a portion of the water (Gen. 1.20).

And there is Providence of the Rider over all the animal species, or (perhaps) we should say that there is no Providence except over man because of the higher portion due to which he is man. (Perhaps) we should say that the four faces are (potentially) upon man. THEY HAD THE LIKENESS OF A MAN (Ezek. 1.5). Man, when the higher portion rules over him, has the countenance of a man...There is such that prides himself in his strength and does not make use of (his strength) in intellectual activities, but rather in animal-like activities, therefore he has the countenance of a lion. There is such that prides himself in his wealth, in animal-like enjoyments. He has the countenance of an ox. For wealth comes to a man to increase crops, and most crops (are produced) by means of the power of an ox. There is such that has neither strength nor wealth, but runs after worldly pleasures, snatching and eating "as a vulture that swoopeth on the prey. (Job 9.26). He has the countenance of a vulture. All this (i.e. the various countenances) the Rider saw fit "to give to an individual according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17.10).

78^b (2)

The wings of the living beings . . . hasten the movement.
He revealed to him that the matter of Providence over the

individual comes to him from God by means of the living beings quickly without hinderance, according to what he is. (At the time of) the abandonment of Providence He will also hasten the movement. And the wings which covered teach that the subject of Providence is largely hidden, because of the difference of the matter of Providence over human beings, still more the rest of the living beings of whom it is doubtful whether there is Providence over them or not.

The living beings signify the Intelligences, therefore he saw that their appearance was as the likeness of a man. (Ezek. 1.5), since he has in him a portion from (the Intelligences), and by means of (them) there is Providence from God over the rest of the created things.

The wheels signify the spheres. . . (Isa. 28.27, Ezek. 14.25, Isa. 5.28).

As the animals which are (attached to) a chariot move the wheels of the chariot and rotate them, so the holy living beings move the wheels, for THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS (Ezek. 1.20). This refers to the soul of the wheel that is emanated from the living being. Therefore (Scripture) says, THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS, -- in the wheels and not in the living being -- for the living beings are not like bodies.

Although the living beings have no actual movement, the prophet saw the vision in the form of sensible objects, like

every vision of prophecy. (RaDaK cites various examples which are to be explained as visions perceived by the senses: Gen. 18.8, Josh. 5.13, Ezek. 40.3). Every mover among sensible objects itself moves at the time of its moving something else, and everything that moves itself has a mover, therefore WHEN THEY WENT, THEY WENT TOWARD THEIR FOUR SIDES (Ezek. 1.17), and because their actions are proportionate to their movement, he saw that THEY HAD THE HANDS OF A MAN UNDER THEIR WINGS (Ezek. 1.8), and the hands are as causes of the action.

Since we have explained the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah" in general, we shall (now) interpret it specifically, verse after verse, with the help of the One Who Teaches Man Knowledge.

AND I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD, A STORMY WIND CAME OUT OF THE NORTH (Ezek. 1.4). AND I LOOKED refers to that which he saw in a vision of the exile and spoilation of the land. STORMY WIND and NORTH refer to the fact that from the north came the calamity unto them (Jer. 1.14), for Babylon is north of Israel. This (also) refers to the governance of the world, which is a hidden and mysterious matter, concerning which the heart of man storms.

. . .

A GREAT CLOUD WITH A FIRE FLASHING UP (Ezek. 1.4). This refers to the exile, for it is a great cloud and a great

darkness. It (also) refers to the governance of the world, for the cloud and the first are subject to various changes. Similarly, in the governance of the world there are matters that hide this for the opinions of most human beings.

Moreover, they may be compared to the cold and the heat which are (means of) the preservation of the sublunar world.

WITH A FIRE FLASHING UP is like "fire flashing up amidst the hail" (Ex. 9.24), one of the acts causing amazement.

SO THAT A BRIGHTNESS WAS ROUND ABOUT IT (Ezek. 1.4).
(A brightness was round about) the cloud and the fire also. For as one were they revealed to him mixing one with the other . . . and it refers to the exile, meaning that they went out from light to darkness, but were destined to go out from darkness to light.

SO THAT A BRIGHTNESS WAS ROUND ABOUT IT. The darkness and the confusion were within. Concerning Providence, whoever goes around the confusion and the perplexity and the contradictions and will constantly encircle that matter (Providence) in his mind, it will be clarified and he will go out from perplexity and there will be a brightness for him without darkness or contradictions. Concerning the matter of perception, there is limited perception as in those things which are round about it, and they are the Intelligences. This is the meaning of BRIGHTNESS. But to perceive His essence is as one who enters darkness and mist.

AND OUT OF THE MIDST THEREOF AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM,
OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE FIRE (Ezek. 1.4). OUT OF THE MIDST
of the storm, because his heart stormed and was dismayed con-
cerning the vision.

I saw AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM. The electrum is the
purest of the fire which (the fire) empties out of the smoke
. . . This is the meaning of OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE FIRE.
Similarly, in the

79^a (3)

Similarly, in the third vision, (Ezek. 8.2), it says,
AND FROM HIS LOINS AND UPWARD, AS THE APPEARANCE OF BRIGHT-
NESS, AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM, and Scripture compared the
rider with it (the color of electrum). That which Scripture
mentioned AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM is what Scripture men-
tioned below (Ezek. 1.27): AND I SAW AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM.
(Scripture) mentioned (the electrum) at the beginning and at
the end. At the beginning (Scripture) mentioned it generally
and opened for us two doors. It mentioned the electrum first
because it is first and uppermost over all in rank and in
virtue. It mentioned it at the end because it is the last
and end in study and perception.

Concerning His existence, Scripture likened Him figura-
tively to the color of electrum. But concerning man's per-
ception of him, "He made darkness His hiding place" (Ps.
18.12). "The people stood afar off; but Moses drew near
unto the thick darkness where God was" (Exod. 20.18). "And

Moses alone shall come near unto the Lord; but they shall not come near.^m (Exod. 24.2)

. . .

THE LIKENESS OF FOUR LIVING CREATURES (Ezek. 1.5). We have already interpreted (this verse) (78^b). Moreover, (we may interpret the verse) according to another meaning inasmuch as they were a figure for the governance of the macrocosm and the microcosm. And they (are constructed) upon (a combination) of fours. Therefore he saw four living beings, four wheels, four faces, and four wings. Everything is four because from the living beings and the wheels comes governance over four divisions with four principles each of which the sublunar world is created. The (sublunar) world has four species: animal, mineral, vegetable, and rational. The great luminaries are guides of the sublunar world in four ways, for the sun in its circuit passes through four seasons of the year. Similarly, the moon (passes) through four phases during the month. Also, the day is divided into four periods in accord with four principles. Also, the animals and plants could be classified? according to fours. All of this is the governance of the sublunar world. And the rider in this chariot is the Active Intellect. Similarly, the governance of the microcosm follows upon four. For the guides of the body of man are four: the nutrition, the perception, the imagination, and the appetite. The nutrition

is divided into four faculties: the attraction, the retention, the digestion, and the repulsion, with their four qualities: warm, cold, dry, and wet. Moreover, there are four humours by which the body is sustained. They are blood, phlegm, black bile and red bile. Similarly, there are four kinds of investigation: that it is, what it is, how it is, and why it is. . . .

AND THIS WAS THEIR APPEARANCE: THEY HAD THE LIKENESS OF A MAN (Ezek. 1.5). THEIR APPEARANCE means the appearance of their form and their character, not eyes (e.g.), but the likeness of eyes. Moreover, it says that (their appearance) WAS LIKE COALS OF FIRE. (Ezek. 1.13).

THE LIKENESS OF A MAN in their body and in their clothes and in their faces with respect to one side. . .

AND THEIR FEET WERE STRAIGHT FEET (Ezek. 1.7). Their feet are compared to the wheels, for they go about by the power of the living creatures just as the feet walk by the power of the body.

. . .

STRAIGHT . . . for the wheels are equitable and upright

. . .

AND THE SOLE OF THEIR FEET WAS LIKE THE SOLE OF A CALF'S FOOT (Ezek. 1.7). (Although the foot described in the visions is an ox's foot) it says "calf" and not ox for homonymity in the word "round." And a round head there was to a throne of

square figures and not round figures. And the wheels are round and their orbit is the orbit of the rotation, a conjoined motion. The movement of the wheels is from East to West and from West to East.

AND THEY SPARKLED LIKE THE COLOR OF BURNISHED BRASS (Ezek. 1.7). It does not say concerning the feet that their color is LIKE THE COLOR OF BURNISHED BRASS, for THEIR COLOR IS LIKE THE COLOR OF BERYL. But concerning the sparkling it says, LIKE THE COLOR OF BURNISHED BRASS. And so do they sparkle. Because of the magnitude of their distance, (the sparkling) is not seen thus to perceive. Also one may interpret the sparkling as concerning the living beings themselves. That is to say that he saw their color like the COLOR OF BURNISHED BRASS and sparkling like it, and thus he saw an angel.

.

THEIR WINGS WERE JOINED ONE TO ANOTHER (Ezek. 1.9). . . . he understood from this that their work is not distributed in such a way that some work in one part of the world and others work in another part of the world. Each is joined to the other in their work.

THEY TURNED NOT WHEN THEY WENT: THEY WENT EVERY ONE STRAIGHT FORWARD (Ezek. 1.9). In the change of their work from one type of work to another, there is no hinderance nor turning of faces, because in every place were they equal, for they are non-spatial.

79^a (4)

AS FOR THE LIKENESS OF THEIR FACES, THEY HAD THE FACE OF A MAN (Ezek. 1.10). (This refers to) their principal faces, for the rest of the faces are metaphorical of the matter that is requited through them.

.

I, in the interpretation of Isaiah, tread the way of the great sage, our Rabbi Moses b. Maimon, of blessed memory, that the living beings are not seraphim. The seraphim have six wings and the living beings have four wings. But why does another idea now appear plausible to him? I.e., that the living beings are seraphim?

79^a (5)

One needs to give reason why Isaiah saw six and Ezekiel four. And Ezekiel saw four faces to each living being, but Isaiah did not see other faces. Ezekiel stated the number of living beings, and Isaiah did not state the number of seraphim. For every (difference) one needs to give a reason. Shall we say that the visions of Isaiah and the visions of Ezekiel are similar in (that they are concerned with) one subject, and one must understand from every one of the visions the subject of Providential care and His Providence for creatures. And God did not reveal to Isaiah the form of the Divine chariot, which is built in various combinations of the number four. Because the chariot is a symbol of

movement, as we have interpreted, and in the days of Isaiah it was not yet the time of the movement of the Glory from the Temple. And it was like one who thinks to travel but does not yet travel. But in the days of Ezekiel, it traveled. And Ezekiel's prophetic faculty was not as developed as Isaiah's, therefore God revealed to him the subject of Providential care more explicitly with four living beings, four wheels, four faces, four wings, as we have interpreted, for by the number four is explained more of the subject of Providential care among the sublunar creatures, according to the number of four, as we have interpreted.

Concerning the six wings that Isaiah saw, two covered the face, two covered the legs, and two were used for flying. For the speculation of Isaiah was more fine in them than was that of Ezekiel. And Isaiah understood the signification of the wings to be the Intelligences, and that they are emanated from the Creator, and that is a matter fine and esoteric, therefore Scripture said, "With two he covered his face." He understood the signification of the legs to be the things for which the Intelligence is a cause. For the Intelligences are hidden and concealed from the perception of them. Therefore Scripture said, "With two he covered his feet. But Ezekiel was in the presence of the likeness of sublunar things that do not have so much concealment of the mystery in them. And so, he saw of the

legs that they were a figure for the movement of the constellations, for the matter of their movement is not a matter hidden and esoteric. But that (which is) their essence, which is (that of) Intelligences, is difficult to perceive. For this reason, Scripture said, AND TWO COVERED THEIR BODIES (Ezek. 1.23). And moreover, (it is) because the subject of Providence is hidden, as we have written.

And Isaiah did not see the number of the seraphim, because in their essence they have no number, for what is material does not fall under the category of quantity, but rather the category of relation. . . . And Ezekiel did not perceive of them a number in their essence, but rather in their effects. . . .

AND THEY WENT EVERY ONE STRAIGHT FORWARD (Ezek. 1.12). Already this matter was mentioned above (Ezek. 1.9). Scripture did not repeat the verse here except to introduce in it a new matter, namely: WHITHER THE SPIRIT WAS TO GO, THEY WENT (Ezek. 1.12). The interpretation of SPIRIT is desire and will. . . . And the matter that Scripture introduced is that the living creatures have will and free choice to the extent that it has been emanated unto them from the governance, as the Moreh Tzedek (Maimonides) has interpreted in chapter seven of part two. And the Scriptural proof in this is what the angel said to Lot, "For I cannot do anything . . . "(Gen. 19.22). "See, I have accepted thee concerning

this thing also . . . " (Gen. 19.21).

Behold, I send an angel before thee . . . Take heed of him, and hearken unto his voice; be not rebellious against him; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in him (Exod. 23.20, 21).

.

FIRE (Ezek. 1.13). Concerning the matter of the governance of the macrocosm, the fire is compared to the great luminary; and for the matter of the governance of the microcosm, the fire is compared to the natural heat. . . .

AND THE LIVING BEINGS RAN AND RETURNED AS THE APPEARANCE OF A FLASH OF LIGHTNING (Ezek. 1.14). . . . the living beings act upon the beings that are beneath them in rank grade after grade without hinderance. And the return is (similar to the case where) a master sends his servants to do a task and afterward they return to him to hearken to what else he will command them. But in the Divine mission of the living beings, they are not like this, for the return is easy, like the return of the flash of lightning -- easy and more so to the point where one cannot imagine it -- rather because he could not find a resemblance more appropriate than this. But of them in truth there is neither return nor running, for they are not bodies. Rather he made a comparison with the appearance of their activity in terms of material bodies, as is revealed in every revelation of prophecies. . . .

79^a (6)

NOW AS I BEHELD THE LIVING BEINGS, BEHOLD ONE WHEEL AT THE BOTTOM HARD BY THE LIVING BEINGS, AT THE FOUR FACES THEREOF (Ezek. 1.15). AT THE BOTTOM. Its interpretation is "below, in a sublunar place in the earth." . . . To one living being and its four faces, there was but one wheel . . . The Wheel that was with the living being did not incline to one side of the faces more than to another side, but to its four faces it was equal. . . . He understood from this that the governance of the living beings over the world is through the means of the wheels equal unto the four faces, as we have interpreted them. But Providence is not equal unto them. And in his statement, BEHOLD ONE WHEEL, Scripture did not say "the likeness of a wheel" as it said "the likeness of four living creatures," to make known that the former are bodies and the latter are not bodies.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE WHEELS AND THEIR WORK WAS LIKE UNTO THE COLOR OF A BERYL . . . (Ezek. 1.16). Scripture said as a metaphor (that) the appearance was like the color of a beryl, and likewise as a metaphor (that) their work was like the beryl. For they take on work and effect. As is seen on its front, in like manner is it seen from behind. And this is generally its merit. And to it happens that the front is worked. For the luminaries which are upon the uppermost sphere are seen from below the lowest sphere.

AND THEY FOUR HAD ONE LIKENESS: AND THEIR APPEARANCE
AND THEIR WORK WAS AS IT WERE A WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL.

(Ezek. 1.16). Scripture again makes known the appearance and the work in one statement, which is that their spheres were seen (and they) had within them (other spheres). And the uppermost sets in motion the spheres that are within them. AS IT WERE A WHEEL WITHIN A WHEEL. For the ninth sphere, which is the uppermost, sets in motion with itself that which is within it.

. . . AND THEY FOUR HAD THEIR RINGS FULL OF EYES ROUND ABOUT (Ezek. 1.18). The eyes are a figure for the luminaries.

79^b (7)

AND WHEN THE LIVING BEINGS WENT, THE WHEELS WENT HARD BY THEM (Ezek. 1.19) . . . for the moving of the wheels that is seen is dependent upon the moving of the living creatures . . .

AND WHEN THE LIVING BEINGS WERE LIFTED UP FROM THE BOTTOM, THE WHEELS WERE LIFTED UP (Ezek. 1.19). The matter of the lifting up of the living creatures and the wheels from the bottom is a figure for that which happens in the sublunar world. For when things break out of order and governance, (it is) as though there is neither guide nor keeper, as if they are things left to chance. (Examples of) this include when a torrential rain comes, and washes away seeds, pasture, grasslands, even fruit trees with the rest of the trees,

until from want men, cattle, and wild animals die. Similarly, (this is the case) generally with snow, hail, strong winds, thunder, lightning, and bad odors. Or the occurrence of causes that are destructive and annihilate one or several lands, or the sinking of land and hurricanes, earthquakes, and tidal waves, as Moreh Tzedek (Maimonides) mentioned in chapter seventy-two of part one of the treatise, Moreh Nevuchim.

Although all this is according to His governance, since most of His governance is perpetuation of becoming and of being, something, when it is upset, makes it seem as though is the microcosm . . . (Ps. 79.2). And all this makes it seem like the departure of the order of governance, as if the guides and the guardians were lifted up from the earth and all that is in it and left them abandoned.

WHITHERSOEVER THE SPIRIT WAS TO GO, AS THE SPIRIT WAS TO GO THITHER, SO THEY WENT (Ezek. 1.20). We have already interpreted that the meaning of SPIRIT is "will." And (Scripture) interpreted the intention in this, and added more and said, AS THE SPIRIT WAS TO GO THITHER. This refers to the will of the wheels. Scripture added more and said, AND THE WHEELS WERE LIFTED UP BESIDE THEM (Ezek. 1.20), to give the reason why were the wheels lifted UP beside the living beings, Scripture interpreted the reason and said, FOR THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS (Ezek.

1.20). And we have already interpreted this.

WHEN THOSE WENT, THESE WENT, AND WHEN THOSE STOOD, THESE STOOD. (Ezek. 1.21). The going is a figure for the governance and the standing is likewise a figure, for there is neither standing nor pause for the wheels, for throughout all eternity they revolve without standing and without pause, but the standing is like, "Above Him stood the seraphim" (Isa. 6.2). And all the host of heaven stand above Him. And that has the meaning of "service." (Cf. also) "And he stood by them under the tree." (Gen. 18.8). And the work and the service before God is to gain knowledge in Him whose name is exalted and praised, and in His word.

WHEN THOSE STOOD, THESE STOOD, because the Intelligence comes to the wheels from the living beings.

Although he saw the going and the standing and the lifting up, it was sensed by way of metaphor. And He revealed it to him thus that he might understand from what is sensed what is meant metaphorically. And in this verse He introduced the idea of standing, and the rest is repetition to emphasize the matter, concerning all Scripture said about the will of the living being in the wheels.

AND OVER THE HEADS OF THE LIVING BEINGS THERE WAS THE LIKENESS OF A FIRMAMENT. . . (Ezek. 1.22). This is as if it said, "And the likeness of a firmament was over the head of the living being. LIVING BEING is a collective for

LIVING BEINGS, as in THE WILL OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS. And this firmament is not a body, but the prophet saw it as a sensible object, in order that he might understand from it the meaning of all of them. Nor was there in anything that was revealed a material thing, except for the wheels, therefore (of the wheels) he did not say of them "likeness" but simply "wheel." And the firmament is the bright light of the intellect that covers over all, for its name is as the name of its master, that is stretched forth over the heads of the living beings. And that is what is written of it, that we read concerning the second day, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it divide the waters from the waters." (Let it divide) between a form that has an attachment with the body and between a form that has not an attachment with the body. And it's possible that with it is a family of thousands and ten thousands.

TERRIBLE (Ezek. 1.22). - In its going and in its splendor.

. . .

AND UNDER THE FIRMAMENT WERE THEIR WINGS CONFORMABLE THE ONE TO THE OTHER . . . (Ezek. 1.23) "Conformable" means "straight." For when the wings were outstretched, they were straight. And when they were conjoined one to another, EACH HAD TWO WHICH COVERED, (thus Scripture) said, for every one of them had two more wings. Beside the straight wings which

were used for flying, there were two more wings that covered. And what is the (implication of) EACH ONE OF THEM HAD TWO WHICH COVERED THEIR BODIES? (Ezek. 1.23) Even though this matter has already been mentioned, Scripture repeated it again to make known that what is in them is emanated unto them from the firmament that is stretched over their heads.

I HEARD THE NOISE OF THEIR WINGS (Ezek. 1.24). He understood from this that the wheels in their revolving give forth loud noises and he related this to the living beings just as he related to them movement, even though they have no actual movement. But because as an effect of their power they revolve, he relates to them the movement of the wheels. And the noise of the wheels he also heard, as it is said, AND THE NOISE OF THE WHEELS BESIDE THEM (Ezek. 3.13). But Scripture repeated here the matter and related the noise to the living beings alone, for they were the source.

WHEN THEY STOOD, THEY LET DOWN THEIR WINGS. (Ezek. 1.24). He understood from the standing the service and the work, as was said.

79^b (8)

And it was revealed that the revolving and the movement refer to the matter of governance, but in their essence while serving:

The heavens declare the glory of God . . .

There is no speech, there are no words,
Neither is their voice heard. (Ps. 19.2,4)

How much the more the living beings who are above (the heavens).
And this is (the meaning of) the letting down of the wings,
for they make noise like the almighty noise, which means
strong and powerful . . . or which refers to (a noise) of
God who is called "Almighty." And similarly, in the third
vision, AS THE VOICE OF GOD ALMIGHTY WHEN HE SPEAKETH (Ezek.
10.5).

(Kimchi then cites: Dt. 5.19, where God's voice is
heard only within the Israelite camp; Ezek. 10.5, where
God's revelation is heard only within the Temple precincts.
Even though God's voice is loud, it is restrained.) Thus,
every voice of prophecy is only heard by one who is
specially prepared for it.

. . .

He heard the NOISE OF TUMULT (Ezek. 1.24), which informed
him that the chariot was departing from the Temple, for the
noise of the wings of the living beings is a figure for the
departing. For the fowl, when it makes ready to fly, flut-
ters its wings. Similarly, the wheels give forth noise in
their moving.

FOR, WHEN THERE WAS A VOICE ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT THAT
WAS OVER THEIR HEADS . . . (Ezek. 1.25). Scripture said
THERE WAS A VOICE not "like the noise," as when Scripture

(described the) noise of their wings. Rather, from above the firmament that was over their heads there would come the voice. He understood from this that although the firmament was stretched forth over their heads above, it was not that which commanded them and made its voice heard to them concerning their activities. Rather (it was) from above the firmament. That was the same voice (that was heard) from the cherub (Ezek. 10.5 f). And the voice and the speech are meant to be allegorical.

The Lord hath established His throne in the heavens;
 And His kingdom ruleth over all.
 Bless the Lord, ye angels of His,
 Ye mighty in strength, that fulfill His word,
 Harkening unto the voice of His word. (Ps. 103,19 f.)

For the firmament, even though it is their cause, is itself caused. And behold, the voice that goes forth from above the firmament is as the Lord who commands His servants who are standing over Him. And He raises unto them (His) voice and speaks and they listen and keep quiet in order to hear the voice of His speaking. This is the meaning of AS THEY STOOD, THEY LET DOWN THEIR WINGS (Ezek. 1.25). For the servants who are standing by have neither voice nor speech, but rather the hearkening and the receiving (of commands). And there is also a hint in Scripture's saying vayehi, WHEN THERE WAS, that there was one time when to a specially prepared) man the voice went forth to him from above the firmament without intermediary, as it is said,

"And he heard the voice speaking to him (Num. 7.89)."^m Face to face the Lord spoke with Moses. But to the rest of the prophets, the voice came from the last Intelligence, which is the Active Intellect. . . .

AND ABOVE THE FIRMAMENT THAT WAS OVER THEIR HEADS WAS THE LIKENESS OF A THRONE (Ezek. 1.26). Scripture indicated that yet another being was above (the firmament). And he saw the likeness of a throne upon it, for He does not sit except upon a throne. And that which was a likeness had as its appearance the appearance of a sapphire stone, which is bright and shining. AND UPON THE LIKENESS OF THE THRONE WAS A LIKENESS AS THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN UPON IT ABOVE (Ezek. 1.26). And He either sits or rides, for at times Scripture will describe Him as a Rider, in respect to the matter of The Chariot, in His ruling over it as a rider over his chariot. At times Scripture will describe Him as king sitting on a Throne. And it teaches by the word "sitting" also the confirmation of His existence. And the throne is not a thing outside of His essence, for above the firmament there is no other Intelligence but the Rider. And the throne teaches His quantity, His elevation, and His greatness, as interpreted R. Moreh Tzedek on Exod. 17.16, in chapter nine of part one of the honored treatise, the Moreh Nevuchim. For as the king, when he sits among his officers, is aware of whoever does not know him by that

one's sitting upon a chair higher than (those of) his officers. For the greatness of This One who sits and His wisdom teaches concerning Him that He is and exists (as) cause of all, Blest be His name. And the sensible form that is honored most among sensible forms is the form of man. Therefore, he saw a likeness as the appearance of man. And because actually the Rider has no likeness equivalent in the imagination, Scripture said, A LIKENESS AS THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN, to keep corporeality divorced (from the God concept). . . .

79^b (9)

AND I SAW AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM (Ezek. 1.27). This that was as the appearance of a man, I saw its color (to be) AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM, AS THE APPEARANCE OF FIRE ROUND ABOUT ENCLOSING IT (Ezek. 1.27). ENCLOSING IT is interpreted in the same way as OUT OF THE MIDST THEREOF (Ezek. 1.4). As it is said above, OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE FIRE and that is the finest of the fire, as we have interpreted (B. 24). And the thick fire is about it, and the fine fire is in its midst. And he saw of Him two visions: AS THE COLOR OF ELECTRUM, FROM THE APPEARANCE OF HIS LOINS AND UPWARD; AND FROM THE APPEARANCE OF HIS LOINS AND DOWNWARD, AS THE APPEARANCE OF FIRE, AND THERE WAS BRIGHTNESS ROUND ABOUT HIM. (Ezek. 1.27) And the fine fire cannot be seen because of its excessive fineness. And this section is a figure similar

in signification to the verse: "And thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen (Exod. 33.23)." And the honored portion in man is from the appearance of his loins and upward, for in that portion are the form of the face, the instruments of action, and the organs of breathing, by which a man becomes wise. This means that The Chariot will acquire from the Rider something of His essence, when the Rider is upon it. But the essence of the Rider, and He as He is in Himself, which are (symbolized by) the face, The Chariot will not actually perceive, as it is said, "For man shall not see Me and live (Exod. 33.20)." LIVE refers (to the fact that) even the holy living beings do not see Him. And this is the meaning of THERE WAS BRIGHTNESS ROUND ABOUT HIM. (This is) the perception that the holy living beings perceive and the firmament that is above their head.

.

AS THE APPEARANCE OF THE BOW (Ezek. 1.28). There are four (aspects of the bow), namely, the closest to my eyes was the mixed appearance, and next to it was the green, and next to it was the saffron, and it was below them all and was on the side of its hollow. Therefore He saw the appearance of the bow with the signification of four which goes throughout the matter of The Chariot for the reason that we mentioned. And it is an appearance that no man rules over, for it does not shine. And it is a figure for the percep-

tion that we mentioned, that there is BRIGHTNESS ROUND ABOUT.

THIS WAS THE APPEARANCE OF THE LIKENSS OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD (Ezek. 1.28), which is to say what The Chariot will perceive of the glory of the Lord.

AND WHEN I SAW IT, I FELL ON MY FACE, AND I HEARD A VOICE OF ONE THAT SPOKE (Ezek. 1.28). I saw all of the vision that is mentioned from its beginning unto its end. And I fell on my face, for my heart was dismayed concerning the vision. While I was still on my face, I heard the VOICE OF ONE WHO SPOKE TO ME. And this was an angel who was speaking with him. And what the great sage, the RaMBaM, of blessed memory, wrote concerning the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah" is known from his book for those who understand it.

.

NOW THE CHERUBIM STOOD ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE TEMPLE (Ezek. 10.3). God revealed to the prophet the cherubim on the right side of the Temple. Since he had shown him the abominations that they were doing in the north of the Temple. He revealed to him the cherubim: "The mighty in strength, that fulfil His word," in the south of the Temple. And thus, by means of them does He wreak vengeance upon those who transgress His will and His word, for from between them was taken the fire that destroys them. And concerning the subject of the governance of the macrocosm, on the right side will He bring the fire from the one clothed in linen. And

so it is, for the microcosm. AND HE STOOD BESIDE A WHEEL (Ezek. 10.6). He made known by this that the wheels have no action that is not caused by the cherubim. Therefore, activity was attributed to the cherubim, and of the cherubim there was revealed THE FORM OF A MAN'S HAND UNDER THEIR WINGS (Ezek. 10.8), for their action was as their movement, and their movement is the movement of the wheels.

WHEN THEY WENT, THEY WENT TOWARD THEIR FOUR SIDES; THEY TURNED NOT AS THEY WENT, BUT TO THE PLACE WHITHER THE HEAD LOOKED THEY FOLLOWED IT; THEY TURNED NOT AS THEY WENT. (Ezek. 10.11). THE HEAD is the cherub. And the wheel goes after the cherubim, for THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS.

It is possible that Scripture hints by THE HEAD at the uppermost wheel that surrounds all the wheels that are within it. And that is the daily movement.

AND THEIR WHOLE BODY (Ezek. 10.12). Scripture attributed to the wheels body because they are actually material. But to the cherubim who are not material actually but only by way of appearance, Scripture did not attribute to them body but rather faces, wings, hands, and feet. But matter is not attributed anywhere to an Intelligence, for body is attributed to a thing decided (to be of the category) of living beings, not to anything else, even metaphorically. And the higher aspect of the body is called BACK. And what

is inserted into the thickness of something is called matter. And the subject of the verse pertains to what is said (before in the verse): THEY TURNED NOT AS THEY WENT. For after the head go the wheels. AND THEIR HANDS -- Scripture does not say about their hands that they are a figure as (when) Scripture says, THE FORM OF A MAN'S HAND UNDER THEIR WINGS. But rather the interpretation of THEIR HANDS is as (in the verse), "Two tenons shall there be in each board, joined one to another; thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle (Exod. 26.17)." And they are an axis of every wheel.

AND THE WINGS (Ezek. 10.12) . . . The meaning of WINGS is the small spheres which are as the area of the large spheres.

79^b (10)

To one who has this knowledge of the Mutikallimun and the knowledge of others beside them, the interpretation of AND THE WINGS concerns the movement of their essence and the secret of their interest in the governance.

AND THE WHEELS WERE FULL OF EYES ROUND ABOUT, EVEN THE WHEELS THAT THEY FOUR HAD (Ezek. 10.12). That is what Scripture says in the first vision: AND THEY FOUR HAD THEIR RINGS FULL OF EYES ROUND ABOUT (Ezek. 1.18). In a similar way did we interpret the figure. (Of) what Scripture says there (about) THEIR RINGS, Scripture adds an interpretation

here, and says AND THE WHEELS, lest you say that the eyes were on the rings alone, i.e., in the area of the wheels. This means, all the thickness of the wheels, for the eyes pass from side to side as nails in a door. And THEIR WHEELS (Ezek. 10.12) is an additional explanation . . . And the appellation THEIR WHEELS refers to their essence, i.e., the word "wheel" is an abstraction referring to concrete individuals.

AS FOR THE WHEELS, THEY WERE CALLED IN MY HEARING THE WHEELWORK (Ezek. 10.13). The prophet's purpose was teaching that he heard that unto the wheels came a voice that called to them "O Wheelwork." And that is a calling (to attention) as "O Generation" (Jer. 2.31), and "O Congregation" (Num. 15.15). Scripture intends here to say that every activity that Scripture attributed to the wheels was by His command and His will. And it is as if He calls unto it (Wheelwork) the commandment and says to it: "Do thus and do so." And commanded in the wheel is the cherub, FOR THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING BEING WAS IN THE WHEELS. And His calling is not with a voice or with the organs of speech. Rather, God made him to hear in the prophecy a voice to make him to understand the subject. And similarly (are we to interpret "And one called unto another (Isa. 6.3)."

And Scripture mentions the face of a cherub in the place where it mentioned the face of an ox in the first vision.

. . . The cherub is the name of that which is incorporeal in every place (that it is mentioned). And it becomes for the imagination as the likeness of the two most honored forms among sensible objects among sublunar creatures, namely, the face of man and the wings of fowl. And it is known that the species among living beings that do not speak upon whose use man is most dependent, taking precedence to the body, is the ox, for (man's) food. And much of the produce comes by the power of the ox and use of its carrying. And to gather his wheat (the ox) drags the carts, by which man is aided in most of the carrying.

Behold, most of the help of man for the life of the body (comes from) the ox. And when man, like (the ox) is drawn to worldly, bodily desires, and throws away the understandings, all the more do he and the ox eat foolish things in one crib. Then the Intellect has over him neither devotion nor Providence of the Rider. And these faces depart from The Chariot, even as a figure. It is said by the faculty of imagination that one is of the other two (lion or vulture) until men will call "Man" one who has not the knowledge of an ox, and they will not call him a lion or a vulture, for they have a large portion in the faculty of imagination and technique regarding their prey.

And it has a hint of it (departure of individual Providence) in this vision and not in the first vision because in this vision He showed him the abominations that they were

doing in the Temple on account of which the Glory departed. All that was done for the resemblance of the cherub was not from the cherub, for unto the cherub did he revert.

And so, for the subject of general Providence the cherub is compared as animals are likened. And there are left to the cherub in the vision of the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah" the face of man for those few who were among them called "Man."

The form also differed (between the first and third visions). It had the name "living beings" instead of "cherubim." For "living beings" is a composite name. Not so is "cherub," for it is that which is incorporeal.

And they do not teach about it another name, to make known of it that for it there does not remain miraculous Providence on earth. Therefore the prophet heard the name "cherubim." For that which the prophet saw at the beginning he saw at the end, as Scripture says, AND THE CHERUBIM MOUNTED UP -- THIS IS THE LIVING BEING THAT I SAW BY THE RIVER CHEBAR: AND I KNEW THAT THEY WERE CHERUBIM (Ezek. 10.20). New information was not introduced. For also at the beginning he knew that the ox, lion, and vulture are not in the heavens, and do not exist except as imaginary things in the vision. Rather, in this vision, God made known to him the departure of the Glory and (miraculous) Providence

80^a

from the earth, as Scripture says, AND THE CHERUBIM LIFTED UP THEIR WINGS, AND MOUNTED UP FROM THE EARTH IN MY SIGHT

. . . (Ezek. 10.19). And behold, the living beings reverted (to being) cherubim, for Providence did not remain among the cherubim, i.e., over individuals in a miraculous way in addition to Providence that (is exerted) generally over all the living. This is the meaning of I KNEW THAT THEY WERE CHERUBIM: Now I know that they are cherubim and not living beings, even though I saw at the end (Ezek. 10.22) what I saw at the beginning. And for this reason, Scripture said in this vision "living being" and not "living beings" as though Providence had been secluded with one. And because He changes (it) from the living beings to the cherubim, it mentions the subject several times (in the text). . . . Providence departed from the earth and secluded itself with the cherubim.

Chapter III: Toward a Translation of RaDaK's Esoteric
Commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1

This chapter consists of a tentative translation of RaDaK's esoteric commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1. Three consecutive dots (. . .) mark the omission of passages considered by the translator to be non-essential in respect to the expression of the philosophical position of the commentator. Such omissions include Midrashic and Targumic passages and passages that seemed to be unclear in meaning. Numbers at the left margin refer to the section division of the Columbia University Press edition, edited by Finkelstein.

Thus said David b. Joseph b. Kimchi, of blessed memory:

I shall now return to present the esoteric interpretation of Gen. 2.7-5.1. At the outset I would say that "the man" that is mentioned in this section is, according to the exoteric interpretation, Adam, and according to the esoteric interpretation, the name of the species (Man); and both interpretations are true, but the exoteric is for the masses and the esoteric is for those few who are the elite of the masses. . . .

2.8

THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN, IN THE EAST, AND
PLACED THERE MAN WHOM HE HAD FORMED.

EDEN refers to the active Intellect, for it is the true, spiritual Eden. God planted in it a garden . . . at the beginning of His creations. (That is,) when He created the Intelligences, he placed in the Active Intellect a power that could bestow forms upon the sublunar beings, each according to its function. Therefore, is it (the power?) called

"garden," since there are in it (the forms of) varieties of trees and plants that differ one from the other.

Man whom He formed out of the dust of the ground is of the pure matter that is in it (the ground). He placed him in the garden to be the principal being over all sublunar creatures, for he possesses a faculty from Eden making him the principal being of the garden. And he is planted in Eden if he will work and keep the garden.

. . .

2.9

WITH THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN, AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD. . . .

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN. That is its center, for the heart is in the center of the body. God caused to grow in it two trees, and they are the name of the two faculties that are in one heart. One of them is the human intellect, and that is the TREE OF LIFE. The second is the material intellect, and that is the TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD. The Tree of Life is all good, when it engages in metaphysics and directs its potentiality to cleave to the Active Intellect, according to its power, it is all good. The material intellect is good when it engages in mathematics and physics, which are as a ladder to climb up to metaphysics. (The material intellect is good) also (when) it engages in the arts for the life of the body, and in the appetites to produce offspring, but the rest of them (i.e.,

the appetites) are bad.

2.10

A RIVER ISSUES FROM EDEN TO WATER THE GARDEN AND FROM THERE IT DIVIDES.

This is the intellect that emanates from Eden to water the garden, and it is the heart, as we have interpreted.

AND BECOMES FOUR BRANCHES.

They are the four cavities that are in the brain, and in which there are three faculties: perception, discrimination, and memory. The perception is in the two front cavities. The discrimination is in the middle cavity, and they call it "the Judge," for it tests the perception and judges it in accordance with the knowledge of the thinker. In the last (cavity) there is the memory and the watching of what one thought, saw, or heard. Because the brain is not so soft there, since it becomes harder towards the spinal column, it retains. The faculties which are in the brain come to it by the help of the heart. Therefore it says, FROM THERE IT DIVIDES AND BECOMES FOUR BRANCHES.

. . .

Moses our teacher wrote all these things (that appear in the Torah before the account of his career) by (inspiration of) the Holy Spirit from the mouth of power . . . in order to establish (the truth of) creatio ex nihilo . . .

2.15

THE LORD GOD TOOK MAN.

It is not that He took him from place to place, according to the esoteric, but that He raised him from level to level . . . for first he is dust from the soil or a drop of semen, but He raised him to the uppermost level, to be placed in the Garden of Eden, the garden which He planted in Eden, not which He planted in the soil, whence he was taken. This (raising) is because of that which was planted in his heart, potentially, actualizing daily by the help of the uppermost intellect, which is called "Active," and by individual study and exertion in it (the garden). But the Active Intellect will not be enough (in the actualizing process), without both individual study and assertion. Thus it says, TO TILL IT AND TO TEND IT. TO TILL IT means study. TO TEND IT means that he keep his intellect far from the rebellious and transgressors, and be one who keeps and remembers (the intellect) always. Our rabbis said (B.R. 16), TO TILL IT means study, TO TEND IT means observance of commandments.

2.16

THE LORD GOD COMMANDED MAN, SAYING: OF EVERY TREE OF THE GARDEN YOU ARE FREE TO EAT.

Since He planted the Eden, it was fitting to make commandments concerning it and to warn him, for there is neither commandment nor warning among the rest of the lower creatures. And behold, he is warned by his intellect that he may eat of every tree of the garden, and they (represent) stepping stones of philosophy, which are categorized according to their type,

like the trees of the garden. The uppermost of them is the Tree of Life, which is metaphysics. And the sciences that take precedence to metaphysics in one's study of them are as a ladder to climb up to metaphysics. Or you may say that they are as an introduction for one who approaches (the study of) metaphysics. For the Tree of Life is in the center of the garden, . . . and one must pass by the other trees line by line until he reaches the middle of the garden. Then he will find the Tree of Life and eat of its food and live forever.

2.17

AS FOR THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND BAD, YOU MUST NOT EAT OF IT; FOR AS SOON AS YOU EAT OF IT, YOU SHALL BE DOOMED TO DIE.

For the Divine intellect, of which the human intellect is part, prevents one's engaging in desires, since they cause the human intellect to be idle, and behold, it dies in the death of the body, if one does not engage himself with it. Therefore, placed next in the Biblical text is:

2.18

THE LORD GOD SAID, "IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE; I WILL MAKE A FITTING HELPER FOR HIM."

This means that since I made Man dust from the soil, it is not good that he be totally intellectual, but he not at all involve himself with matter. Therefore, I have made him composed of both, that he may be involved with both.

Therefore, he needs a helpmate who will be totally material, and who will help him with the needs of his upkeep and with perpetuating the species. He will constitute his life of both of them, and he will cause the intellectual part to prevail over the material. For thus did God breathe into him an everlasting soul, which He did not do in the case of the other creatures, which are wholly material. He placed in man freedom that he might investigate how to pursue the way of the human intellect, (which) was created to distinguish him from the domesticated animals and wild beasts.

Thus it says:

2.19

THE LORD GOD FORMED OUT OF THE EARTH ALL THE WILD BEASTS AND BIRDS OF THE SKY, AND BROUGHT THEM TO THE MAN TO SEE WHAT HE WOULD CALL THEM; AND WHATEVER THE MAN CALLED EACH LIVING CREATURE, THAT WOULD BE ITS NAME.

He brought them in his heart that he might think about them, that they are from the soil alone, while he is a composite of four elements, and he has an intellect whereby he may know their general and specific nature by which they differ one from the other, and this is (how they acquire) their names. He, through his intellect, may know all of this, and therefore, he may discern, by himself, that God has graced him (with) this intellect to investigate these creatures and that he should be distinguished from them and that he is lord over them all. Therefore, he will not follow the

way of those creatures that are lower than he, and be an animal like them. Rather, he will assert himself with all of his power to be like those creatures that are higher than he. And thus it says:

2.20.

WHATEVER THE MAN CALLED EACH LIVING CREATURE, THAT WOULD BE ITS NAME, to make known that God gave him potentiality to know natural science for the sake of wholeness. After Scripture mentions animals, how much the more (should it mention creatures) that are lower than (living creatures), which are vegetable and mineral. And that which is said, NO FITTING HELPER WAS FOUND, means that Man did not find by his intellect that he should be like these beasts, that he should engage in materialism. Nor did he find by his intellect that he would have a helper but instead he would have an adversary, should they (lower creatures) be related to him in such a way that he be involved with them.

2.21.

SO THE LORD GOD CAST A DEEP SLEEP UPON THE MAN AND HE SLEPT.

But God implanted in him the appetitive faculty and did not choose that he always be alert in his intellect. Rather he would be asleep at times (in the matter of) observation of the intellect. Then he would busy himself with materialism in order that there be help in (maintaining) the existence of this world. In the verse are mentioned both

"sleep" and "deep sleep," for at times (Man) (merely) sleeps, and at times he sleeps deeply, and every instance (of sleep or deep sleep) is due to the strength of one's nature.

HE TOOK ONE OF HIS RIBS from his sides.. And that is the material intellect, which we have mentioned, which Man should use to a limited extent in his appetites. The meaning of HE TOOK is that He took it (the material intellect) from the human intellect to distinguish one from the other.

AND CLOSED UP THE FLESH AT THAT SPOT. He closed (the wound) with the flesh, which is the seat of appetite. He placed it before the human intellect as though it were a partition dividing between the material intellect and between the human intellect, and all this is in the nature of Man.

2.22

AND THE LORD GOD FASHIONED INTO A WOMAN THE RIB THAT HE HAD TAKEN FROM MAN.

He made strong the appetitive faculty in man and this is the fashioning (Gen. 2.22). And the human intellect is the weaker and is a poor child (Eccl. 9.16). But the appetitive faculty is a great king. The material intellect is called "Woman" for the appetitive faculty is planted in it. Therefore the Mutakallimun called matter "Woman," since it receives the forms one after another and bears changes.

HE BROUGHT HER TO MAN. He joined her to him, but he should keep her at a respectable distance, since he is Man

and not animal. But if he will not keep her distant as is seemly, he will be an animal, as is the greater part of his fashioning.

2.23

THEN THE MAN SAID . . .

After Man sees that most of his structure is dust, flesh, and bones, he is to be drawn to the animal desires. Flesh and bones are the dwelling of the desires. The material faculty is closer to him than the human faculty. Therefore was appetite called "Woman," because she was taken from Man who is dust from the soil. Most of his fashioning is from the soil (matter). Appetite is fixed in the material creatures. (paragraph paraphrased)

2.24

HENCE A MAN LEAVES HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER AND CLINGS TO HIS WIFE SO THAT THEY BECOME ONE FLESH.

Therefore, it is the way of most men to leave one's father, which is the intellect, and one's mother, which is the higher soul, of which the human intellect is part. AND CLINGS TO HIS WIFE. She is the aforementioned "Woman." SO THAT THEY BECOME ONE FLESH. For the human intellect returns material, and behold, they are one flesh, and they are dust. Unto the dust do they return. (Gen. 3.19)

2.25

THE TWO OF THEM WERE NAKED, MAN AND HIS WIFE, YET THEY FELT NO SHAME.

They were naked of intellect. They had no shame, since they were undistinguished from the animals . . .

3.1

NOW THE SERPENT WAS THE SHREWDEST OF ALL THE WILD BEASTS.

The Serpent is the material intellect. Although the appetitive faculty is in all the beasts, including domesticated animals and fowl, as the Lord God implanted it in them, behold the Serpent in man has guile and cunning more than any wild beast, and it has the knowledge to tempt, and it arouses the appetitive faculty.

(What follows is a paraphrase of the commentary on 3.1-5).

Serpent: Did God really say, YOU SHALL NOT EAT OF ANY TREE OF THE GARDEN? If He has withheld from you bodily pleasure, then He has withheld every good thing from you.

Woman: WE MAY EAT OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREES OF THE GARDEN. God did not withhold any bodily pleasure. He created us to eat, drink, and to keep by our power the life of the body.

IT IS ONLY ABOUT FRUIT OF THE TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN THAT GOD SAID, YOU SHALL NOT EAT OF IT OR TOUCH IT, LEST YOU DIE. Even in what is permitted us, (we may not partake of pleasures other than for the sake of) perpetuating the species and safeguarding health. If we transgress this, the soul will die in the death of the body.

Serpent: Because of bodily pleasures, YOU ARE NOT GOING TO DIE. God knows that, as soon as you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God. All the while that you partake of bodily pleasures, you will grow in wisdom.

WHO KNOWS GOOD AND BAD. The serpent seduced her and said to her, "Begin with bodily pleasures, and know and understand the good and the bad. Then take the good and leave the bad." But this was seduction, for after one partakes at all of pleasures, one increases in consumption until he also partakes of the bad pleasures.

3.6

WHEN THE WOMAN SAW . . . THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR EATING . . .

She looked into the matter of pleasure and saw that it was good to partake of bodily pleasures. . . .

AND THAT THE TREE WAS A DELIGHT TO THE EYES,

For by the perception of the eyes is there delight in good food and in forms of beautiful women.

AND THAT THE TREE WAS DESIRABLE AS A SOURCE OF WISDOM, SHE TOOK OF ITS FRUIT AND ATE . . . In accord with the instructions of the Serpent. AND SHE GAVE SOME TO HER HUSBAND ALSO, AND HE ATE. . . to one suited to be her husband, who might have been stronger than she, but instead turned out to be like her, and the flesh that closes (the wound) was

removed, and the partition that separates (was removed).

The rabbis (B.R. 15.6, p. 141) said: God did not reveal The Tree of Knowledge to Man nor will He reveal it. RaMBaM used this statement and said: the strength of reason and the nature of existence requires this. (Moreh, part II, chapt.30) This means that He did not reveal the evil that proceeds from partaking of it. "Also the world He set in their heart (Eccl. 3.11)." One must partake to a limited extent in pleasures to maintain existence, and it is the will of the creator that at times Man should slumber, as we have written. This is the meaning of RaMBaM's statement. S. ibn Tibbon interpreted "Man" to be one who is called "Man" and who is not of this (material) nature and has not eaten from (The Tree of Knowledge) except through Woman.

3.7

THEN THE EYES OF BOTH OF THEM WERE OPENED . . .

He changed (the prior statement), YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED, for the seducer said that at times the eyes of both of them are opened, and the material intellect becomes the human intellect, just as the human intellect had become the material intellect at the beginning, and they become aware that they sinned in their pursuit after (the forbidden degrees of) pleasures.

AND THEY PERCEIVED THAT THEY WERE NAKED . . .

They were aware that they were naked of intellect. This

was a cause for being ashamed.

AND THEY SEWED TOGETHER FIG LEAVES AND MADE THEMSELVES LOIN CLOTHS . . .

A fig leaf is a symbol of the three faculties which reside in the brain. For it (the brain) is divided among the three (cavities) and the middle (cavity) is the highest and thus it is the Judge in the brain. And the meaning of THEY SEWED TOGETHER is that they devoted them (the faculties) to the intellect.

The meaning of LOIN CLOTHS is related to the verse, "The residue of wrath shalt Thou gird upon Thee (Ps. 76.11)," meaning that they bound and girded their heart and their knowledge and did not release them unto the passions.

3.8

THEY HEARD THE SOUND OF THE LORD GOD MOVING ABOUT IN THE GARDEN AT THE BREEZY TIME OF THE DAY.

This is the human intellect that cries out and warns one concerning the commandments of God and His will . . . AT THE BREEZY TIME OF THE DAY refers to the time when the day turns cooler, and thus it is that at the time of old age the natural warmth cools off and one begins to abstain from bodily pleasure. . . .

3.11

THEN HE SAID, WHO TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE NAKED? The bad deeds tell ultimately that deceit is reckoned.

3.13 (paraphrased)

The Serpent is cursed more than all the other animals since the animals are neither rewarded nor punished, but the Serpent is punished for all of his wickedness.

AND DIRT YOU SHALL EAT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.

As long as the enticer is wicked and overwhelms Man, he'll eat dirt, which are bodily pleasures. There is no status for them. (This is the meaning of ON YOUR BELLY YOU SHALL CRAWL). When the Serpent dies within Man, he (Man) raises up the human intellect that will eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life and live forever.

3.15

I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN YOUR OFFSPRING AND HERS.

The enmity is such that one will try to put to death the other. Similarly, it is the nature of all men, who are the offspring of Woman. And both of them (Woman and Serpent) are in her as the seducer and the seduced. Although the seducer manifests himself at the beginning as a friend, he ultimately reveals his true intent. At the beginning, one is the offspring of Woman. But if one is wise, so that he overpowers the Serpent, then he will be the offspring of Man. If one becomes wise slowly, then he will put to death the Serpent and cause the offspring of Man to live. If the Serpent overwhelms the offspring of Woman, then the Serpent

will have put to death that one, with the consequence of eternal death, for that one is merely dust, and to dust he returns. (paraphrased).

3.16

AND TO THE WOMEN HE SAID, I WILL MAKE MOST SEVERE YOUR PANGS IN CHILDBEARING; IN PAIN SHALL YOU BEAR CHILDREN. YET YOUR URGE SHALL BE FOR YOUR HUSBAND, AND HE SHALL RULE OVER YOU.

The material desire which is Woman causes toil and there are pangs to the one who partakes of them. And Man is free of them. He does not worry about them, for enough for him is bread to eat and a garment to wear. CHILDBEARING is the evil thought. To engage in such thoughts begets toil and sin (Job 15.35). If the thought is put into deed, then these are the sons born to him: pain and toil. And even temporary pleasure is not his, for if one acquires money, he acquires toil. And if he acquires it, and subsequently it is lost, behold, he is more sad than one who did not acquire it at all. Similarly, if he have sons, they will get sick and die, and he'll be more sad than one who did not have any sons.

THEN YOUR URGE SHALL BE FOR YOUR HUSBAND.

Then you'll be silent in the presence of your husband who is the human intellect, who is worthy of being Man. And the urge is that one will say at the time of pain: it were better for me had I not acquired money, had I not begotten

sons, nor chased after bodily pleasure. Then it would be well, and I'd be secure, for one who does not run does not fall.

AND HE SHALL RULE OVER YOU.

He was worthy to rule over you and not release you to the passions.

3.17

AND TO MAN HE SAID. Having completed the chastisement of the Woman, he took up his chastisement of the Man, which is the human intellect, as we have said.

BECAUSE YOU HEEDED YOUR WIFE AND ATE OF THE TREE ABOUT WHICH I COMMANDED YOU, SAYING, 'YOU SHALL NOT EAT OF IT,'

Because you were drawn after matter,

CURSED BE THE GROUND BECAUSE OF YOU;

He changed what was seemly to be a blessing (into a curse), because of you. For thus did I set you with the ground, which is the body, in order that you might draw the ground unto you, and not that you be drawn after it. . . .

BECAUSE OF YOU. Because of him, there is punishment and reward.

IN ANGUISH SHALL YOU EAT OF IT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.

If you are drawn after passion in order to enjoy it a bit, you will be said in that consumption . . .

3.18

. . .

AND YOU SHALL FEED ON THE GRAINS OF THE FIELD.

Since you have become like an animal, you shall eat feed and not fruit of the Tree of Life.

3.19

BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW SHALL YOU GET BREAD TO EAT,
UNTIL YOU RETURN TO THE GROUND.

What you eat in this world, which is taken from the food of the animal, is yours by the sweat of your brow. Your status is lower than that of the animals, for animals' food is ready for them in the field, without labor on their part.

FOR FROM IT YOU WERE TAKEN.

The fashioning of Man is his body, which is derived from four elements: earth, water, wind, and fire. And most of his fashioning is of the element of earth, which includes sinews and bones, which are cold and dry like earth.

FOR DUST YOU ARE AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN.

Not to the land of the living (shall you go), for there will not be left of you a higher portion.

3.20

THE MAN NAMED HIS WIFE 'EVE.'

For the matter was like the matter of the beasts of the field. Small was the difference between them. Therefore, He made a small difference in the names. Where one has a vav, the other has a yod.

BECAUSE SHE WAS THE MOTHER OF ALL THE LIVING.

He sensed that he had desires and that she had desires. But she was called the mother of (living things), because she is the pure matter which is in the earth, and she rules over all those living on the earth, because of the material intellect which is in her, which rules by its tactics over the living in the kingdom which God gave to her.

3.21

AND THE LORD GOD MADE FOR MAN AND HIS WIFE GARMENTS OF SKINS, AND HE CLOTHED THEM.

It is interpreted that the Lord God had already made for them garments of skins to clothe them against their nakedness, for they were naked of intellect. So why were they (now) naked? Because He made for them a good garment, and this became bad only through their choice. . . .

3.22

NOW THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US.

(paraphrased) God said this referring to both the angels and Himself. The angels are separate intelligences. God is the cause and the intelligences are effects. Nor do the effects know the cause in its true self.

LIKE ONE OF US is said rather than simply "one of us," because of the higher portion that is in him, for the intellect that emanates into Man from the Active Intellect is like (the Active Intellect) to a limited extent, but not completely, as long as he clings to matter.

It is said, NOW THE MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US by virtue of the intellect that is placed in him. And now he has released his soul to know good and evil and to pursue pleasure.

WHAT IF HE SHOULD STRETCH OUT HIS HAND AND TAKE ALSO FROM THE TREE OF LIFE!

Although he stretched out his hand toward materialism, which is the way of most men, nevertheless, He gave him hands to turn and take also of the Tree of Life. Perhaps he will take it to heart that this is the good way and eat of the Tree of Life and live forever after the death of the body. (RaDaK translates pen of 3.22 as "perhaps" rather than "what if.") They are the fewest of the few who will eat of the Tree of Life. . . .

3.23

SO THE LORD BANISHED HIM FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN, TO TILL THE SOIL FROM WHICH HE WAS TAKEN.

The man who is mentioned, who ate from the Tree of Knowledge and stretched not forth his hand afterward to take of the Tree of Life and ate not from it, behold, he is banished from the Garden of Eden to till the soil from which he was taken. Dust he is, and to dust he returns.

3.24

HE DROVE MAN OUT, AND STATIONED EAST OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN THE CHERUBIM AND THE FIERY EVER-TURNING SWORD, TO GUARD

THE WAY TO THE TREE OF LIFE.

That is Man when he eats not of the Tree of Life. Scripture mentions him this second time . . . to make known that banishment and eviction are not intended for Man, for God placed in Man at the beginning the good inclination as well as the evil inclination, and gave him knowledge with free choice . . . But the evil inclination was actualized first, for thus does creation require, "for the inclination of the heart of Man is evil from his youth (Gen. 8.21)."

THE CHERUBIM. That is the name of the Intelligences. And the higher portion that emanates from them unto Man is also called "cherub." And it is said in the plural, because that which brings Man to be like unto a cherub includes the sciences. And they bring the intellect of Man from potential to actual in his self-assertion in them (the sciences).

THE FIERY EVER-TURNING SWORD. This refers to the evil inclination. Not the "sword" but THE FIERY SWORD is written. "Fiery" is an adjective describing the sword, for it is the fiery appearance of a sword when it is burnished. And when one turns it and waves it from side to side, he renews the the fiery aspect, and it frightens the beholder, . . . And behold, Scripture makes known that the good of this world that causes man to err is imaginary and illusory and changing, therefore Scripture calls it "fiery." EVER-TURNING has a feminine suffix (in Hebrew) to show that desire (a

feminine noun) is the seat of the fire. The fire guards the way to the Tree of Life in order that man not walk in that way that brings him to the Tree of Life to eat of its fruit

. . .

4.1 (paraphrased)

The offspring of Man may be divided into three categories. One is the category of the Cain-type. He is a tiller of the soil and somewhat bestial when it comes to conceptual things. Tilling of the soil, most of the trade of man, his business, and pursuit after purchases are all included in the concept of "tilling of the soil." And that is the life of the body. Woman gave Cain this name because she thought that it was God's will to till soil and not another thing.

The second category includes the Abel-type. This is the merchant, whose life's work is called "vanity" by Koheleth (4.8). But Abel has more potential of the material intellect than Cain. Abel has knowledge and counsel in the affairs of business and the conduct of political states. Perhaps there is some assertion of the human intellect. Nevertheless, he does not eat of the Tree of Life, for by and large he has no portion in the human intellect. He is called "shepherd," because he engages most of the time in brutishness, which involves the bodily passions.

The third category is the Seth-type. Seth is born in the image of Man and after his likeness. He has a portion

in the human intellect, and, being Man in the true sense, he eats of the Tree of Life.

4.2

SHE THEN BORE HIS BROTHER ABEL.

Scripture means to say that giving birth to Abel is a superfluous act. For the life of the body in the tilling of the soil suffices Man. Everything else is superfluity and extraneousness, serving merely as the pleasures of Man.

4.3

IN THE COURSE OF TIME, CAIN BROUGHT AN OFFERING TO THE LORD FROM THE FRUIT OF THE SOIL.

After growing old, most men decrease in bodily enjoyments and take some notice of the work of the Creator and turn to Him in some things and do charity, and this is their OFFERING UNTO THE LORD.

And Cain remained in his animal nature and at times worked more in tilling his soil. But still his faith was not right, even though some of his deeds were right, for he did not eat of the Tree of Life.

4.4

ABEL BROUGHT THE CHOICEST OF THE FIRSTLINGS OF HIS FLOCK.

Even though he extended himself to partake of bodily enjoyments, when he grew old, he began to investigate a bit with the human intellect and to leave most bodily enjoyments, for the Name of the Lord, for He does not desire them. But

a few of the extra pleasures of the body and the joys -- this is THE CHOICEST OF THE FIRSTLINGS OF HIS FLOCK. AND THE LORD PAID HEED TO ABEL AND HIS OFFERING. For he (Abel) saw that it was right to turn to God in imitatio Dei. Nevertheless, he was not whole, because he did not make use of the human intellect as he should have, to the best of his ability. Therefore, he was killed in this world or in the world to come. This was not natural death, but was murder instead.

4.5

BUT TO CAIN AND HIS OFFERING HE PAID NO HEED. CAIN WAS MUCH DISTRESSED AND HIS FACE FELL.

He was not pleased with him or with his deeds, for there was no intellect in him, and he was like an animal. He does not understand when he does evil and . . . in his heart he is angry and his face falls.

4.6

AND THE LORD SAID TO CAIN, "WHY ARE YOU DISTRESSED AND WHY IS YOUR FACE FALLEN?"

The will of God, which is the human intellect, responds to his anger and distress.

4.7

SURELY IF YOU DO RIGHT THERE IS UPLIFT.

The intellect teaches him the way of repentance.

BUT IF YOU DO NOT DO RIGHT, SIN IS THE DEMON AT THE DOOR.

If you do not do right you will find the door of the way

of sin. . . .

WHOSE URGE IS TOWARD YOU.

Its desire and its longing is to make you stumble, for it is the enticing and seducing serpent.

YET YOU CAN BE ITS MASTER

If you want you can be master over it and it will not stand in your way if you overwhelm it. . . .

4.8

AND CAIN SAID TO HIS BROTHER ABEL.

It is as though one were fighting with the other, for the former praises tilling of the soil, which is the life of the body, and the latter praises the intellect.

AND WHEN THEY WERE IN THE FIELD,

This is to say that the two of them were in the field, which is tilling of the soil, meaning, that Abel had been enticed by Cain.

CAIN SET UPON HIS BROTHER ABEL AND KILLED HIM.

This means that when he overwhelmed him, he killed him. And this killing is the killing of the soul, that it not remain after the death of the body. . . . If Abel was killed because of love for this world, then Cain likewise should have been killed, but God preserved Cain. Now the taker and the giver in this world is the (Active) Intellect, as we have explained. . . . Hinted at also in this matter is what Solomon said, "There is a righteous man that perisheth in his

righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his evil-doing (Eccl. 7.15);" "Behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter (Eccl. 4.1)." 4.10

THEN HE SAID, "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? HARK, YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIES OUT TO ME FROM THE GROUND!"

The blood cries out from the ground because it causes death and everyone who tills it is cursed and lacking the good of God, and if the sinner confesses after his transgressions have multiplied, but is not fulfilled in his intellect, he will live long in this world, but in the next:" (God) instantly requites with destruction those who reject Him (Dt. 7.10)."

For one is not whole who merely ceases from sinning if he does not also do good and does not actualize his intellect. Behold, such a person is placed in the category of "those who reject Him," and he goes from the presence of the Lord and his soul is destroyed and he returns to the Land of Nod (wandering).

EAST OF EDEN

He is East of Eden, meaning in front of and not behind Eden. He is in front of, since he cannot enter Eden. He is in front of, since he confessed his sins and forsook them. But he does not enter Eden, since he does not become whole during his life with good deed and actualization of the intellect.

All that we have interpreted as pertaining to three categories of men may be interpreted of Man in the three seasons of his life. He is Cain in boyhood, Abel in young manhood, and Seth in adulthood. Seth is one to whom God has been gracious in bestowing knowledge, and it is fitting for one who understands to make interpretations of this whole section in this method as we have presented the section. Similarly, the section on Lamech and his wives is fittingly interpreted according to the allegorical method by one who understands. Thus, his two wives represent the animal and the vegetative souls, and Lamech represents the rational soul.

4.25

ADAM KNEW HIS WIFE AGAIN, AND SHE BORE A SON AND NAMED HIM SETH.

Scripture does not make mention of Eve, because the first Woman returned to the dust. This wife was another who hearkened to Man. Therefore, she gave birth to good offspring and it was other offspring, not like the first ones. And behold, the flesh was drawn after the intellect and the poor one became a king. And behold, this offspring was in the Divine image and likeness. And Seth was in the Divine image and likeness and his offspring were similarly in the Divine image and likeness.

4.26

AND TO SETH, IN TURN, A SON WAS BORN, AND HE NAMED HIM ENOSH, for the human intellect and not the material intellect triumphed in them. . . .

IT WAS THEN THAT MEN BEGAN TO INVOKE THE LORD BY NAME.

They began to engage in the study of physics and metaphysics. Note that the first two human beings Scripture did not call "Man" but rather "Eve I." And Seth Scripture called both "Eve II" and "Man." For both of them were of one spirit and not of one flesh as at the beginning. . . .

FOOTNOTES

1. Abraham Geiger, "Toldot Ha-RaDak," Kevutzat Maamarim, translated by Samuel Poznanski, p. 231.
2. David Kimchi, Introduction to Chronicles, Mikraot Gedolot, Vol. 7, p. 108.
3. Geiger, pp. 239-243. Michlol was later published in two parts.
4. Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews, Vol. III, p. 394.
5. Geiger, p. 231.
6. David Kimchi, quoted by William Chomsky, David Kimhi's Hebrew Grammar, p. 9. Cf. Introduction of this thesis, p. 3.
7. Geiger, pp. 231-239.
8. Cf. Bibliography of this thesis for list of secondary sources.
9. David Kimchi, Introduction to the Prophets, Sefer RaDak, p. 2.
10. Geiger, p. 247.
11. David Kimchi, p. 2.
12. Graetz, III, p. 394.
13. Geiger, p. 246.
Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on the "Maaseh Ha-merkavah," Mikraot Gedolot, Vol. 9, p. 79a.
14. Kimchi, Sefer Ha-shorashim, p. 420.
15. Kimchi, quoted by William Chomsky, p. 8, n. 2.
16. Geiger, pp. 231-239.
17. Leo Strauss, Persecution and the Art of Writing, p. 17.
18. Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on Gen. 2.7-5.1, The Commentary of David Kimhi on Isaiah, edited by Louis Finkelstein, Gen. 2.7.

19. Kimchi, Commentar zur Genesis, edited by Abraham Ginzburg, Gen. 2.8.

Kimchi, Exoteric Commentary on Ezekiel, Mikraot Gedolot, Vol. 9, p. 12^b, Ezek. 10.17.

Et passim.

20. Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on Genesis, Gen. 4.10.

21. Kimchi, Sefer Ha-shorashim, p. 420.

22. Vid. p. 1 of this thesis.

23. Strauss, p. 18.

24. Isaac Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy, p. 277.

Some assertions in this thesis cannot be documented by references to comments of RaDaK. It is the position of the writer, however, that such assertions are warranted by the coherence of RaDaK's statements with the Neo-Platonized Aristotelianism of his colleagues.

25. Idem.

26. Kimchi, vid. Chapter II of this thesis, p. 49.

27. Ibid., p. 38.

28. Husik, p. 303, f.

29. Kimchi, Chapter II of this thesis, p. 45.

30. Ibid., p. 34.

31. Idem.

32. Idem.

33. Ibid., p. 40.

34. Ibid., p. 27. Note, however, that in one place the Rider is identified as the Active Intellect. Vid. p. 34.

35. Ibid., p. 49, f.

36. Ibid., p. 38.

37. Ibid., p. 31, 54, f.

38. Ibid., p. 51.
39. Ibid., p. 30.
40. Ibid., pp. 30, 39, 45.
41. Ibid., p. 39.
42. Ibid., pp. 30, 34, 35, 42, 43, 44.
43. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, p. 86.
44. Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on Genesis, 2.8.
45. Kimchi, vid. Chapter II of this thesis, p. 30.
46. Husik, p. 267.
Kimchi, Chapter II of this thesis, p. 42.
47. Ibid., p. 45.
48. Ibid., p. 36.
49. Ibid., pp. 42, 43.
50. Husik, p. 292, f.
51. Ibid., p. 29.
52. Ibid., p. 27.
53. Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on Genesis 2.10.
54. It is assumed that Kimchi thought of creatio ex nihilo as a form of emanation.
55. Kimchi, Esoteric Commentary on Genesis 2.8.
56. Ibid., Gen. 2.7.
57. Ibid., Gen. 2.8.
58. Idem.
59. Ibid., Gen. 2.18.
60. Ibid., Gen. 2.9.

61. Ibid., Gen. 2.21.
62. Ibid., Gen. 2.9.
63. Idem. Note how Kimchi directs the student to philosophical studies that are beyond the scope of his commentary.
64. Ibid., Gen. 3.16.
65. Ibid., Gen. 2.15.
66. Ibid., Gen. 3.8.
67. Ibid., Gen. 3.22.
68. Ibid., Gen. 3.23.
69. Ibid., Gen. 4.10.
70. Ibid., Gen. 3.22.
71. Ibid., Gen. 2.22.
72. Ibid., Gen. 3.1-5.
73. Ibid., Gen. 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

- David Kimchi, and Judah bar Joseph Ibn-Alfachar. Correspondence, Kovetz Teshuvot Ha-RaMBam. Edited by Abraham Lichtenberg. Leipzig, 1859, prt. III, pp. 1-4.
- David Kimchi. Esoteric Commentary on Genesis, The Commentary of David Kimhi on Isaiah. Edited by Louis Finkelstein. New York, Columbia University Press, 1926, pp. LIII-LXXIV.
- _____. Esoteric Commentary on Ezekiel, at end of Ezekiel in Mikraot Gedolot. New York, Pardes Publishing House, Inc. Vol. 9, 1951, pp. 78b-80a.
- _____. Exoteric Commentary on Chronicles, Prophets, Mikraot Gedolot. New York, Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1951. Vols. 7-9.
- _____. Comentar zur Genesis. Edited by Abraham Ginzburg. Pressburg, Unton Edlen von Schmid, 1842.
- _____. Introduction to the Prophets, Sefer RaDaK. Lemberg, Pessel Balaban, 1878, p. 2.
- _____. (Mikhlol) David Kimhi's Hebrew Grammar. Edited and translated by William Chomsky. New York, Bloch Publishing Company, 1952.
- _____. Sefer Ha-shorashim. New York, 1948. (Dictionary of Michlol)
- _____. Sefer Tehilim im Perusho Ha-aroch shel Rabbeinu David Kimchi. Edited by Israel Nathan Brickenstein. Tel Aviv, Mosad Ha-rav Kook, 1946.
- _____. "Teshuvot La-notzerim," Sefer Nitzachon. Edited by
- _____. "Vikkuach," Milchemet Chovah. Constantinople, 1790, pp. 13a-18b.

Secondary Sources

- Harry Cohen. "Introduction," The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Hosea. New York, Columbia University Press, 1929, pp. IX-XLI.
- Louis Finkelstein. "Introduction," The Commentary of David Kimhi on Isaiah. New York, Columbia University Press, 1926, pp. XVI-XCVI.

Abraham Geiger. "Toldot Ha-RaDaK," Kevutzat Maamarim.
Translated by Samuel Poznanski. Warsaw, Tuschiyah, 1910,
pp. 231-253.

Heinrich Graetz. History of the Jews. Vol. III. Philadelphia,
The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956.

Caspar Levias. "David Kimhi," The Jewish Encyclopedia. Edited
by Isidore Singer. New York and London, Funk and Wagnalls
Company, 1916. Vol. VII, pp. 494-495.

H. S. Lewis. "David Kimchi," The Jewish Chronicle, February
8, 1889; p. 17; February 15, 1889, p. 15; February
22, 1889, p. 14, f.

Leo Strauss. Persecution and the Art of Writing. Glencoe,
Ill., The Free Press, 1952.

Meyer Waxman. "The Kimhi Family," A History of Jewish
Literature. New York, Bloch Publishing Co., 1938, pp.
177-179.